

The Abingdonian

2022-23





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2022 – 2023

Volume XXVI No. 6 Issue 327

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Editorial Foreword



Welcome to the new(ish) edition of the Abingdonian,

Before we get started, I would like to extend my thanks to Mr Taylor, Mr Jenkins and Mrs Wearne for acting as staff in charge of the Abingdonian, and Henry Roseff, Rory McLaren, Kwame Abayete, Morgan Eilbeck and Kajan Sivakumar for being of great assistance to the magazine. And of course, a huge thank you to Pranit Narain and Alden Lo for being an essential part in leading the Abingdonian team.

This year has certainly not been straightforward for the Abingdonian, as everyone in our team vanished when our GCSE exams came around, leading to us falling behind and having to scrounge around in order to rinse out every article we probably could. Therefore thank you to everyone who wrote an article, especially those who wrote more than one! It was more essential than ever for us to get these in on time and even with a great deal of help from people it was a sprint to get the edition out in (reasonable) time. Deciding to switch to a different editing software for this edition also did not come without its challenges, but thanks to the support we had from staff and each other we managed to make it work.

We were especially musical this year, with the famed return of House Singing bringing back the playful and competitive spirit along with some amazing performances. There were also some big drama productions such as Grease, which brought American romance and comedy to the Amey Theatre. The year ended with the school looking into modernizing for the future, starting renovation on two of our boarding houses and a building project for a new lunch hall.

Once again, thank you very much for everyone who played a part in the coming together of this edition of the Abingdonian - we hope you enjoy looking back at an eventful year.

Ainesh Jamuar 5MFFC

Head's Foreword



It is certainly a stiff challenge to try and capture the collective life of Abingdon in a single publication. As you leaf through these pages, I am sure you will be struck by the range and scale of everything that took place during the academic year. Life here is underpinned by an ambition to provide fulfilling and challenging experiences that will benefit every single one of our pupils and of course this would not be possible without the dedication and expertise of our staff, both teaching and support. It was thanks to their work that the School received such a positive report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate following their visit in May 2023, with headline gradings of 'Excellent' both for the Quality of Pupils' Achievements and for their broader Personal Development.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to one member of staff in particular, who not only led our preparations for inspection but who has also played a significant role in shaping the breadth and depth of the education we offer here. David Dawswell took the decision to step down as Second Master at the end of 2022-23 after 16 years of service. David not only set a great example to others by dint of the high standards of his teaching and his own participation in the Other Half but he also provided significant encouragement and advice to colleagues. David has worked with several Heads at Abingdon, all of whom have greatly valued his contribution and support, and it was a privilege to be able to thank him for all his work as a member of the senior team at the end of the academic year. I am delighted that our students continue to benefit from David's expertise and enthusiasm as a teacher of Maths.

In the summer of 2023 we also said farewell to another notable servant of the school in the form of Michael Stinton, who retired after an extraordinary 37 years in post as Director of Music. You can read more about Michael's contribution to the School inside this edition and we all wish him well for the future.

My thanks therefore go to all my colleagues who made possible the wonderful opportunities that you will read about in this magazine. I'm also grateful to the editorial team of The Abingdonian who have gone about the challenging task of capturing life in Abingdon in print. I hope you enjoy reading their work.

Michael Windsor

Michaelmas 2022



Upper Sixth Biology Field Trip to Margam

The Upper Sixth Biologists visited the Margam Field Study Centre in South Wales to expand their knowledge of the natural world and hone their practical skills. On the first day, the group compared two areas for differences in plant biodiversity. The following day, the students went to a nearby beach to practise various sampling techniques such as random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling. They analysed the various species of crustaceans and invertebrates that lived on the beach. The students began with null hypotheses and collected various samples across the beach to get a feel for the environment, returning the creatures to their original location before conducting random sampling in quadrats to count the number of individual snails and limpets in randomly chosen areas.

On the second day, the students headed

to the sand dunes at a nearby university. They learned about the conditions and factors that form the dunes, their environmental roles, and how they can demonstrate the principle of succession in ecology. Utilising stratified sampling, the students counted the number of different plant species at each marker, identified each species using key sheets, and recorded their data on shared Google Sheets via iPads. They also measured light intensity and wind speed at each location to determine if the distribution of plant species had any relation to the conditions at each section of the sand dunes. After returning to the Margam centre, the students used a Student's T-test to compare the data and draw their conclusions.

To end the day, the group took part in an eagerly awaited activity: mammal trapping. The traps were designed to be humane and included snacks and bedding to make the creatures' one-night stay as comfortable as possible. The following morning, the students inspected their catches.

On the final day at the centre, the group went to a nearby river to conduct experiments on the effects of



environmental conditions on the population distribution of aquatic species such as dragonfly larvae. They measured water speed, depth, and light intensity to determine whether their null hypotheses held true. The results of this investigation were used for a core practical back at school. The students learned a lot from this trip and are grateful to the teachers and staff at the Margam Field Study Centre for their help and expertise.

Ben Whitworth

House Singing

After two years of House Singing remission, 1000 singers, conductors, and instrumentalists all came together to rejuvenate the competition to its former glory. As usual, the repertoire became only more ambitious, with harmonies, accompanying bands and synchronised movements appearing in different performances. Clearly, there had been many rigorous sessions and uncertainties over practice, however, every house produced a highly enthusiastic and electrifying performance, encapsulating the sense of house spirit.

Traditionally, House Singing is a controversial topic, requiring the collaborative commitment of all house members to ensure the overall success of each piece. In particular, Donnelly's House came into this year's competition with a burning desire to overcome the Lower School dominance of previous years. Under Edward Bennett's direction, their lively rendition of Counting Stars was detailed and clearly practised with great care, with confident instrumentalists producing a polished performance. On the day, they were second to perform, following Lower School, the previous winners. Despite the rhythmic difficulties of the piece alongside nerves before the actual performance, Donnelly's were appreciative of the sense of community



spirit and pride over their production, leading towards their victory.

However, other houses certainly gave them a run for their money. Stockdale's, under the controlled direction of Oliver Smith came in second with I Want It That Way, capturing the 90's classic effectively. Oliver's combination of vocal soloists and their wild choreography produced a sense of enthusiasm that emulated the spirit of house singing - bringing everyone together. Moreover, the rousing performance of Some Nights by School House was particularly well thought through and handled under the experience of Oliver Glover. The part singing and confident accompaniment from the band set an extremely high benchmark for the following houses to match.

Nerves were jangling as Iain Donald stood up to give his judgements. His

comments were fair, constructive and supportive, but always straight to the point. In particular, he highlighted the bravery of the directors, soloists and instrumentalists who had stepped up to show leadership in the rehearsal process and final performance. However, special thanks should go to the efforts of Mr Stinton who inspires a sense of energy, enjoyment and enthusiasm into each rehearsal he visits. After starting the house singing competition over 25 years ago, he has always offered constructive, supportive feedback for our benefit. Although his time at the school is coming to an end, his invaluable contribution to this competition will remain for years to come.

Jamie Kilroy 6NDB



GCSE Physics and Engineering Trip to Munich

A group of 40 4th and 5th year pupils travelled to Munich on Thursday 13th October for a GCSE physics and engineering trip. It was the first time the school had run the trip, and it is safe to say everyone enjoyed every moment of it.

Landing in Munich at 11pm meant that we only managed to get to sleep at our hotel at 1am. Nevertheless, we woke up fairly early that morning and set off for an unexpected history tour by Mr Simmons around Munich city centre. He gave us an insight into the role of Munich in Nazi Germany and what part various different buildings played in the regime. However, as interesting as it was, it was not physics, and after we bought lunch in the city centre, it was off to the Max Planck Institute to begin our adventures.

