

April 2023 | No. 63

# AbingdonNews



## Reach for the Top

Well done to the 14 Abingdon students who attended the Independent Schools Climbing Championships on 20 March. The competition encompassed 12 bouldering, 8 top rope and 3 lead climbs. Particular congratulations to Rufus Cox and Daniel Harrison who respectively won the U18 and U16 categories.

## Message from the Headmaster

I have a confession. In order to put together my introduction for this edition of *Abingdon News*, I asked Chat GPT for some help. You may well have come across Chat GPT already - a powerful AI-based language model that can help students and staff with a variety of tasks, from researching and writing papers to communicating and collaborating with their peers (as Chat GPT describes itself).

I have to admit that Chat GPT did a pretty good job - certainly a good enough job to highlight that technology continues to develop apace and that we need to prepare our students for a rapidly changing digital world.

We embrace innovation in our curriculum and you can read more about our approach to digital education inside this edition. We also believe that our students benefit from being imbued with the traditional values that underpin life at our ancient school, such as diligence, integrity and generosity of spirit. This instils the moral platform that will allow them to make the most of the opportunities that modern technology will bring.

I also want our students to grasp that they have the opportunity to shape technology and make sure it leads to a better world rather than simply feeling that they are consumers at the mercy of fads and trends. With that sense of agency, together with an understanding of their responsibility to make the world a better place, our students will thrive and prosper.



## Physics trip to Geneva



At the start of the Christmas break, a group of Physics students travelled to Geneva to visit scientific facilities in the region, learn about the historical significance of Switzerland in the development of science and to see the cutting edge technology that is pushing forward the boundaries of modern physics.

Amongst the highlights was a visit to the Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN) where the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is located. The world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator made headlines in July 2012 with the discovery of the Higgs boson. The students also visited the Geneva plasma physics centre and found out more about how nuclear fusion in power plants such as ITER and DEMO is achieved; the Geneva Observatory which houses modern telescopes and is responsible for finding exoplanets; the Verbois hydroelectric dam which, along with two other hydroelectric dams, produces 56% of Swiss electricity; and the EPFL university in Lausanne.

## 6th Form take Paris by storm



Over half-term, a group of Lower 6th pupils spent a week in Paris on a study and culture trip. In the mornings, students attended language lessons at the prestigious France Langue school; with the afternoons dedicated to exploring some of the many cultural attractions Paris has to offer including the Louvre, Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Musée d'Orsay, the Quartier Latin, and Napoléon's tomb at the Invalides. No visit to Paris would be complete, of course, without plenty of good food and our students enjoyed tasting various cheeses at a fromagerie in Montmartre, celebrating a student's birthday with some treats from Angelina (one of Paris' best known pâtisseries) and sampling a range of French dishes with their host families. À la prochaine fois!

In January, a number of 6th Form linguists attended the annual joint MFL Society dinner, hosted by St Helen and St Katharine. The guest speaker was Air Cdre Peter Cracroft from the RAF, Defence Attaché in Kyiv, who talked about his experience in Diplomacy and the value of languages beyond 6th Form. Pupils were then treated to a delicious supper and some lively karaoke from the pupils in French, German and Spanish. There was a real buzz throughout the evening, and it was great to have such a strong turn-out.



## Training ground

Two teams completed a challenging Duke of Edinburgh training expedition over a January weekend. The teams faced foul, wet weather on Saturday with good spirits and, following a very cold night, woke up to a frosty but beautiful sunrise. These students will now start to prepare for their Gold practice expedition in Snowdonia.

## British Physics Olympiad

At the end of the Michaelmas term, 7 Upper 6th students participated in the British Physics Olympiad competition. Run by Oxford University, the competition involves sitting a 3 hour paper on challenging Physics concepts beyond the A Level specification. Congratulations to all students who took part with Walter Man (Top Gold), Johnny James (Gold) and Tom Walters (Gold) worthy of particular mention for achieving the highest results.



## The Great Escape

On 29 January, a group of 20 boarders went to Escape Hunt in the Oxford Westgate Centre, to take part in the challenges of their escape room puzzles. Four groups attempted 2 separate rooms, and each had an hour to complete them. One group successfully completed Alice in Puzzleland in 31 minutes, giving them a position on the monthly leaderboard. All our boarders enjoyed the activity, and the chance to put their puzzle solving skills to the test.



## Eco Week

The week commencing 30 January marked Eco Week across The Abingdon Foundation. The initiative began with Abingdon School hosting a student-led event with our partnership schools to co-create a One Planet action plan to make our community more sustainable. Other initiatives included a focus on reducing food waste, making sustainable food choices at meal times and recycling empty pill packets. In addition, our Green Gym students continued to promote sustainable garden initiatives including using timed watering to minimise water use; recycling pots; home composting; using a manual grass cutter, rather than petrol or electricity run alternatives; and home growing seasonal vegetables.



## Philosophy and Theology Dinner on Nicomachean Ethics

Students from Abingdon and St Helen and St Katharine gathered together in January for a joint Philosophy and Theology dinner with guest speaker, Professor Luca Castagnoli from Oriel College, Oxford. Professor Castagnoli gave a thought provoking talk about Aristotle's seminal work 'Nicomachean Ethics'. Students then enjoyed music from the jazz band (which featured players including Mr Windsor, Mr Barnes and 6th Formers), before enjoying a delicious supper, hosted by Abingdon's catering team, Sodexo.



## A poetic evening

The Abingdon and St Helen and St Katharine Joint Literary Society welcomed esteemed poet and critic Ben Wilkinson as guest of honour to their annual dinner. Ben addressed over 50 guests with readings of poetry from his collection 'Same Difference' before being interviewed by Freddy Chelsom, who is one of many Upper 6th students intending to pursue English at university. The evening was thought provoking and fun, with a fiendish quiz accompanying superb food and service from our kitchen and hospitality staff.



## Pancakes anyone?

On Shrove Tuesday, student volunteers entertained the residents of Old Station House care home with their pancake flipping skills. Despite quite a lot of pancakes ending up on the floor(!), they were rewarded for their enthusiasm with some fresher pancakes and jam. Well done everyone.



## Art attack

In January, we welcomed artist Ian Murphy for a day's workshop in which 3rd Year students explored his techniques and way of creating marks on paper.



Ian gave 3rd Year, and other keen artists from all ages, a talk, showed them examples of his work and explained his process of creating a finished piece. During the workshop, students explored a variety of different methods that Ian uses to bring his work to life, including the preparation of the paper beforehand,

to different shading techniques and the use of water in his work. Students were shown how to use pens, graphite markers, ink and bleach (!) on different textured papers to create a more eye-catching piece. It was a very enjoyable, informative and inspiring experience.



## Boarders are game for anything

One weekend in January, some of our boarders paid a visit to Thirsty Meeples - a board game cafe in Oxford - where they were able to play as many board games as they liked, chosen from a library of over 2,700 titles. From Name 5 to Monopoly, there was something for everyone to enjoy and lots of delicious drinks and treats to keep everyone refreshed!