Our first stop was the European Southern Observatory to explore the workings of the solar system through a mixture of large posters and interactive



games. Then, we split into three groups and each of us went to different areas of the campus: one group went to the Department of Mathematics to learn about bridge construction and solve problems; another went to the Department of Astrophysics where there was a planetarium display (not the only one of the day it would turn out) and a discussion about the research that the department is doing on black holes; and the other went to the Department for

Quantum Optics, where students visited a real research lab and conducted their own laser-based experiments. After this, we all went to a planetarium session run by the ESO for all members of the public, which broadly touched upon the components of our universe and its inner workings.

In an already packed day of activities, there was one final place to visit, which was the Munich Public Observatory, which is run by a group of volunteers





extremely passionate about space and astrology. Here, as the clock struck 9pm, we visited another planetarium, before we headed up to the roof of the building to visit the telescopes (which we unfortunately weren't able to use) to end an extremely busy day.

We then had to try to cram another two visits plus a surprise venture up the Olympic Tower into about 7 hours before we had to leave for the airport. As such,

it was another early start before a trip to the world's biggest science museum, the Deutsches Museum. We again split into two groups: one completed a robotics workshop where we visited the robotics section of the museum and then attempted to try to steer a small robot around a "circuit" using the robot's colour sensors, and the other was given free rein to explore the museum and everything it had to offer before both

groups swapped around. The museum had everything: from the history of musical instruments to a microscopy theatre and a section with optical illusions and experiments with light.

We then left for the BMW museum, which is part of a larger complex that includes the car manufacturer's headquarters and an exhibition centre. We were able to explore the rich history of the company through the many cars and motorbikes on show, as well as a Formula 1 display reflecting on BMW's short tenure in the sport, which included a race win with Robert Kubica. Another interesting aspect was what the future held for the company, with a focus on sustainability and innovation. All that was left was to scale up the 182m Olympic Tower and take in the entirety of Munich before heading to the airport and flying home.

Overall, despite the relative brevity of the trip, we had a great time and learnt a lot from it, and we'd like to thank Mr Simmons for organising the trip and the staff who accompanied us.

Pranit Narain 5NJOD



5th Year Spanish Trip to Granada

At 5:30 am on 17 October 2022, a group of roughly 40 students and four staff members gathered weary-eyed in the Abingdon coach park, passports and Covid passes in hand. Five hours later, they were 35,000 feet in the air on a plane to Malaga in southern Spain; a couple of hours after that, they were trundling through the Andalusian countryside on a bus on their way to Granada.

Granada (if you don't know) is a beautiful and historic city in the Andalusia region of Spain, with a rich and fascinating history dating back thousands of years. It is well-known for its incredible Moorish architecture, which is particularly well-preserved in the Albaicín area of the city. The most stunning example of it, however, is undoubtedly the world-famous Alhambra, one of Spain's most-visited sites, which sits proudly on the hillside overlooking the city's ancient buildings.

Having arrived in the city, we met our host families: families with whom we stayed, in groups of two or three, for the duration of our visit to Granada. The families were very welcoming, and gave us the opportunity to try a wonderful variety of Spanish food. Most spoke little or no English, giving us a fantastic chance to practise our



Spanish skills – which was difficult at first, but soon became easier.

Every morning, we all took part in Spanish classes at a language school near the city centre. We had lots of fun during the classes – constantly practising our Spanish while taking part in various activities, including designing our own countries (to practise the future tense) as well as writing Halloween stories (in Spanish, obviously!).

In the afternoons, we did loads of different things – from cooking (or trying to cook!) Spanish food (such as kebabs,

alcohol-free sangria and salmorejo) to learning how to dance flamenco (a very fun activity – though harder than many of us had expected!). On the last day, before our flight home, we also went to the Parque de las Ciencias (a science museum), where we had a fascinating tour in Spanish. The highlight, however, has got to be our visit to the Alhambra. One of the best-preserved palaces of the Islamic world, it was begun in 1238 by Muhammad I Ibn al-Ahmar, with many additions since. The architecture is stunning – with tranquil courtyards and magnificent towers rising high above the



city (the views from which are breathtaking).

We also had plenty of opportunities to explore the city itself. We walked up through the wonderful Albaicín area of the city to the San Nicolás Church on the hillside opposite the Alhambra (there were some pretty good photo opportunities there!), and we also tried some amazing churros con chocolate at

Cafetería Alhambra and Café Fútbol. As well as that, we had loads of delicious tapas (from mini hamburgers to berenjenas con miel to a Spanish chocolate mousse), which come free with every drink in Granada!

After spending six fantastic days in Granada, we had all learned so much, improving our Spanish immeasurably. The things I've mentioned in this article

are a mere overview of what was a fascinating and incredibly in-depth trip. It was a brilliant experience, and one which we will never forget!

Josh Price 5NJOD



1st Year German and Science Trip to London



On Monday 21 November 2022, the first years went on a joint German and Science trip to visit some of London's Museums. It was a 2-hour journey with the 72-seater coach (that only had one seat to spare as there were many people going on the trip) leaving at about 8:50am. We were all looking

forward to this amazing experience of visiting two museums and the Goethe Institut. At first, we went to the Science Museum and then to the Natural History Museum.

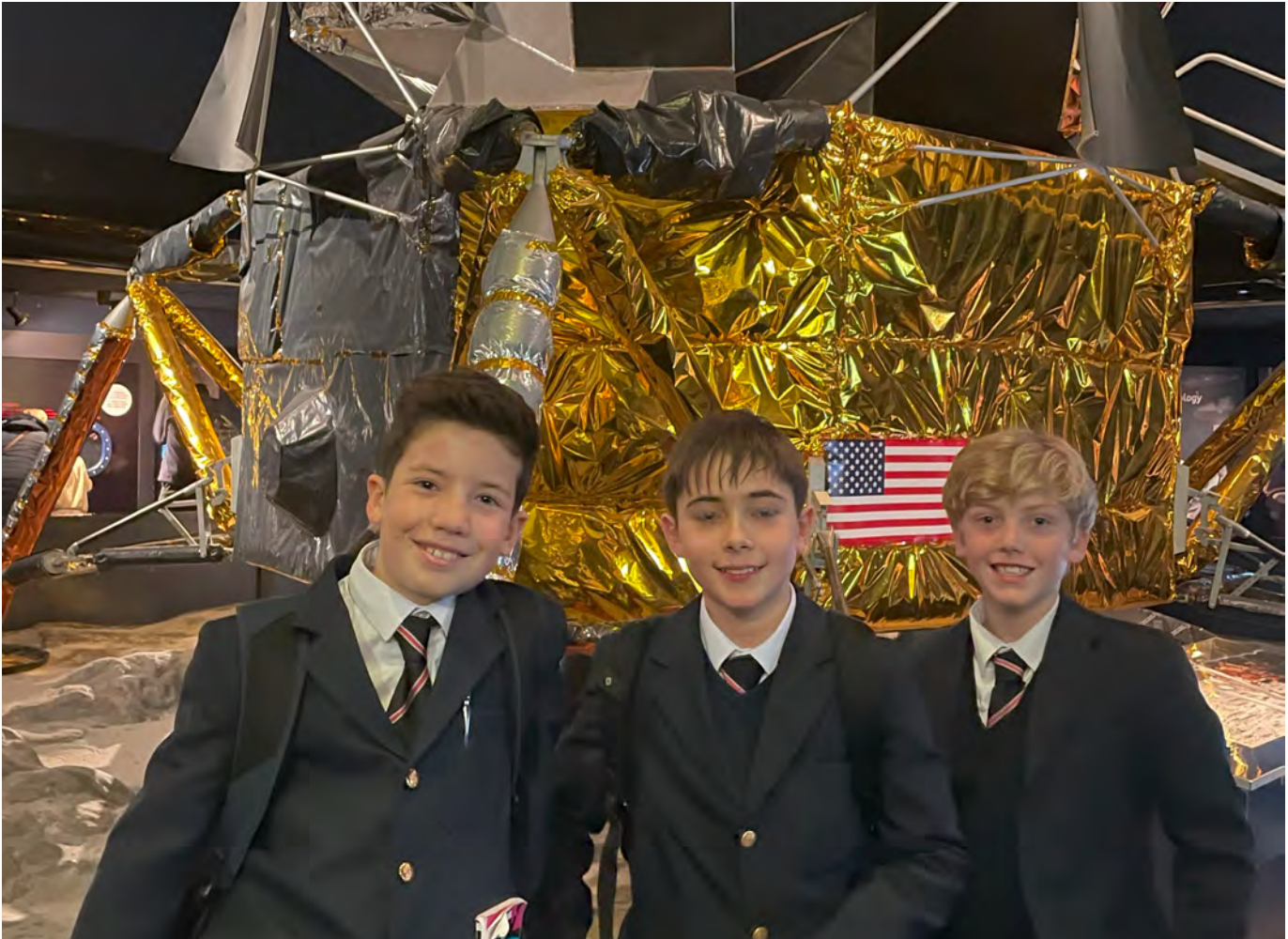
After the coach ride, half of the year split off to go to the Natural History Museum

and half went to the Science Museum. My group went to the Science Museum first. Following a short, but wet walk, we entered the Science Museum and were given booklets that had things we had to find throughout the museum.

Some of the most interesting things in the museum were the cross section of a Boeing 747 that was literally cut out of a plane! It showed the first class, economy and baggage areas. Also on the third floor was an interactive section called "Design your Future". This consisted of four displays and games that you could challenge yourself on. My personal favourite was called "design your own rover" which is when you compose a rover for Mars and race with the other rovers along a digital track. One last interesting thing was the space section, which had full size replicas of rockets and probes. You could learn about the first rockets and all about the moon.

After about 45 minutes of exciting searching, we met up on the third floor, for a well earned lunch, supplied by the catering staff at Abingdon. After that the two groups swapped over.





After lunch, my group went to the Natural History Museum. It was so fascinating, there was so much to see from the cool insects to the epic dodo. In the museum there was also a massive blue whale that was around eighty feet long! In my eyes the best thing there was the fascinating Dippy the dinosaur, towering at a whopping eighty eight feet over me, it felt so intimidating. As well as all of this there was also a very cool escalator, it made you feel like you were going through a meteorite, the front of it looked like lava, but then when you got into it you could see all of the burning rocks and the lava that would actually be in a meteorite. The museum seemed extremely big and had huge amounts of information. Lots of people finished the questions from the booklet relatively swiftly so went to the gift shops and had a look around the rest of the museum. The gift shops were fantastic with brilliant books about evolution and dinosaurs to captivating looking puzzles. In the rest of the museum it featured creatures like the oldest types of fish as well as a snake stone.

On this trip there was also a photo competition that took place over the course of the whole trip. There were all sorts of different categories such as 'the best photo to do with biology, the best photo to do with Germany and the best photo to do with physics' ; these are just a few of the many categories. In the Natural History museum there were some superb opportunities to take photos.

After the museums, we went to the Goethe Institut. The Goethe Institut promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and in international countries. It has an amazing community of staff and youth students from different countries of the world. It encourages cultural exchange and the study of German abroad. It also provides information on German culture, society and history. The Goethe Institut is named after a German poet called Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It was a fun visit and we learnt something too! It was a real eye-catching experience; the place had a white robot in human form with glowing eyes that directed you to

the library. Interestingly, the young people that had travelled to the Goethe Institut made a thought-provoking video. The video was really unique due to how it was presented as a daily newscast.

The excitement continued as we went downstairs. As we entered the room there was a massive screen with a seating area, the screen went live to show the details of the Goethe Institut which was fascinating. Amusingly, we had an amazing speaker who explained about the Goethe Institut. What amazed us about this speaker is the fact that he has 55 thousand subscribers on Youtube social media.

The trip was really fun and a great opportunity to make links between German and science.

Rafiq Dajda, Daragh Cassidy and Dean Dziva 1P

The Joys of Roman Spain

Having just returned from a school Classics trip to Spain, I can highly recommend the 'path less travelled'. While it would be a shame to rob pupils of the chance to visit mainland Greece or Rome, we plan trips there in alternate years in a four-year cycle (how very Classical!), leaving us to explore the rarer sites in the 'off' years. And it doesn't get much rarer than South Western Spain (at least unless your school risk assessment can cope with war-zones!).

I first contemplated a trip to this region leafing through the Oxford Archaeological series book on Spain (rather out-of-date and in need of a new edition); as I explored the sites further, I discovered that Spain has not been covered well academically in the UK, with most of the digs under Spanish leadership and without a history of foreign institutions getting involved (no British School of Seville, as at Athens or Rome); perhaps a further contributing factor is the lack of connection between the literary sources for the area and the archaeological material of the sites themselves, so that academics interested in literature-based historical study are not naturally drawn to the area. (However, I would recommend John Richardson's book on Roman Spain, which along with Fishwick's book on Merida and Tarragona is a lonely beacon of UK-interest).

This is all a terrific shame because the



sites are amazing, and actually, once you get into the historical/literary connections there is plenty to put the sites into context. While there are plenty of excellent sites across Spain, they are pretty spread out; combining them might prove impractical for a school trip. However, Seville and Merida were reasonably close to one another with enough further sites nearby to furnish a five-night trip.

The first port of call on our trip was Cadiz (Gadir to the first Phoenicians). Their settlement here allows the current inhabitants to claim it as the oldest city in Western Europe. Cadiz is the gift that keeps on giving archaeologically, something that must prove a nightmare

to anyone wanting to build anything in the old city. Many archaeological sites have recently been struck upon completely by accident when foundations were being dug for new buildings, including a Phoenician fish-salting factory (for the garum-lovers out there!) and a third of a theatre, now tucked picturesquely within whitewashed houses. The theatre was part of the development by L. Cornelius Balbus, alumnus of Cadiz, controversially gifted Roman citizenship in 72BC and good mates with Julius Caesar; he didn't just build a theatre in Rome in 13BC but also exported the idea back home to Cadiz, starting off rather a trend in theatre-building in the area (we saw five in total during the trip).





Seville (Hispania) was an important city at the mouth of the river Baetis, controlling an area that (along with the east coast of Spain) came under the control of Phoenicians early on, and later the Carthaginians. The final battle of the Roman conquest of Spain, wresting the area from the Barcids, took place nearby at Ilipa in 206BC. It was to keep an eye on the natives back in Hispania that Scipio created a colonia of veterans at Italica. This was to have important consequences for the future of the Roman empire. While Seville has odd patches of Classical interest (e.g. the houses under las setas, columns dotted about and a good museum that has been closed for far too long as it remains at the time of writing), Italica is impressive both in the quality of its mosaics and the wonderful amphitheatre that featured in the Game of Thrones series. Trajan is the great alumnus of Italica (and Hadrian was of an Italian family, though not born there); presumably they descended from veterans of the battle of Ilipa. Hadrian piled huge amounts of money back into Italica (like Balbus for Cadiz, only more so), creating the 'new' town (which is what is excavated today, the old being under the town of Santiponce) and the amphitheatre; at a capacity of 40,000 it was too big for the town (of perhaps 10,000), but shows the wishful thinking of Hadrian. Poorly preserved is the Traianeum, the temple to the deified Trajan, which was clearly a focus for this new (very posh) town. It featured the biggest bathhouse known in Spain

(although not particularly well-preserved), and some very large houses, which may have reached three storeys in height. The birds' mosaic alone could occupy my attention for a long time – budding ornithologists can attempt to name the 35 different species depicted. We took a stroll down to the theatre (in the old town), sadly open only for shows; it should certainly be on UNESCO's list of sites to adopt.