## Good for you

On 31 January boarders from across the 3rd, 4th and 5th Years attended an enrichment healthy eating workshop, delivered by CSgt Mike Beaton MBE and Mne Max Thompson - both from the Royal Marines Education Awareness Team.

Mike and Max gave a presentation on their experiences in the Royal Marines and spoke about the benefits of eating healthily for sport, education and life as a whole. They also spoke about the need to be conscious of how much sugar individuals consume. Mike then did a live cookery demonstration to show the students how easy and quick it is to make a nutritionally balanced dish.

## Reflecting on Technological Change in the Classroom

by Nick Ball, Maths Teacher at Abingdon School

It is nearly 20 years since I first qualified as a teacher and I have recently found myself reflecting on how the profession has changed over that period of time.

Of course many things have remained unchanged including the end goal of producing articulate, problem solving students who have a strong moral compass. So too have the 'bones' of the lesson - I have always used problem solving in maths lessons to really engage students in deep thought and I still do; and my feedback in order for students to improve remains formative as it always was. What is very different now is how I am doing these things. Much of that is a result of the advances we have seen in technology over the period and this has had a fundamental impact both on the learning experience for students and the way we, as teachers, approach our teaching.

Whilst I have always embraced technological advances, experience has also taught me that just because something is new and exciting, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is going to make someone a better teacher!

A good example of this is the interactive whiteboard which was just making its way into the classroom when I first became qualified. To this day, I am not convinced it 'added' anything in particular to my teaching - it was quite clunky and the pen quite often didn't write where I wanted it to. The projector, on the other hand, on which I could show accurate graphs and prepare problems for students to solve, proved to be an invaluable tool.

Most recently, the Covid pandemic has proved to be a major catalyst for change. Long periods of lockdown and homeschooling meant the sector had to reassess, very quickly, how we could continue to deliver an education to our young people in a virtual environment.

The introduction of Google Classroom as an online teaching and learning tool alleviated the need for physical presence, books or paper. Overnight, students were scanning and uploading their work onto Google Classroom for teachers to mark. With work submitted in this way, providing focused and formative feedback became



a challenge until I discovered MOTE - a package which enabled me to leave voice recordings in Google Classroom. I will confess that, initially, I was uncertain how effective my feedback via voice message would be. This all changed, however, when I heard Joe Wicks (aka 'the Bodycoach') use voice messages to communicate personal messages of encouragement to individuals to help them achieve their fitness goals. It was at this point that I realised Joe must be doing hundreds of these messages and that, doing so in this way, was not only quicker but also far more powerful.

So, I began leaving students voice messages using MOTE. I marked their work in the usual way using an iPad on the screen (ticks, crosses, correction etc.) but then, at the end, where I would normally write a long comment, I left a voice recording to talk through and sum up my feedback. It was so effective that, when we returned to normality post-Covid, I continued to do this for homework. Not one to rest on my laurels, I surveyed my students to see what they thought of this approach and I was blown away by their response. Every single student said they loved this method of feedback - they seemed happier to listen to my comments than to read them and, it also saved me time. Win Win.

Another evolution has been the visualiser which I also used during lockdown and also continued to use in my return to the classroom post-Covid. This 'document camera' connects to my computer and allows me to display techniques to the whole class so everyone can see the

content at the same time during the delivery of a lesson. It has proved far more effective to use during mixed mode teaching, than to stand at the front of the classroom with a board pen and whiteboard (which is what I previously did).

Most recently, a colleague has introduced me to 'Notability' on an iPad pro. Whilst still at the very preliminary stages of using this, I can already see the enormous benefits. I prepare my lesson in Notability and then go through questions using the iPad. It allows me to wander around the room (unlike the visualiser); I can combine my own drawings with other imported images; and then, at the touch of a button, I can share everything from the lesson with my class. That means my students are actually thinking through the solutions to the questions I have posed, rather than madly hurrying to copy information down from the board. This is particularly helpful for those who have additional learning needs, for whom copying information from a whiteboard can be tricky.

So, as I sit here with all those years experience under my belt, I recognise the significant and positive impact technology has had - both on my ability to deliver lessons and in enhancing the experience for my students. Whilst much has changed and much has remained, I am proud to say I still enjoy what I do and I am still embracing any change that might continue to enhance the educational experience - both for me as a teacher and for my students.

## Everyone's mad for Grease

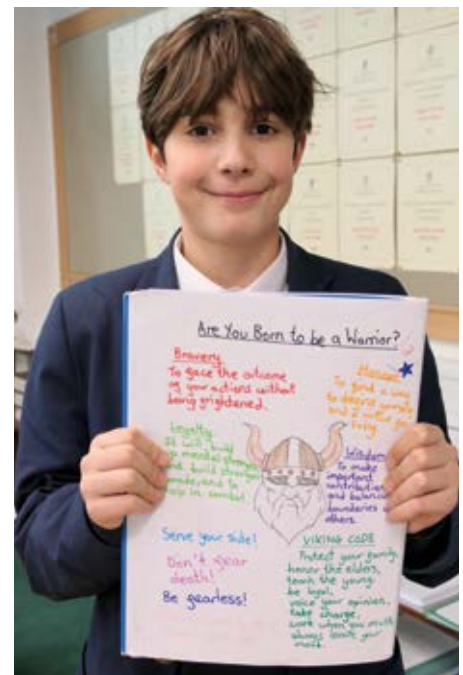


At the beginning of February, we were transported back to the 1950s and Rydell High School as a cast of 38 Abingdon and St Helen and St Katharine students took to the stage of the Amey Theatre for the production of 'Grease'. They performed to sell out audiences every night and stirred up an incredible atmosphere - the standing ovation to the tune of 'Greased Lightning' at Friday's performance was a particular highlight! Mr McDonnell, said of the production: "It has been a pleasure working with such a talented group of young actors - I cannot fault the commitment they have shown to the whole process and I'd like to thank them for all their hard work."



## Model United Nations

In February, the united forces of St Helen and St Katharine and Abingdon came together to debate the issue of the Rights of Protesters. The resolution, submitted by the delegate of Turkey, sought to prove that the country deserved to deal with its internal affairs without the interference of foreign powers. Initially, there was some backlash due to the slightly Turkey-oriented resolution, but after a rather zany joint amendment from the delegates of Brazil and the USA, the debate widened to include other countries on the question of how they ought to respond to an invasion of their capitol buildings. The amendment, which included protesters having to 'run laps' of an unspecified 'field', was passed and the floor was handed to Bangladesh, who wanted to minimise 'mass' gatherings in numbers greater than 5 people. After some more fruitful debate, the amendment was passed with immeasurable appraisal. To conclude the session, the delegate of Italy bargained to speak against the resolution as a whole, but was unable to win over the favour of the majority and, in the end the resolution, with rather unnerving repercussions, withstood the scrutiny of the general assembly and was passed.



## Showcase

Before half-term, the 2nd Lower School Work Exhibition of the year took place. Giving pupils the opportunity to show their peers a recent piece of work of which they are particularly proud. There were some great examples. Well done Lower School!