A quick digression on theatres, as we saw two more somewhat off the beaten track, first at Casas de Reina (Regina Turdulorum, the local pre-Roman tribe being the Turduli, who along with the neighbouring Turdetani were disparaged by Livy as the least warlike of the Spanish tribes). It used to be on the axis of the roads linking Seville and Merida, and Cordoba and Merida, but now is most certainly in the middle of nowhere. We discovered that our group constituted over 1% of the entire yearly visitor numbers. The theatre, however, is well-preserved and the findings suggested a thriving imperial cult even here. Even better as a theatre (and with a more fun story) is Medellin, named by Quintus Caecilius Metellus after himself. He wasn't bashful: he named several places after himself: vicus Caecilius, Caeciliana and castra Caecilia, which is modern Cáceres. He was an important general in the war against Sertorius and was granted a triumph alongside Pompey in 71BC. He also produced his own coinage with QCMP (the 'P' is pius; the name added because of his duty towards his father, getting him recalled

from banishment by the followers of Marius). All typical behaviour by a late-Republic politician/general. He is responsible for turning this hill-side town into a little-Rome, with its own theatre perched on the hillside, 50 years older than the one in Merida, down the road. Indeed, the changing nature of Spain can be seen in the movement of towns from a defensible position in the foothills of the Sierra Morena (e.g. Medellin) in the 70s BC, when Spain was definitely still a war-zone, down to the plains by the 20s



BC when Merida was settled under Augustus following the Cantabrian war. The theatre itself has a beautiful view that almost defies the knowledge that, as of every Roman theatre, and unlike Greek theatres, the scaenae frons behind the stage entirely blocked it out! Go up to the castle above for a great view down into the theatre.

And so to Merida, Emerita Augusta to the Romans, meaning 'the veteran town built under Augustus'. Augustus had set it up after the Cantabrian war against the tribes of northern Spain. This was a very dirty war lasting 10-years and requiring eight legions; two of them, the fifth *alauda* and tenth *gemina*, raised by Caesar in Gaul. Seville is a town with everything that could be bracketed under the label 'what the Romans did for us'. It certainly deserves a couple of days; some sites are entirely free, and all the others can be entered under a reasonably priced all-inclusive ticket. It is a great place for walking around and getting a sense of the street-plan of a castra which became a town. The *cardo* stretches north-south from the modern Plaza de Toros (and nearby a posh 1st century BC house, the so-called house of the Mithraeum, and a necropolis), past the temple of Diana (which had nothing to do with Diana) at the corner of the old forum, under the arch of Trajan (which had nothing to do with Trajan but marked the entrance to a forum of the imperial cult), and finally out next to los Milagros, the miraculous aqueduct and smaller Roman bridge. The *decumanus*, on the other hand, travels from the west across one of the best-preserved Roman bridges anywhere (a good view is from the Alcazaba fortress), alongside

the modern Plaza de España and passes out next to the Roman hippodrome to the east. The town itself still feels about the same size as the Roman one, with cramped streets that mimic the width of the original ones.

Merida's theatre is one of the best in Europe and, unusually, sits right alongside the amphitheatre in the ancient equivalent of an Olympic Park. Inscriptions show that the theatre's sponsor was Agrippa, who was important to Augustus' victory in the Cantabrian war (Augustus himself being not so useful as a commander). The scaenae frons is well-preserved and the post-scaenium area (porticoed courtyard behind the theatre) was not something I'd seen before. The amphitheatre too was particularly interesting for the fact that it abutted the city-walls and therefore needed to solve the problem of restricted entrances since it lacked a vomitoria. This was ingeniously solved by towers allowing access from outside the walls. Beyond the walls was another posh villa with some lovely mosaics, one featuring a trio treading the vintage and another a collection of different fish.

Merida museum was our only big museum on the trip (the one in Seville being closed), but it is a superb museum and a beautiful building in its own right (the bricks and arches of the central hall reminiscent of the *opus latericium* style). The bays off the central hall are themed 'religion', 'entertainment', 'burial' etc., and the huge mosaics run up the walls, so that they can be viewed from the ground, first, or second floor. There is also an almost perfect bust of Augustus veiled, a copy of the *via Labicana* type,

and an interesting collection of coins. Head downstairs to the crypt to see a length of Roman road and an unusual four-way sarcophagus.

On our trip back to Madrid to fly home, we made a virtue out of the necessity of a long coach journey by stopping off at Bohonal de Ibor, a collection of columns and a temple front seemingly randomly beside the road on the banks of a huge reservoir built under Franco. The original town of Augustobriga had been in the valley, but the remains were carefully removed from the threat of flood-waters and transported to a picturesque bank amid the Spanish oak-trees; a very tasteful (if historically inauthentic) example of anastylosis, and good fodder for the trip photos.

As often occurs with trips, there were things we missed out that I would have loved to have seen. The Monday off-day in Spain (when sites are *cerrado*) was a pain, and meant we didn't get to see Baelo Claudia (beach-side Roman town). I'd recommend travelling on a Monday, if you can. Even so, the five-night trip was full of exciting sites. Credit should certainly go to Hellene for being willing to step into the unknown, enabling an ambitious itinerary, and sorting out great hotels and guides for us.

Toby Pinnington 6JMA



Badminton



The badminton squad started this season off strongly with a great win against Wellington College. Despite losing the core members from last year's team, the new members quickly demonstrated their abilities in their first game: Archie Lok's defence, Nikhil Tennant's awareness of the space, Will Sue's power, Harrison Cruikshank's netplay, Thierry Tsai's and Alex Fleming's smashes and many other great qualities. However, one of our aces, who was not able to attend the first game, announced his presence and his skills when the team played against Magdalen College School. Due to the absence of many first team players, Gordon Chan stepped up and led the inexperienced players to put up a great fight against the opponent, although they had to swallow the defeat at the very end.

We soon faced one of the toughest opponents on the calendar - Harrow. With the return of the majority of the first team members, the squad was able to bring a close game, but it was on the brink of losing. Tom Walters, the vice captain, used Leon Guan's vocal empowerment to withstand the pressure and helped the team to draw against Harrow with the final scoreline being 8:8 in our first encounter.

Every member of the squad showed their uniqueness and value. This brought

great depth to the team, and it was undoubtedly a difficult process to decide who could put on the 1st team shirt, which has a brilliant design that matched its price. With this pleasant trouble, the team only suffered two defeats, against Harrow and Winchester, in the following seven games prior to an annual event - a game against Sankey Academy that put the singles and doubles skills of each and every player to the test. The impressive performance of all the players helped the team to claim victory once again.

After careful consideration, Gordon Chan, Alex Fleming, Archie Lok, Tom Walters, Alex Wan, Will Sue, Nikhil Tennant and Leon Guan were sent off to our final fixture of the year, the Wellington Quad, a tournament where Wellington, Eton, Harrow and Abingdon compete against each other. In spite of the great effort shown by our players, especially our undefeated first pair - Gordon and Alex, we narrowly came second by one point less than Harrow. Well done to Harrow, we definitely won't mention the fact that you got easy points because a team left early and gave you a forfeited match.

The writer of this article was this year's squad captain, Leon, a loud and cheerful person who did not devote any skill points to smashing. He was initially uncertain about what values a captain

should possess, but with the help of the squad alongside our excellent coaches, Mr Allen and Scott, the whole experience has been wonderful. I am very grateful to all the members of the team and I wish you all the best in the future.

Leon Guan 7BDS

This has been a really wonderful season and it has been great to see the team step up. After the departure of some players with prodigious skill it was superb to see a slightly younger cohort of players moving up into their positions in the 1st VIII. Many of our players this year still have a couple more years left at Abingdon and I fully intend to exploit their talents as the club moves forward. Leon captained the squad with determination and enthusiasm. He was selected because he leads by example and he embodied this important characteristic for the entirety of the season. His shoes will be difficult to fill next year. The club wishes all the best to our departing students, we hope to see them coming back as Old Abingdonians to sporting events, and look forward to the upcoming 2023/24 season.

Tom Allen

Physics Trip to Geneva

At the start of the Christmas break, a group of 48 travelled to Geneva in Switzerland to visit the varied scientific facilities in the region. During the time there the students learnt about the historical significance of Switzerland in the development of science and got to see the cutting edge technology that is pushing forward the boundaries of modern physics.

On the first proper day, we took the tram service to visit the Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire or CERN where the LHC is located. The Large Hadron Collider is the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator making headline news with the discovery of the Higgs boson in July 2012. The 22 member countries of CERN spent around 1 billion euros in building the equipment and conducting the experiments. Protons are accelerated by supercooled Niobium-Tin magnets to 99.99999991% of the speed of light around a 27 Km tunnel; they make this journey 10,000 times a second. The protons are sent in packets so that an alternating magnetic field will boost their speed, one packet is sent clockwise and the other counter clockwise, they collide at set points where the detectors are placed. When they collide a lot can happen, through Einstein's famous $E=mc^2$ equation, energy and matter are related so the smashing of two packets of protons creates a lot of energy and



subsequently lots of different particles to be released. Now the job of the massive detectors and even bigger supercomputers is to try and figure out what happened. For every 1 billion protons that collide only 1000 Higgs particles are produced so the chance of observing one is very low. Luckily there are 600 million collisions per second to increase the chances. The downside of having so many collisions is that there is huge amount of data that need to be processed at the data centre, so much so that it has to export its data to other supercomputers. The astronomically large numbers associated with the LHC were awe-inspiring and truly it's a marvel of modern technology. The highlight of the visit was getting to see the antimatter factory, the only facility in the world producing antimatter at this scale.

Other interesting visits included the Swiss Plasma Centre studying the stability of plasma for use in fusion systems helping to research how to effectively achieve nuclear fusion in power plants such as ITER and DEMO. The Geneva observatory was also a very interesting visit and the research done there has been responsible for finding many new exoplanets and houses modern telescopes. The Verbois hydroelectric dam helps contribute to producing 56% of Swiss electricity with the other two hydroelectric dams in the country. As well as exploring the sites from Geneva the group travelled to the city of Lausanne to visit the EPFL university and the exhibitions there.

Ben Simmons



U15s Rugby Success

The U15As began their rugby season with a strong performance away to Marlborough, but unfortunately, their hooker, Archie Trietline, suffered an injury that ended his Michaelmas rugby season. The team played against their local rivals, Radley, in the first round of the National Cup and, with the help of their supporters at their first-ever game on Waste Court, they managed to secure a 24-24 draw. However, Radley advanced to the next round due to away rules. Despite the initial disappointment, the team later realised that the outcome worked out well for them in the long run.

The team faced a few mixed fixtures, with the injury count increasing along the way. As a result, they travelled with a mixed A/B/C squad to Norfolk, where they played in the Langley Under 15 National Rugby Festival. The team was tested by top rugby schools such as Brighton College, Wellington, and Merchiston, but they emerged victorious as the winners of the Vase competition.

In November, the team played in the first round of the Plate competition, and they secured a convincing away win against St Clement Danes. However, they suffered a clumsy away loss to Eton just three days later. The team bounced back and secured a closely contested 14-5 win against Radley at Cox's Field.



At the end of November, the team won a solid victory over Reading Blue Coat, which propelled them into the third round of the Plate. They faced the Crypt School on Waste Court at the start of December, and they gained an early advantage, which set the tone for the rest of the game. They ensured their dominance in the second half and took the win. This sent them through to the National Plate quarterfinals against Brighton College, a team they had beaten at the Langley Festival just two months prior.

During the Christmas break, the team had six weeks to prepare for their quarterfinal fixture against Brighton. Once again, their supporters lined the touchlines and bolstered their performance, allowing them to secure a convincing win over a strong Brighton side.

The team knew that their semifinal draw against Exeter would be their toughest challenge yet. The team from Devon led at halftime, but the coaches' encouragement and intense support from their fans helped the team secure their place in the final.

In the final, they played against King's School, Worcester, at the StoneX stadium, home of Saracens. The team arrived well-prepared and excited to play at this premiership venue. Although they did not get the result they wanted, the whole experience was surreal and one that the squad will never forget. The chance to represent their school in the final of a national competition for the first time was an incredible achievement for the players and a credit to the hard work of their coaching staff.

Ned Hold 4DLJ



Lent 2023



Grease

After a 4 year break from musical theatre, there was much anticipation when the Abingdon Drama Department announced it would be returning with 'Grease' for 2023 after its last sellout musical 'Loserville'. Expectations were high, which was immediately reflected in the flood of eager Greasers signing up for a place in the show. Auditions were quickly underway with extraordinary turnouts, testing both acting and signing. Much talent was on show, although an array of dodgy American accents made me wonder whether some thought Rydell High was set in Liverpool. Despite the slight mismatch in singing ability, with the St Helen's students quickly humbling the Abingdon students (a recurring theme for the rest of the production), there were certainly some hidden gems amongst the group. After an intensive callback process, the cast was released, and rehearsals were underway.

Rehearsals began as three a week, split into dancing, singing and acting - however these were quickly reduced to two a week after Mr McDonnell's capacity to watch Felix Kind's dancing

wore thin. Musical Director Mr Fox's energy and passion made singing rehearsals extremely enjoyable. As a full cast we began to practise whole ensemble numbers, such as 'You're The One That I Want' and 'Summer Nights'. For solo numbers, Mr Fox taught 1-1 sessions outside rehearsals - a slightly more frequent and necessary practice for the Abingdon students. Despite Mr Fox's best efforts to get us to sing in harmony, the practice quickly exposed those whose singing experience had ventured little past rugby chants and karaoke bars. Immediate difficulties were posed by some cast members over the pronunciation of poignant lyrics such as 'rama lama lama ka dinga da dinga dong' or 'shoo-bop sha wadda wadda yippity boom de boom'. Nevertheless, between painful grimaces from Mr McDonnell, steady progress was being made.

Dancing rehearsals were certainly the most anticipated amongst the group. The dance numbers were directed ardently by Miles Burke, whose enthusiasm first seemed daunting, but quickly made himself into a cast hero. I will never forget the first dance rehearsal. The whole cast turned out in full with a

buzz of excitement amongst them, with no one knowing what to expect. We began with 'Shaking at the High School Hop', and Miles took little time in warming us in. Within a few minutes, almost 50 bodies were throwing themselves around on stage attempting 'the chicken' and the 'shimmy'. Miles' patience and tolerance was to prove invaluable - how he managed to get us from a complete mess into a coordinated, somewhat synchronised group amazes me. The method by which we learnt the dances was through filming ourselves in the rehearsal and watching it back - a process which proved to be a little flawed when discovering on rewatch that the entire cast are executing completely different moves at the wrong times. 'Grease is the Word' might well have been choreographed by Dylan Kaeupeur, who successfully managed to cover the entire camera on one recording, blocking everyone in shot but himself - perhaps this explains why the entire dance was changed just a few days before the performance.

After a long Christmas break, the cast returned with the performance less than four weeks away! Suddenly, what seemed like a distant and slightly illusory

task had arrived very quickly and become very real. Rehearsals picked up fast, as did Mr McDonnell's stress levels. Sunday rehearsals were quickly introduced, and despite a few moments of poor time keeping from certain members of the cast, the production was beginning to come together. Mr Lloyd-White and the tech crew began to work their magic, and before long the Amey Theatre was transformed into Rydell High, elevating excitement amongst everyone involved. Miss Fever and Miss Hutton also began experimenting with hair and makeup, producing a mixture of questionable quiffs and exposed foreheads. Whilst some were pleasantly surprised with their new found look, others appeared to be imitating an extremely low-budget Elvis tribute.