## German exchange

Over half-term, 28 students travelled to Germany for the Abingdon-Bielefeld German exchange. In Bielefeld, the group experienced life in their partners' family homes and attended school lessons; they visited the football museum in Dortmund as well as the Nixdorf computer museum; they took part in team building activities, created a German-English cookbook in an art project, went bouldering and - most importantly for some - won 7:6 in the England vs Germany football match! Many students commented on the amazing hospitality they experienced with their hosting families and enjoyed the short school days. The most successful aspect was the amount of German the group spoke from the start. Thanks to all those, including parents and staff, who gave up their time and made this exchange possible.



## Ghost walking tour

Boarders undertook a spooky ghost walking tour around the university city of Oxford in February. Led by a local guide, who regaled them with chilling tales of ghosts, ghouls and haunted houses, they were left with a sense of excitement and wonder, and a newfound appreciation for the rich history and spooky legends of Oxford.



## Oh what a show!

In early March, the Onatti Theatre Company came into school to put on a performance of 'Im alten Saloon', a Western inspired comedy acted entirely in German, for our 2nd, 3rd and 5th Year students. Highly engaging, the performances included cameos from several pupils, who put their acting (and German!) skills to the test.





## Oxford Monopoly

On 12 March, Crescent House boarders took part in the Oxford Monopoly Challenge. Teams competed to have their photos taken in front of Oxford's most famous landmarks, and scored points based on the game Monopoly. The winning team was the 4th Year, who managed to get to 25 of the 29 sights before making it back to the House before the 4pm deadline!



In March, 15 Abingdon students represented 3 delegations (out of 104 overall) at the biggest international MUN conference in the UK, held at Haileybury. Our students represented China, Israel and Slovakia, performing with intelligence and skill, and winning a significant number of awards, including overall award for distinguished delegation. Well done to them all.

## Charity begins at home...

Students, staff and parents have voted for **Thames Valley Air Ambulance** and **WaterAid** to be our nominated charities for 2023.

### Thames Valley Air Ambulance -

Funded entirely by donations, this fantastic charity brings hospital-level care by land and air across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. In the last year alone, their highly trained teams attended 3,158 incidents.

**WaterAid** - Since its inception in 1981, WaterAid has worked across 28 countries to provide clean water to 28.5 million people; and access to decent sanitation facilities to 29 million people.

Our fundraising has already started well with the home clothes day held before half-term raising £1,318 to date).



To celebrate the end of the mocks, 5th Year Spanish students went out for a delicious dinner at Dorindo's Mexican restaurant in Abingdon. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food and the Mexico-themed quiz - extra churros for the winners! There was also a lot of sombrero-wearing!

## Taking shape

It is with great interest that we have been watching the development of our new dining pavilion and the extension and renovation of Austin and Crescent Houses. Seeing these projects take shape over the course of the Lent term means we can now truly see how our new facilities will sit within our existing landscape and appreciate how they are going to enhance the school experience for our entire community.

Due to open later this year, the extension and renovation of Austin and Crescent School Houses, and the future renovation of School House, will offer our day and boarding communities vibrant, modern accommodation with purpose-built House rooms, extended study facilities and single bedrooms for our 6th Form boarders. In addition, our new dining pavilion will be a hub for school life, seamlessly changing function according to our needs - whether that's as a dining hall, cafe or theatre spill out area.

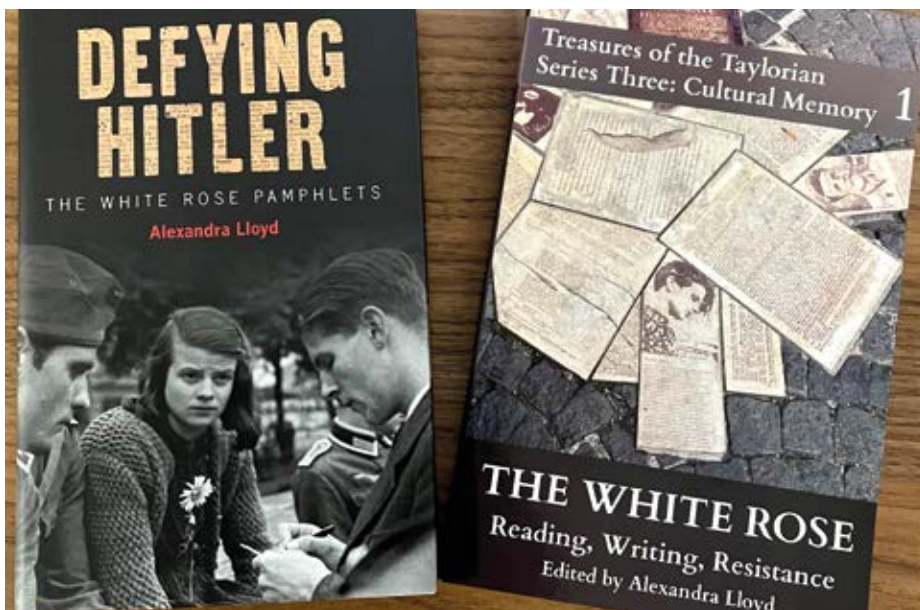
It is a very exciting time for the Abingdon community. Our investment in these developments is a testament to our commitment to provide exemplary and sustainable facilities, and by so doing, an optimal educational experience for our students.





## Ichthyosaur fossil

Abingdon students James Longworth and Alex Heffernan were given a fascinating insight into the painstaking work of palaeontologists when they met University of Portsmouth scientists carrying out an analysis of the ichthyosaur fossil. The palaeontologists demonstrated the techniques they use to classify and further understand the specimen, including 3D scanning and spreadsheet modelling of features to find similarities with the closest known species of ichthyosaur. The 3D scanning technique is used to reconstruct both computer and physical models and diagrams of delicate specimens, allowing them to be manipulated, compared and shared among researchers anywhere in the world. As well as handling some of the ichthyosaur fossil remains, James and Alex were also shown the huge vertebra of a predatory.



## Die Weiße Rose

In February, linguists in the 5th Year and Lower 6th travelled to Oxford to take part in a White Rose Project Day. This research and engagement initiative at the University of Oxford aims to raise awareness of the White Rose resistance group 'Die Weiße Rose' which was responsible for creating and disseminating anti-Nazi leaflets in Munich during World War 2. At its heart were siblings Sophie and Hans Scholl and the visit was particularly poignant as February 2023 marked the 80th anniversary of their arrest, interrogation and execution by the Nazi regime. For the project, students translated leaflets created by the White Rose group and used them as inspiration to create a poster protesting issues in the modern world.



## Inspirational talk by Al Sylvester

In January, Lower School pupils enjoyed a truly inspiring talk by adventurer Al Sylvester. Al told the story of how, after a career in RAF mountain rescue, he led the RAF's initial unsupported attempt on the South Pole. He spoke about how he went about building his team; the ups, downs and realities of life in the Antarctic; and the resilience he had to show to recover from the frostbite he suffered. After the talk, the audience had lots of questions for Al and one lucky (and increasingly very warm!) individual got to dress up in Al's kit.