Before long dress and tech rehearsals were upon us, and with the news of a sold out theatre on all 3 performance nights, nerves were rising. Once costumes were on, set was in place and the band was firing, the play was brought to life in a flurry of flamboyant dancing and striking colours. After two full run throughs, everyone was itching for performance night.

Going into the performance on the 1st February, the cast were excited to show a sold out audience what we had been working on since the start of the academic year. The mood in the camp was one of positivity after a successful dress rehearsal. The stage was set and at 19:00 the curtains were opened and lights went up. The performance was an



exhilarating one to perform in and all of the cast and crew put on a spotless performance. The round of applause at the end was one that motivated us, spurring on the momentum for the days to come.

With the nerves and adrenaline simmering from the first night, attention moved to Thursday. Thursday saw the same atmosphere from the audience, one that laughed at jokes and clapped enthusiastically at the end of numbers. Then came the arguably biggest night of them all, Friday. With word spreading around Abingdon and another sold out audience, the pressure was there to keep the reputation of this performance going. Like in football when the crowd is called the '12th man,' the same could be said for the audience on the third and final night. They were electric from

minute one and when the curtains were drawn there was an applause for the 5 T-Birds standing frozen ready to sing, "Grease is the Word." We were then treated to a standing ovation during the curtain call.

Grease was a once in a lifetime opportunity. From the cast, to the crew to the band, it would have not been possible without the hard work put in by everyone involved. Mr McDonnell's directorial masterclass shall always be remembered.

Will Grice 7EMH and Hugo Stone 7AGH



German Exchange



I was very happy to take part in the German exchange this school year. Abingdon School has taken part in an exchange programme with the Ratsgymnasium (a grammar school) in Bielefeld, North West Germany, for over 50 years. The programme is normally open to pupils in the 4th year. However, since the exchange had been cancelled for the past 2 years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was open this year to pupils

in the 5th and 6th years as well.

During the Summer Holidays we were put in touch with our German partners. The idea was to send emails in each other's first language (e.g. I was sending emails in German) to improve and get to know each other.

The German party came to Abingdon in September. On some days we took our German partners to lessons with us and

on other days the German pupils went on trips to Oxford, Bath and the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, learning about England and its past.

In February 2023 the Abingdon party went to Bielefeld. As soon as we arrived in Germany we all spoke German to the best of our abilities, even answering in German the questions the German customs had to ask about our trip! The



school day at Ratsgymnasium Bielefeld is a bit shorter than the school day at Abingdon, starting at around 7:50 a.m. and ending at either 1 or 2 o'clock depending on the day. Instead of eating lunch at school, there are 2 roughly 10 minute breaks where you go outside and play a sport or eat a snack. German pupils generally live a lot closer to the school than people who go to Abingdon school: I could walk with my German exchange partner to school.

We spent some of the school day in German lessons, helping to contribute. I was pleased in a physics lesson when I was able to contribute and answer a question in German about the specific heat capacity of water and also in a German lesson analysing some of Goethe's poetry.

On other occasions we went on excursions. Sometimes the German party were lucky enough to go on the excursions with us. One of our earlier excursions was exploring Bielefeld. Bielefeld has a historic centre with an old town hall and market square with some mediaeval buildings. Nearby there is also Sparrenburg Castle which dates back to the 13th century. I also went past the Dr Oetker Pizza Factory and saw old churches like Altstädter Nicolaikirche.

Another very interesting excursion was

to the Nixdorf Computer Museum in Paderborn. It is the largest computer museum in the world and we saw 4000 year old wax tablets, typewriters, calculating machines, computers and robots. There was a wide variety of things to see including the £1 million Apple Macintosh 1 computer. There were also many interactive displays and a particularly popular one was the flight simulator complete with a throttle quadrant and joystick. We also saw a range of robots and on our museum tour learnt about the history of computing and how robotics has evolved. Another fun excursion was to the Climbing Centre in Bielefeld where we experienced bouldering - climbing on a wall without being attached by a rope. There were crash mats underneath in case anyone fell off and we were taught how to fall and land safely. There was also a visit to the football museum in Dortmund.

At the weekend we went on excursions with our host families. I was lucky enough to be taken to Berlin. I saw the remains of the Berlin Wall, went inside the Reichstag Building and saw famous landmarks such as the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint Charlie. I bought a small stone from the Berlin Wall as a souvenir.

On the last day there was a friendly football match for the pupils involved in the German exchange: England against Germany. It was very close, but the Abingdon team won 7:6. At lunchtime that day some of us went on farewell lunches with our exchange partners. We were shocked to hear the price of the tap water!

I recommend going on the German exchange if you study German as it is a great opportunity to practise speaking the language and become a lot more confident in your ability. It is also an opportunity to make new friends and to experience a very different school system and culture. It was an experience that I will never forget and I am grateful to Miss von Widdern for organising the exchange and putting together the programme for our time in Germany.

Philip Ashton 5MFFC



Basketball

Basketball has quickly become one of the most popular sports within the school. Walking past the MUSA at breaktime, lunch or period 8, you are likely to see a quick pickup game of basketball going on. It has been really impressive to see even those from younger years in the school growing their passion towards the sport and getting stuck in playing against those who may be 3 or 4 years older than themselves.

It is clear to see much of this practice and skill acquired have been translated onto the court within matches. The U16s have developed as a side this year with impressive wins against strong MCS and Stowe sides, with the highlight of the season for the U16s being putting 65 points past MCS. It has also been excellent to see many of the U16s players progressing to make debuts for the U18 side and becoming an integral part of the U18 squad. Special mentions must go to Chung Nam Tam and Beam Mongkolchaipak for captaining the side so effectively.

The U18s have had a fantastic year of basketball winning all their matches apart from one. They have set a club record in this regard; WELL DONE! Highlights included record wins at home against Bloxham, MCS and Radley, in which Tunmise Adebutu decided he was going to try to shoot in the wrong basket at one



point, and the club's first ever dunk in history by Marc Sheriff — against Radley. Perhaps the most challenging moment of the season was when the team fought back after being down against Stowe away to win the game and keep the unbeaten season going. This included an important performance from Alastair Gray featuring his infamous spin move!

Home matches have been a pleasure to play in, with strong support often filling out the sports centre, a testimony to the growing enthusiasm around the sport. Huge thanks must go to Rev Gooding for leading the U18 side and overseeing the club, Dr. Frampton for coaching the U16s, and Mr. Triff for all his help in

organising, officiating and coaching matches and training sessions to bring the huge success which the club has had this year. Mr Triff has also set in place a new players' stats system which we are really grateful for. All in all the basketball club is making huge progress and success, and I look forward to seeing the success which a young, exciting squad will bring in the future, with the next Michael Jordans and Lebron Jameses of the school emerging!

Marc Sheriff 7NSH



MUN

Haileybury

Conference

Model United Nations is a simulation of the real United Nations, writing resolutions to global problems and engaging in intense debates from the perspective of your allocated country. A group of 15 Abingdon students set off on the 17th of March to attend the prestigious international two-day conference hosted by Haileybury School, Hertfordshire. The weekend was attended by schools from not just all over the country, but many from overseas too.

Abingdon was allocated 3 different delegations: China, Israel and Slovakia. These each had between 4 and 7 pupils in their own committees. Subjects discussed ranged from the Security Council, Disarmament and International Security, Economic and Social issues and more. Friday saw an immense hurry to get pre-written resolutions signed and handed to the chairs of the debate to be chosen. Across the weekend, a plethora of topics were discussed in the committees and several resolutions written by Abingdon pupils were picked to be debated. On Sunday, the day was opened with a service in the school's beautiful 19th century chapel before resuming debating in committees.



The weekend ended with a few hours of debating in the general assembly, which involved all of the participants in one room. Many congratulations to Jonathan Ochero and Ramli Al-Atiki for speaking so eloquently in front of the crowd of hundreds of competent debaters.

It wouldn't be a good conference without an awards ceremony, which saw our school lauded for their efforts throughout the weekend, Toby Pinnington achieved a Highly Commended trophy, whilst Co-Secretary General Jasper Furniss, Harry Litchfield and Jonathan Ochero all received Distinguished Delegate trophies.

But it was the Delegation of China, consisting of Jasper, Toby, Jonathan, Enoch Hung, Leo Wang, Freddie Beneat and David You that received one of the

three 'Distinguished Delegation' trophies - rendering Abingdon one of the most successful schools at the entire event! Co-Secretary General Philip Kimber was invited to be a chair of the Security Council, an equally remarkable achievement which the club is immensely proud of.

The weekend was an incredible amount of fun but wouldn't have been possible without the organisation and commitment of Mrs Bridgeworth, Mr James and Mrs Lee. The Model United Nations Other Half is one of the most rewarding societies at Abingdon, and is always very excited for new members to join to continue the exceptional legacy of the club.

Harry Litchfield 6MSC



Cricket Tour of India

In early April, the U15 and U17 cricket teams were fortunate enough to embark on a 12-day cricket tour to India, travelling through the capital city, New Delhi, along with Agra, Jaipur, and Sawai Madhopur. We enjoyed memorable and exciting cricket-related experiences, but also interesting and enlightening cultural experiences. It was an unforgettable trip, and a brilliant opportunity to learn more about a completely different society, and their traditions, as well as to play plenty of cricket!

After landing in New Delhi, and after a strangely familiar rainy training session the previous day, the U15s had our first match at none other than Lord's Cricket Ground! Having lost the toss and been sent into bat on what could pass off for a stretch of the M25, Jack Watson struck an impressive 80* from 50 balls, coming in at 3, supported by the rest of the top order. After the bowlers, notably spinner Alex Elly, skittled through most of the opposition's batsmen, our target of 182 seemed untouchable, but a century from the opposing captain had us worried for a moment! Later, we headed off from the hotel to an IPL fixture, with a hectic dash on crowded paths to the ground. The atmosphere in the stadium was simply incredible, one inconceivable anywhere in England.



The next day, we travelled as a group to the Deepalaya charity, and toured around some notable historic sites. The charity acts as a non-formal school for children living in the marginalised segments of the area, living in the local slums. It provided us with a very different perspective of education and its importance to children, whatever one's background. We continued the outing with a visit after lunch to the war memorial India Gate, where it seemed as though every man and his dog wanted a picture with us! A look around the interesting and impressive marble Bangla Sahib Sikh temple, and its huge community kitchen topped off a captivating day of sightseeing.

The fifth day presented the U15s with our second match, this time a longer format, taking up the whole of the day, in the sweltering heat. A standout performance from Sam Grocutt came to an unfortunate end on 49 (39 balls), run out on the final ball of the innings, and a man-of-the-match 2 wickets from James Mennie in the second innings were in vain, with the hosts rather comfortably chasing down our total of 192. An eloquent and enlightening post-match speech from coach Mr Axon seemed to please the local interviewer!

The following day, once checked out from the Park Hotel, we returned to the fortress, Lord's, to play our third fixture, against the same JNS XI as the first match. Another sublime knock by Sam Grocutt, this time of 82*, anchored the innings, supported by a short but eventful 56 from 27 balls by Benedict Robinson. Some cameos from the middle order brought our total up to 208, a daunting one to say the least. Wickets were shared around in the following unsuccessful chase, but batsman Oliver Hewes' loopy leggies removed the previous match's centurion on the boundary in dramatic fashion (with a celebration to match!), and brought two other much more convincing wickets, arguably surpassing the hosts' own specialised spinners!

Having checked into our hotel, after a long drive the evening before to Agra, we were woken at the crack of dawn to be



shuttled to the majestic Taj Mahal at sunrise, which was well worth the early start, and touring around was a welcome rest from the taxing days of cricket leading up to it. We proceeded after a much needed breakfast to the nearby Agra fort, which was another incredible sight, a great show of the historical architecture, its history illuminated by our enthusiastic tour guide, Dinesh. After only a brief stay in Agra, we boarded our (thankfully well air conditioned) bus, for a 6 hour journey to Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan.

At 4 in the morning, the day after our arrival at Ranthambore Regency, we set off in some Jeeps which didn't exactly inspire much confidence, hoping to catch a glimpse of a tiger. We were not so lucky, however we (or at least those of us who stayed awake) did manage to see plenty of deer, monkeys, peacocks, and even a crocodile, along with some spectacular views. Finally, we boarded the bus yet again for another long journey, this time to Jaipur, the Pink City. The following day, we headed off to the Amber Fort Palace, stopping at some picturesque sights along the way. There, we saw not only a beautiful palace, including a stunning room of mirrors, but also some rather out of place elephants.

Having successfully escaped the vendors at the palace, we continued to our fourth match, on a somewhat dismal pitch. Despite the lack of



confidence in the pitch, Rhys Whinfrey managed to piece together a quick 29, the highest score of the day for the visitors, enough for him to take home the man of the match award in a rather disappointing losing effort. To rub salt into the wound, the bus got stuck in the sand barely a hundred metres from the ground! After some futile heaves behind the bus, a nearby tractor saved the players and coaches from having to push the bus any longer, thankfully.

We returned the next day with some new enthusiasm, and, after winning the toss and electing to bowl, had a far better game, against the same opposition. Notable mentions go to Rhys and Alex with the ball, and Jack with the bat. A comfortable chase made for an early finish, and that we finished

the tour with a winning ratio of 3-2, something to be very proud of, especially in such challenging conditions. We returned that afternoon to New Delhi, and enjoyed some time in Gurugram on our last day, before flying back to Heathrow.

The tour was truly a once in a lifetime experience, and was made thoroughly enjoyable by all the staff who organised it. Big thanks must go to Mr Golding, the mastermind behind the trip, and to Mr Axon, Mr Easterbrook, and Mr Evans, as well as everyone at Living With The Lions sports travel, including our superb tour guide, Dinesh.

Benedict Robson 4MRE and James Mennie 4HMP



First Year Adventure Trip to PGL Liddington

On the 25th of April, 52 members of the first year set out for a five day long trip to PGL Liddington near Swindon and what a trip we had. After a relatively short and slightly rowdy bus journey, we arrived and settled into our rooms. In the coming days, we would take part in many activities including raft building, climbing, zip wiring and, everyone's personal favourite, the giant swing. Read on to find out more.

Once we had arrived we were split into groups and were straight into activities including Survivor, which consisted of making shelters out of tarpaulins and rope, as well as another activity called Jacob's ladder. This was a ladder where the rungs were increasingly spaced out, meaning that the only way to get up the ladder was to work in teams to pull the rungs down and then climb it. This activity definitely had mixed results as to who got the furthest up the ladder but both really helped all the teams develop important teamwork and listening skills.

After a night of many attempts of getting through the night without any sleep, a



marginally tired first year began their second day of activities. Many of the groups did zip wiring, which everyone found to be an incredibly fun and adrenaline filled experience. We also went abseiling, which perhaps was met with slightly less enthusiasm and slightly more terrified looks than the zip wire but many of us gave it a go all the same.

On the third day, the weather took a turn for the worse, becoming considerably wet just in time for the raft building activity. However, this did not deter us hardy first years and many of us proceeded to do the activity in shorts and t-shirts in the pouring rain, taking delight when others 'fell' in. We did however regret this when we had to walk

all the way back to the rooms soaking wet. Luckily the rooms, as per usual for PGL, were absolutely boiling, letting us dry out almost completely for the next activities.

As well as the various daytime activities, we also had slightly calmer evening tasks to do. One of these was the PGL quiz, a quiz in which the more questions we would get right, the more 'PGL' banknotes we would collect. This was completed in teams and, after sorting out some minor attempted cheating by one team (adding a banknote they found on the floor to their supposed stockpile of notes), it was very good fun and, like Jacob's ladder, was very good for developing our teamwork skills.