## Road relay

The 52nd annual Road Relay took place on 13 March with 174 teams competing in windy conditions. This is always a great event in the school calendar that brings together all areas of the school community.

## Silver

Our silversmiths have been really busy this term in their Other Half activity. The students have learned how to saw, file, bend, solder, sand, texture and apply patina with amazing results.



## It's war!

In March, the English civil war re-enactment society visited our 2nd Year history pupils. They displayed their Parliamentary civil war paraphernalia, talked pupils through the causes of the civil war, explained how the methods of warfare evolved over the course of the war and even gave demonstrations of the flintlock and matchlock muskets in action. The pupils were thoroughly engaged, asked wonderful questions, and were delighted to have witnessed the civil war being brought to life.



## Joint thinking supper

In February, 1st Year academic award holders met up with students from St Helen and St Katharine to discuss the use of technology in the classroom. Attendees divided themselves into smaller groups to look into the pros and cons - both from the perspective of students and of teachers. After a pizza dinner, the fruits of the evening's research were presented.



## Lower 6th French workshop

During the Lent term, 3 teachers from the Alliance Française in Oxford gave a 2 hour workshop to the Lower 6th students. They looked at film techniques and discussed the film 'The Artist', before exploring the role of charity organisations in the French speaking world. The final session, on French phonetic exercises, allowed the pupils to practise a variety of tongue twisters.



## Annual work showcase

In March, School House students held their annual work showcase. Each student brought a piece of work that they were particularly proud of and presented it to a group of their peers from the 3rd Year to Upper 6th. Each group was led by an Upper 6th house prefect and the range of work showcased was tremendous - from paintings and DT to English poems and revision notes.

## UK Linguistics Olympiad

Abingdon's top linguistics competitors recently took on the fiendish advanced level of the UK Linguistics Olympiad to battle against the best brains in the country. Only a small proportion of these are awarded a medal. Abingdon did outstandingly well and secured no fewer than 11 medals including 2 gold which went to Louis Chan and Nelson Chan who have been invited to compete in the final round against the top 50 students in the country.

## Quizzical?

Congratulations to Mark Taylor, Matty Rolfe, Sam Wormald and William Walters for winning the 1st round of this year's Schools Challenge (online) against King's Taunton by 320 points to 200. The largest quizzing competition in the UK, Schools Challenge, motivates and rewards students based on their love of continued learning and the advancement of education. Best of luck to Abingdon in the next round.

## Enterprising young people

On 25 January, team Ox Enterprises took part in a Young Enterprise online Dragons Den style event. Three team members gave a detailed outline of their products, the marketing strategy and accounts to date. The judging panel was particularly impressed with the sustainability of the products, the partnerships the students have developed and the considerable sales successes they have had. Later in the term, they learned they had won the award for Innovation, with the fact that the products were also manufactured from upcycled materials contributing to the award.

# Abingdon Music



## Practising hard

On 25 January, 8 different chamber groups had a workshop with some of the music teachers, in preparation for the Pro Corda National Chamber Music Competition. The chamber groups involved in this workshop were string quartets, cello groups, a brass quartet and a piano quartet. 28 pupils played a wide variety of repertoire, including Mozart, Beethoven, Gabrieli, Kabalevsky and a few others. These workshops help to advance the standard of our musicians as well as build confidence. All of them worked really hard and we are proud of the dedication they showed.



On 28 February, the annual chamber music evening took place, providing 95 minutes of enthralling and varied chamber music, arranged by the students with no intervention or direction from staff. We heard performers from across all year groups playing a variety of genres including strings, woodwind, piano, cello and brass; and choosing between the more traditional Gabrieli, Bach and Handel, to contemporary composer, Colin Cowles, and everything in between! The concert was rounded off by a polished performance by Ryan Ng, Walter Liu, Yubo Gao and Thomas Zhang who were then presented with the Chamber Ensemble shield. Many congratulations to them and to all performers for a delightful evening.



## Rock Concert

Whilst the temperature outside was plummeting on a snowy March day, the heat inside the Amey Theatre was turned right up as the 1st annual Rock Concert was being staged. With a near capacity crowd, the 12 separate acts played with great energy and verve. Pieces ranged from Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and Megadeth's *Tornado of Souls* to Guns n Roses' *Sweet Child 'O' Mine* and *Don't Stop Me Now* by Queen. Congratulations to all performers and our sincere thanks go to the Amey Theatre Technical team for their superb staging of the event. Rock on!



## Annual Singers' Platform

The 1st Solo Singers' Platform since 2020 returned on 7 March. Focusing on a group of Abingdon's most able and committed singers aged between 14 and 18, a range of repertoire from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries was presented, accompanied by Mr Yeats. From Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Schumann's *Die beiden Grenadier* to Billy Joel's *Just the Way You Are* to *Feeling Good* by Bricusse and Newley, each performance was expertly executed with a great deal of style.



## Spring Concert

Our Spring Concert, held on 9 March, presented our musicians with the opportunity to show what they have achieved in their weekly rehearsals since January. Acts included the 2nd Year with *Alexander Hamilton*, a rendition of Queen's *Don't Stop Me Now* by the Gospel Choir; a medley of well-known tunes by the Concert Band; and the Big Band's repertoire which included *Gonna Fly Now* from the film, *Rocky*; *The Chicken* by Pee Wee Ellis; and Stevie Wonder's *Don't You Worry 'bout a Thing*. The Chamber Orchestra impressed with Klughardt's *Concertino for Oboe*; the 2nd Orchestra with Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, Gounod's *Melodies from Faust*, and the Theme from *New York, New York!*; the 1st Orchestra with Saint-Saëns's *Organ Symphony*. The concert concluded with *Danzon No 2* by the Mexican composer, Arturo Marquez which sent the audience dancing into the cold night air. Congratulations to all involved for a great concert.



## Solo Concert Platform no. 3

Our 3rd solo concert platform, held on 26 January, featured performers from 3rd Year through to the Upper 6th. From bagpipes and piano, to double bass and violin; the performances were wonderfully accomplished and included music from a wide variety of composers including Walker, Mendelssohn, Fauré and Schumann. Our congratulations for this exceptional evening of music making go to all our performers - and to our accompanist Lynette Stulting.



## Lower School Lunchtime Concert

In February, students in the Lower School were given the opportunity to demonstrate their musical talents in front of their peers in a Lunchtime Concert. *Alexander Hamilton* was sung by the 2nd Year students, in a preview for the Spring Concert, and this was followed by spirited performances from the Lower School Band and Junior Strings. There were also several excellent soloists, including an accordion player and a blind-folded pianist!

In February, an informal lunchtime concert included some lovely performances, including Brahms's moving F minor clarinet sonata played by David Hrushowski. Our cellists included Eric Liu, Alex Woolmer and Kayden Wong. We heard two pianists, too - Edward Winter and Yubo Gao in a beautiful piece by one of his favourite composers, Sakamoto.

## Pro Corda National Chamber Music Festival



Eight of Abingdon's chamber ensembles entered the Pro Corda music festival this year, competing against a selection of other schools. Five progressed to the semi-finals, with our U14 Cello Trio, qualifying for the finals. Well done to Kayden Wong, Angus Kwok and Harrison Wong for this accomplishment which reflects their hard work, the fine teaching and the high standards of musical performance at Abingdon.

# Abingdon Sport



## Cross Country

This term has seen great success in Cross Country participating in a number of iconic competitions including the gruelling 9.4km Knole Run (won by Johnny James in a time of 32:03); the Oxfordshire Championships (which saw Johnny James and Quinn Miell-Ingram finish 1st and 3rd respectively); the King Henry VIII Relays (in which Abingdon had to settle for 3rd place; and the B team 20th, beating the A teams of 15 other schools); and the Radley Relays (which saw all athletes run well, with the seniors and inters finishing 1st and the juniors, 6th).



## Squash

Having gone through to the 2nd round of the national competitions, Abingdon was competing against the top 8 schools in the country for a place in the national finals. Both the junior and senior teams enjoyed a closely fought tournament showing their strength in depth. At the end of a great afternoon of squash, however, the juniors eventually lost out to King Edward School; and the seniors to Wycliffe.

## 'The Beautiful Game'

It was fantastic to get a block of 11 fixtures against Dulwich on 14 January, particularly given the extreme weather conditions at the beginning of the year. The games were extremely competitive across the board with some fantastic goals scored from all teams. The seniors travelling away had mixed results with the 1sts and 3rds losing close fought matches and the 2nds winning in the tough conditions. In the U15s, the As were the only team to play and, despite good effort and a goal scored, lost. At home, the U14s and U16s had to deal with some strong wind and rain, however all were extremely competitive games.



## Swimming to Victory

The swimming team had a successful day on 19 January in a friendly gala against Harrow. The seniors managed to break their 3rd relay record of the season - this time the medley. In addition, both Can Tugcegin and Ethan Richards-Knight had outstanding individual swims, breaking records in the 50 breast and 50 fly. Due to some absences in the intermediates, junior swimmers swam up an age group. They all swam extremely well and their narrow loss, against Harrow's larger array of swimmers, proved their might in the pool.

Then, on 10 March at the Bath and Otter, the team managed a 4th in the country in the 4 x 100 free relay, whilst breaking a decade old record and going up 2 places from the heats. The final was incredibly tense, with Chris Skelton and Joe Watkiss putting out some of the best swimming of their lives to set an unbreakable record, placed 2nd in the country and being the 1st swim team to ever receive a national medal. Well done.





It's been a fantastic season for Abingdon Rugby.

Having won their quarter-final against Brighton College 50-24; and semi-final against Exeter School 25-12, Abingdon's U15 team played in their 1st final in the National Schools Plate competition. The competition is the largest schools rugby competition in the world with over 450 schools entering from around the UK. The final, held at the Saracens home ground StoneX Stadium took place on 14 March against King's Worcester - it was a valiant effort by the Abingdon team but in the end, the victory went to their opponents with a final score of 36-12.

Our congratulations also to Oscar l'Anson who has been selected for the Lambs Rugby U18 squad, where he will be able to showcase his rugby skills at representative level.

Finally, our sports scholars were lucky enough to meet OA Charlie Atkinson on 1 February when he came into school to talk to them about his experiences of moving from school sport at Abingdon to professional sport at Wasps and Leicester Tigers.



Due to unseasonably heavy rainfall and river flooding, the 1st chance our rowing crews had to be on the water was 21 January when they travelled to the Olympic course at Dorney. With all the age groups in mixed squad boats, and with little rowing under their belts, the emphasis was on rating low and rowing strong (rather than racing flat out) which saw some good early season performances.

Later in the term, 7 Crews travelled to West London for the annual Hampton Junior Head. Having just had 2 weeks back on the water, all the crews attacked the racing with full commitment. A particular highlight was a win for the J16 A VIII in a tight race over Eton, King's London and Hampton; but the 1st and 2nd VIII and the J16B also performed well finishing 2nd in their events.

In the final week of term, the Boat Club had a very successful couple of days bringing the winter head racing season to a climax. Not only did 70 students make the trip to London for the Schools' Head of the River in which they raced well in challenging conditions on the Championship course; but our J14 had a strong showing at The National Sculling head, held at Dorney Lake.

All our students can be really proud of the way they raced and have shown exceptional commitment to their training this term.

## Loughborough University canoe polo tournament



Two Abingdon teams participated in the Loughborough University Canoe Polo tournament at the National Watersports Centre in Nottingham in March. The 1st games were very chilly with ice being broken on the pitches before the start of the initial games. Abingdon 1 started their group stage with a 5-1 loss but improved to a close 2-1 loss to Sheffield.

In the last game of the initial round, they had a convincing victory over Warwick 7-0 putting them 3rd overall in the pool. Abingdon 2 got off to a slightly faster start in the tournament with a 1-0 victory followed with a 1-1 draw and a 2-1 close victory over Exeter.

Sunday brought the knockout round with Abingdon 1 starting off with a 6-1 victory against Liverpool and Abingdon 2 having a bye in the 1st round. In the 2nd round, both teams lost, 2-0 and 5-1 respectively. In the final game Abingdon 1 won 2-1 against Nottingham and Abingdon 2 beat Exeter. This placed Abingdon 1 in 5th overall in their league and Abingdon 2 in 7th place.



## Abingdon qualifies for water polo national plate final

It has been an impressive and successful season for our water polo squad, culminating in their qualification for the national plate final, for the 1st time in their history. This subsequently saw the squad placed 12th in the country. The top scorer of the season has been Can Tugctin who, over the past 2 years, has put an impressive 44 goals in only 26 games (stat padding), with Jacob Lambsdale being a very solid and strong keeper, making some incredible saves along the way. We bid a sad farewell to our Upper 6th leavers, who have all played integral roles in the development of the squad and its success.



## Basketball

It has been a brilliant season for our basketball squad. On 26 January, there was great team effort from the U16s who secured a convincing win of 65-45 over MCS.

Then, in February, the U18s secured an historic 86-36 win over MCS which included their 1st ever club dunk in a match, scored by team captain Marc Sheriff. The unbeaten season continues...



## British Shooting

Congratulations to Will Canter who has placed 7th overall in the British Shooting Junior Category for the Olympic Trap. Will is the youngest junior in the top 10, with many of these already competing at senior level and in senior GB Olympic training squads. Will has also been selected in the British Shooting Talent Academy for 2023. Some outstanding achievements to start 2023 - well done, Will!



## Badminton

"One of the best games of badminton we've ever played" commented a Winchester player on 4 February when the Abingdon 2nd VIII badminton team took on a strong Winchester opposition.

Despite a lack of 1st team players, there were great performances from Abingdon's 3rd and 4th pairs providing an exciting and hotly contested match with the final score 9-7 to Winchester.

A month later, the Abingdon 1st VIII took on Bromsgrove who, with a couple of convincing wins under their belt, started well.

However, a solid defence from the Abingdon players, followed by a real effort from our 1st and 3rd pairs, led to a final score of 10-6 to Abingdon.

# Abingdon School in Partnership



## Arts partnerships

It's been a busy and exciting term in arts partnerships which has seen the launch of the Oxfordshire Academy of Broadcast Journalism workshops. Led by professional broadcasters, Olly Hogben and Blythe Lawrence, students have heard about the challenges and thrills of a career in broadcast journalism; learned some more practical skills such as 'writing for broadcast'; and have even enjoyed a session on audio broadcasting (delivered virtually from Doha where Olly was commentating on a Champion League match!).



## Continuing to develop

The mutual value of partnership work was highlighted this term in 2 important events which promote the continued professional development of teaching staff.

On 3 March, staff from the Abingdon Science Partnership (ASP) attended the Oxfordshire and Reading Secondary Science Conference, held at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. The event provides local teachers with an opportunity to share best practice and to network. Following the conference's theme of encouraging diversity in science, ASP Lead, Jeremy Thomas, gave a formal presentation on 'astronomy for all'. The event also highlighted the resources and programmes on offer to local schools through ASP.

In March, the termly meeting of the Abingdon Partnership for Schools (APfS) Science Group took place in the Yang Science Centre. Focusing on practical science at the transition between Year 6 and Year 7, the meeting was supported by Adam Easton, Head of Science at Fitzharry's. Primary school science coordinators and Year 6 teachers enjoyed carrying out ASP's Lab Skills workshop, which is designed to increase confidence in Year 6 pupils about to encounter secondary school science labs for the 1st time. Carrying out the practical work themselves encouraged discussion in how pupils could be prepared for the transition, through the correct use of scientific vocabulary, practising safe procedures and the use of standard equipment including thermometers and simple glassware.



## Thameside Primary School Performing and Creative arts club

Every Wednesday afternoon, Jason Preece, Regina Engel-Hart and OA, Mac Adams, take 10 Abingdon students to run 2 clubs at Thameside Primary School. The music club is attended by 15 enthusiastic Year 5 and Year 6 students who learn the music and lyrics of songs by popular artists and shows; and the creative arts club sees Abingdon school students work alongside Thameside students to create artwork such as nativity calendars and Easter cards. Rob Southwell-Sander, Director of Partnerships, comments: "These valuable initiatives provide our students with the opportunity to learn to be role models and develop skills associated with listening and leadership."



On Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 March the inaugural RoboCon Oxfordshire event came to a climax. Launched back in November, students at schools around Oxfordshire have spent intervening months experiencing engineering first hand by designing, building, programming and testing their robots. Their work culminated in a 2 day competition last weekend. Teams also took the opportunity to work with mentors from Abingdon School ("pink shirts") who helped them make improvements to their robots. This resulted in a keenly contested final round with Gosford Hill taking 1st prize, a team from Europa School 2nd, with John Mason and Larkmead joint 3rd.



## Primary science club

The Lent term saw a record 30 pupils from 6 different primary schools attend our Primary Science Club. Towards the end of January, our youngest trainee Science Ambassadors held a session on 'dissection'. Showing great leadership and practical skills, they enthusiastically enjoyed helping the younger pupils find and extract important organs from the mackerel and sardines they were given to work on.



## Book club

Throughout this term, a group of students have run a book club for pupils at Carswell Primary School. They have discussed their favourite books, helped the Carswell pupils create a fictional character and listened to them read. One particular highlight was sharing their knowledge of different alphabets by looking at stories that have been translated.



## NT live screenings

In February, 100 students from Larkmead and John Mason Schools were welcomed to the Amey Theatre for the 1st dedicated arts partnership National Theatre Live screening. Students sat spellbound as they watched Arthur Miller's play 'The Crucible', as well as an interview with designer Es Deylin and composer Caroline Shaw about the making of the production.



## Preparing for puberty

In January, and as part of Relationships and Health Education, Natalie Hunt visited Leafield and St Peter's CE Primary schools to continue her series of workshops for children in Years 4 to 6 on 'preparing for puberty'. These workshops enable the children to learn about the physical and emotional changes in puberty in a safe and fun environment.



## Managing BIG feelings

As part of a series of wellbeing assemblies for Caldecott Primary School, Natalie Hunt spoke to children in Key Stage 1 on how to manage big feelings. By recognising and labelling feelings in our bodies (from tummy aches to feeling shaky), we can decide if the feeling is helpful and choose a strategy to manage it, such as taking some deep, controlled breaths, doing some star jumps or calmly colouring. The children enjoyed sharing some of their feelings from the day and gave examples of strategies that helped them.

The number of students in the **Abingdon Film Unit (AFU)** Other Half slot has been bolstered this term by the addition of new members from the partnership schools of Larkmead, Fitzharry's and St Helen and St Katharine. All these students are utilising their time after the end of their official school day to explore more about filmmaking. The work they are producing will be screened at the British Film Institute Southbank, London in September at a private event which is dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the AFU.



## French exchange

Our Year 8 pupils have had the advantage this term of practising their French with Julia Aubréville, a native-speaker from France who is also an 'assistante' in the Modern Languages department at the senior school. The pupils have been able to improve their speaking and listening skills, including refining their accents. We are very grateful to Mlle Aubréville for her help.

## Science week

APS pupils got really involved in British Science week in March. Year 6 attended an interactive show on 'forces' delivered at school by Science Oxford. The children were shown that, whilst forces can slow us down and hinder our motion, they can also be a necessity in engineering bridges. Students in Years 7 and 8 gained an appreciation of the type of detailed science required in forensic work as they undertook a workshop led by former Home Office forensic scientist, John Bates. John took the pupils through some of the methods used to gather evidence in crime scenes such as dusting for fingerprints, looking at DNA profiles of the suspects and the importance of cyber security; as well as the ongoing process of taking evidence to court.



## Waste not, want not

Inspired by an idea put forward by our pupil led Eco Committee, Abingdon Prep has introduced daily food waste monitoring, with the aim of reducing, and ultimately eliminating, food waste at school.

School Houses and staff are pitted against each other to see who can waste least. The school will then use the data collected to make informed decisions which will help contribute to waste reduction. Brilliant initiative Abingdon Prep!



## What good sports!

What a fantastic term it has been for sport at APS. Under the guidance of new Director of Sport, Elliot, our pupils have competed on the national stage in cross country, fencing, biathlon and squash. A particular mention to our U13 cross country team who came 3rd in the National Prep School Championships in Malvern. In other sport, our teams have honed their skills and grown in confidence with every pupil from Year 3 to 8 representing the school. There have been stand out performances from our U11 hockey team at the IAPS tournament hosted at Tilsley Park; our U12 and U13 football squads; and to individuals participating in high level teams in equestrian, swimming, basketball and table tennis.

## A healthy mind

Before half-term, APS pupils marked Mental Health Week with a wide range of activities. Each year group was challenged to come up with ideas and activities around the theme of 'wellbeing' and 'what we can do to relax'. Activities included yoga, dancing, colouring, mindfulness, art and sporting activities. All the pupils fully embraced the ideas and had 2 opportunities to try something different.



## Wow!

Following on from the assembly given by Head of Abingdon School, Mr Windsor on the subject of 'Awe and Wonder', our Junior Section were certainly awe-struck by the inspirational talk given to them by visiting speaker, Lauren, about her participation in the Ironman Challenge. Not for the faint-hearted, an Ironman is widely considered to be the gold standard of endurance triathlon racing which requires an extraordinary level of training and commitment. Lauren's parting message to our pupils was 'You can do anything you set your mind to, you just have to give it a try!'



## Inspirational artwork

Inspired by the work of English painter David Hockney, our Reception pupils painted their own interpretations of his famous work, Garrowby Hill. In this rolling landscape, Hockney's unique approach to multi-perspective painting is highlighted and, so now too, replicated by our talented and budding young artists in the making... Well done Reception.

# Abingdon News

## 15 minutes with Jeremy Taylor, Director of Arts Partnerships and the Abingdon Film Unit (AFU)

Films produced by the AFU tackle subjects from 'wildlife' to 'breakfast' and everything in between. Outward-looking, they rely on the creativity, adaptability, determination and persuasiveness of their directors - transferable skills cementing the notion that time as a member of the AFU is time well-spent. In 2022, the number of films made by AFU students surpassed 200, placing their filmmaking accomplishments between those of BBC Films and Lionsgate(!), which is no mean feat. Many have been screened at the British Film Institute's Southbank centre in London, quite a few have won awards, and now a growing number of AFU alumni are developing successful careers in the film and broadcasting industries.



The brainchild of then Head of Drama, Jeremy Taylor and renowned British documentary maker (and OA) Michael Grigsby, the AFU will mark its 20th anniversary this September. Dedicated from the start to the production of student films, the Unit has enjoyed the services of a team of visiting industry professionals who mentor and guide students in their work. To the best of our knowledge, this makes Abingdon one of very few schools offering its students this remarkable opportunity.

Asked how the AFU came about, Mr Taylor explains: "The AFU was formed as part of a drive to increase the range of extra-curricular activities on offer at Abingdon, and coincided with the building of the school's first dedicated classroom facilities for drama. My initial idea of the kind of films students might make was pretty limited, and was completely transformed when I met Michael Grigsby. His role in the shaping of the AFU cannot be underestimated. He was passionate about filmmaking as a means of giving people a voice – whether as the subjects of films or the makers of them. He encouraged AFU students to explore the world around them and make films that gave people the time and space in which to tell their stories, especially those who have been overlooked. So for him, filmmaking was both a creative and an ethical concern. Nothing excited him more than the idea that a film could play a part in changing the world for the better. If that sounds a tad worthy, Mike also had a tremendous sense of fun and mischief that immediately endeared him to AFU members.

"I hope he would be heartened to see how the AFU has evolved in recent years, not least in the way it has become a key part of Abingdon's arts partnerships programme, through extending filmmaking opportunities to young people from other local schools via its sister organisation, the Abingdon Film Academy.



"Ultimately, our role is to encourage students to strive for the very best results they can achieve and the films they have produced over the last twenty years are ample testament to their skill and commitment. I believe they also provide a striking record of our times that may one day be of interest to historians and researchers, which is why it's so exciting that the BFI has agreed to take into the National Film Archive and hold in perpetuity a significant number of AFU films.

"The variety of work AFU students produce is one of the great rewards of working with them. Over the last year alone, AFU films have featured an American Air Force drone pilot weighing the ethics of remote warfare; an Oxfordshire artist using her painting skills to help stroke victims; a community group providing a cycle training facility for young people; a portrait of a Russian orchestral conductor...and a delightful comedy about what boarders really get up to when they think their parents are on the other side of the world. At the same time, AFU tutors have been working with students at 3 local partner schools, where a further 14 films involving over 70 students have been produced in the last 12 months.

"Filmmaking has led to creative work in other areas. The Lent term saw the launch of the 2023 season of Oxfordshire Academy of Broadcast Journalism workshops, in which pupils learn the fundamentals of writing blogs, recording podcasts and creating television presentations. There's also been an OX14 playwriting competition (from which a member of the AFU emerged victorious!) and now there is a partnerships song-writing scheme in the pipeline. All these things, combined with the 20th anniversary of the AFU, make it a busy and exciting time to be involved in arts partnership activities across the town of Abingdon."

Much of this success will be celebrated at the British Film Institute's Southbank facility on the afternoon of Wednesday 13 September. Key staff and AFU members, both past and present, will have the opportunity to enjoy screenings of the latest AFU films alongside highlights from the Unit's back catalogue, whilst connecting with each other and reflecting on the many accomplishments of the AFU - accomplishments which simply would not have been possible without the foresight of a drama teacher and a former student.



## Connecting parents, supporting school life

Dear Fellow Parents,

It hardly seems possible that the summer term has begun and another academic year is almost over! ASPA has slowly been returning to hosting more events and as you can see, we had a very enjoyable quiz night in March. The other parent associations covering sporting and music interests have also been active and hosted various events and, on top of that, I know less formal gatherings of parents across forms and year groups regularly take place.

ASPA itself is run purely by parents and as our children progress up through the school, it is inevitable that successors are needed. If you would like to be involved, especially if you are willing to take on a committee role and help shape the future of ASPA, please do e-mail: [aspa@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:aspa@abingdon.org.uk)

Enjoy the summer term and, beyond that, the holidays.

*Richard Stone, ASPA Chair*



## ASPA quiz night

What a fantastic evening! Nine teams turned out, all ready to do battle over 10 rounds and it was certainly closely fought. In the end, there were only 20 points separating the winners 'Wine 4 Sanity' from the team in last place. A huge thank you to Richard Stone for hosting a very enjoyable, challenging and fun quiz; and to the catering team for a delicious supper.



Winners - Wine 4 Sanity



## ASPA contribution to CCF

We were very excited to receive an update from Capt Edwards that the items for the memorial wall area have been purchased and delivered! The team is now preparing to transform the area into a really wonderful space.

## Vacancies

We are looking for enthusiastic new members so, if you would like to join the ASPA committee, please get in touch [aspa@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:aspa@abingdon.org.uk)

# Abingdon Development

## Save the date: Abingdon's 2nd Giving Day 8-9 November 2023!

Abingdon's 2nd Giving Day will be on the 8 and 9 November, raising awareness and funds for our bursary campaign - 'Seven years to change a life'.

We held our 1st ever Giving Day in February 2021 when over 400 people in our Abingdon community helped to raise nearly £150,000 for bursaries at Abingdon. We look forward to sharing more details with you in the coming months.



## Sponsor a room in Austin, Crescent or School Houses

Abingdon's boarding development project is progressing well and you can watch the recent drone footage of the advancing work on the website. The wonderful opportunity to sponsor a room in Austin, Crescent and School Houses is now open. If you'd like more information please contact Alexa Broad or Harriet Alderman via [development@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:development@abingdon.org.uk). Further information on how to reserve a room and make a pledge are on our [Building the Future](#) website page.

## OA Lunch at Abingdon School

On 22 March, over 50 OAs who left Abingdon before 1970 attended a lunch hosted by Mike Windsor, Headmaster and Chris Pickup (OA 1960), Chairman of the 1563 Society. Some of those OAs attending had not been back to the School since they left so were delighted to be shown around by some of our prefects.



## OA Lunch at Mercers' Hall 24 January 2023

We are privileged to be able to hold an annual lunch at Mercers' Hall in London. In January this year we welcomed OAs who left Abingdon before 1970, who were hosted by the Chairman of the 1563 Society, Chris Pickup (OA 1960) and the Headmaster, Mike Windsor. Our philanthropic relationship with the Mercers' Company stretches back to 1563 and, in 2000, the School expressed its gratitude by presenting the Company with a stained glass panel of OA benefactor John Roysse's coat of arms. In 2021 the Mercers' bought a portrait of John Roysse and our OA guests were able to view both on their visit.



## Abingdon School visit to Hong Kong 22-26 June 2023

Abingdon's Deputy Head (Academic), Graeme May; Director of Admissions and Marketing, Jane Jørgensen and Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Alexa Broad, will be visiting Hong Kong from 22-26 June 2023. They are really looking forward to meeting up with parents and OAs and talking about the vision for Abingdon. They will be hosting an Abingdon reception on Friday 23 June at the Central Plaza - please save the date.



## Gold for Rowan Miell-Ingram (OA 2022)

Congratulations to Rowan Miell-Ingram on his outstanding 1st international win racing for the England U20 Cross Country team in Belgium at the annual Lotto Cross Cup in February 2023.



## University Reunion: Bristol and surrounding area

On Thursday 9 February, Old Abingdonians, along with members of the SHSK Society, met up at Zerodegrees in Bristol for a joint University reunion. Mike Windsor and Rebecca Dougall (Headmistress of SHSK) were in attendance.

## Informal Professional Networking Evening for OAs and Parents

Abingdon School parents and staff working in the finance, investment, law, technology and consultancy sectors are warmly invited to join Old Abingdonians at a networking reception.

Join us on **Tuesday 25 April 2023** from 6pm to 8.30pm at the City University Club, 42 Crutched Friars, London, EC3N 2AP.

Sign up is available via the OA Club website.

## An Audience with Ben Macintyre

(OA 1981)

On Thursday 23 March, Ben Macintyre discussed his latest book 'Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle' in which he gave an inside story of life in this infamous German prison for allied officers, challenging what we always thought we knew. Ben is a bestselling author whose books 'SAS: Rogue Heroes' and 'A Spy Among Friends' have recently been televised.



## The Road to RECOVERY: Finding treatments for a pandemic

On Friday 24 February, Professor Sir Martin Landray (OA 1987) returned to Abingdon to give a fascinating talk on his pivotal role in the RECOVERY trial (the world's largest trial of potential treatments for COVID-19 and the discovery that dexamethasone reduces mortality for the sickest patients) for which he received a knighthood for services to public health and science.



Martin Landray (centre) with former members of Common Room, Jon Gabitass (left) and David Crawford (right)

(Left to right) Tony Gray, Stephen Pavlovich, Meriin Dunlop, Mike Windsor, Durotimi Adebutu



## Entrepreneurship Panel Event

On Thursday 2 March, the OA Club welcomed back Merlin Dunlop (OA 1997 and current parent), Stephen Pavlovich (OA 1997) and Durotimi Adebutu (OA 2021) for a panel event on entrepreneurship. Students, OAs and parents were treated to an insightful talk about the highs and lows entrepreneurs encounter. Abingdon's Head of Economics, Tony Gray, brought his own entrepreneurial experience to the role of host, ensuring a high level of engagement with the audience.

## Forthcoming Events

**Friday 12 May** - OA Golf Day: *The Springs Golf Club, Wallingford*

**Friday 9 June** - OA 50s, 60s Dinner: *Villiers Hotel, Buckingham*

**Friday 16 June** - Cricket with BBQ and Bar for OAs, Pupils and Staff: *War Memorial Field, Abingdon School*

**Saturday 17 June** - Croquet, OAs and Pupils: *Whitefield, Abingdon School*

**Saturday 17 June** - Year Group Reunions, for leaving years 2010 through to 2019: *Abingdon School*

**Friday 23 June** - OA tennis, *Abingdon School*

**Friday 30 June** - Strawberries and Pimm's Event: *Henley Royal Regatta*

**Saturday 2 September** - OA Rugby: *Waste Court Field, Abingdon School*

# Abingdon Out of the Past



Abingdon Film Unit (AFU) celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Inspired by the renowned documentary film maker Michael Grigsby OA 1955, it was founded by Jeremy Taylor in 2003 and has now made more than 200 films. Under the guidance of professional tutors, the films range from the trivial and amusing to the historic and profound. In 2006 members of the unit spent three weeks in Cambodia making *Gravel and Stones* about the plight of people disabled by landmines.

Grigsby died in 2013 but his influence in the Unit lives on with the annual Spirit of Grigsby and Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker of the Year awards. All AFU films can be watched on *Vimeo*.

It is 70 years since Michael Grigsby (1936-2013) made his first film, *Ut Proficias*. He was 16 when he persuaded the headmaster, James Cobban, to support his plan to make a documentary about a day in the life of an Abingdon boarder.

Grigsby kept a meticulous log of the making of the film. It highlights the huge differences in filmmaking in the intervening 70 years – and the similarities: overspend and over run. The budget rose from £10 to £23 and the film wasn't finished until the day of the premiere.

*Ut Proficias* can be watched on the British Film Institute's archive site as can Grigsby's later film, *No Tumbled House* (1955), which was also filmed at the school.



From Grigsby's log book



# 63

This is the 63rd edition of Abingdon News, which is also celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. For the School this is a numerologically significant number since it was in 1563, on his 63rd birthday, that John Roysse donated £50 to create a new schoolroom that he knew to be 15' wide and 63' long and in which he intended 63 free scholars to be educated. The school bell is rung 63 times to mark special occasions and the date 1563 is embedded in the school's telephone number: 01235 521563.



The school bell

## Ut Proficias

James Cobban chose the title of Grigsby's film. The words form part of the motto that appears over the entrance into Big School – **Ingrederere ut Proficias**, enter in order to progress. The same words appeared over the entrance into the old 16th century grammar school and were repeated again in the windows of the Sports Centre in 2008.

To anyone who questioned the wisdom of giving the film an obscure Latin title Cobban would say that it hadn't done the Hollywood film *Quo Vadis* (1951) any harm.



Entrance into Big School



Sports Centre windows