The next day was the day we had all been waiting for, the Giant Swing. Despite being everyone's favourite, it was also probably the scariest of all the activities we did (well, apart from maybe abseiling). We were raised up and then we would pull a string and be let go from roughly 10m up in the air and then swing until we could be stopped. This activity also very quickly turned into a competition as to who could make the least silly face when swinging down, although it's safe to say there was no real winner. All the teachers now have some very hilarious photos and videos of all of us being let go from the top.

After the giant swing, we did the sensory trail. At first, not everyone was incredibly thrilled about this activity. As you can probably imagine, the name didn't quite inspire the same excitement as the Giant Swing but in actual fact it turned out to



be a very enjoyable thing to do with a rather hilarious amount of people crashing into trees. During the activity, we were blindfolded and had to walk around a trail with one hand on the person in front of us and one hand on a rope that went all the way around the course. We had to communicate with each other to make sure that we did not bump into any of the obstacles around the course. It was, quite literally, very eye-opening at the end to see where we had actually been and what the things really were. Many of the things that we had dubbed as 'trees' were, in fact, just waist-height wooden posts and an area of ground that – when blindfolded – we had simply deemed 'a muddy patch' had actually been a mattress that we were walking across. This activity was very good for developing our listening, communicating and teamwork skills and everyone found it very fun.

Overall, everyone immensely enjoyed the PGL trip and found it a great experience to try new things and gain some independence. A big thank you to all the teachers, without whom this trip would not have been possible.

William Pearce Harvey 1ARF



Road Relay 2023 Results



Team winners:

U6: Pygott's A - 35mins 12sec (**Overall winners and Joint New Record!**)

(Robin Hambridge, Tommy Harris, Henry Channon, Will D'Arcy)

L6: Border's A - 38mins 13sec

(Quinn Miell-Ingram, Toby Pinnington, Jay Cabell, Thomas Mennie)

5th Year: Border's A - 38mins 13sec

(Michael Bell, Xavier McGuire, Felix Diamond, Luke Skates)

4th Year: Donnelly's A - 38mins 46sec

(Monty Salmon, Hugh Clarke, William Walters, Sam Wood)

3rd Year: Stockdale's A - 42mins 19sec

(Josh Costello, Gregor McVie, Oil McGuinness, Ben Furger)

2nd Year: 2H A - 41mins 43sec

(Wilf Rice, Zaki Saoudi, Jack Taylor, Miley Vann)

1st Year: 1M A - 44mins 13sec

(Patrick Dineen, Charlie Bodley, Kaan Tugcetin, Reagan Evans)

Staff: School House - 42mins 7sec

(Mr Litchfield, Mr Simmons, Mr Hird, Mr Litchfield)





Individual Winners:

U6: Johnny James (7RCB) - 7mins 32sec (Overall Winner!)

L6: Quinn Miell-Ingram (6ALD) - 7mins 44sec

5th Year: Oliver Sherratt (5CLEH) - 8mins 17sec

4th Year: Ralph Allen (4NJAB) - 8mins 23 sec (New Record!)

3rd Year: Oliver Wardle (3SJB) - 9mins 56sec

2nd Year: Miley Vann (2H) - 9mins 40sec

1st Year: Freddie Stevens (1F) - 10mins 16sec

Staff: Mr R Taylor - 8mins 44sec

Well done to everyone who took part!



Second Year Adventure Trip to Plas Pencelli

On 2 April 2023, 44 second years left for Wales, where we would stay for the next five days. During this trip, we embarked on many adventures, including climbing, canoeing and caving. However, this trip was not the typical second year adventure trip, as, although we were staying in the Brecon Beacons, we were not staying in the Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre, due to an issue with infrastructure. Instead, we were still supervised by Plas Pencelli instructors, but we stayed at Rock UK Summit Centre. On the first day, we were given a briefing on safety and where we would sleep. After this, we were split up into four activity groups: blue, red, green and yellow. I was in red, so I shall be describing the order of activities that my group did.

On the first day, we all piled into minibuses and went up the Beacons. My group drove to Pen y Fan, the highest mountain in South Wales. At the foot of the mountain, we met our instructor for the day and began the hard climb up the 886 metre high mountain. The sun was shining (not traditional Welsh weather!) and there was a feeling of excitement in the air. After a few hours of walking, we



arrived at the peak. Far above the fields below, we had an amazing view of the spectacular Welsh landscape. We had a quick photo and lunch break, and then started the long walk down, this time taking a different route that involved some scenery that was more alpine. Thankfully, we did not fall in the river as one of the other groups did, and we made it back to the centre dry, but exhausted. Once all the groups were back at the centre, we had a few hours of free time to play a game of football, or just hang around our dorm rooms before dinner and night activities, like manhunt or roasting marshmallows. Most days followed this same schedule, where we would go for activities in the morning,

then get back late afternoon.

On our second day, my group went canoeing and kayaking. We drove to a nearby canal, where we disembarked and were set up in kayaks. We slowly (there was a lot of falling in!), but surely made our way down the river until we stopped for lunch and swapped with another group so that we were now in canoes. Once we were in the canoes, time seemed to slow down and there was more realisation of how beautiful the surroundings were, especially draped in the soft afternoon sunshine.

On the third day, it was time for rock climbing. We were taken to a wood, through which we would have to walk to get to the cliffs. The weather was a lot worse than the last few days, as it was pouring with rain and foggy, but we safely managed to find the quarry (where apparently a scene from His Dark Materials was filmed). We were split into threes and were allowed to attempt any section of the cliff we wanted (each had a different level of difficulty). Overall, it was a fun activity and before we knew it it was time to leave.

Then it was time for our last full day in Wales. The day's activity was caving. I will admit, I personally was looking forward to this activity the least, but it turned out to be one of my favourites. Once we had reached the caves, we started by walking into a large cavern so that the instructors could point out things such as bats sleeping, or writing from years ago that was put there as a



kind of time capsule. Then, we descended into the colossal cave system that lay beneath the hills of South Wales. For the majority of it, we were crawling through very tight spaces one at a time, but singing songs lightened the mood. To be honest, the time passed quickly, and it seemed that we had finished before too long, even though we had been underground for hours.

The final night seemed quite monumental. Although everyone was exhausted, we had a good time telling stories and sitting around a campfire. Eventually, everyone went to sleep for the final time in the centre.

The final day came around and everyone was going to do the same activity all together: indoor climbing at the Rock UK centre. While not as unique as the rock climbing, it was still an enjoyable activity, and a perfect end to this trip. The bus came soon after this, and we all got on, looking back at the Beacons one final time.

Freddie Farrell 2SJC



Summer 2023



Moldova Project

From the 10th until the 20th of July, 10 students accompanied by Mr Jenkins, Mr and Mrs O'Doherty, and Mr Taylor took part in the Moldova Project. The project is a partnership between Abingdon and the charity Agape, which works to improve the lives of young people suffering from the effects of poverty, which has been running since 2000.

Moldova is the least developed country in Europe, ranking only behind Ukraine in terms of wealth. A former Soviet state that gained its independence after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Moldova also acts as one of the largest hubs of human trafficking on the continent. It lies between Romania, an EU member, and Ukraine, currently at war. This partnership between Abingdon and Agape is one of the longest running bilateral aid projects between the United Kingdom and Moldova. Since 2000, Abingdon students have raised over £100,000 in donations and since 2003 have also run summer camps for the

children there. This year marked not only the first return of Abingdon students post-pandemic, but equally the 20th anniversary of the school's visits, a momentous occasion.

Before we could think about travelling, it was imperative that we did some fundraising for the project. Our challenge was to collectively travel the length of the Dniester, the longest river in Moldova. Using the school's armada of ergos as a group we travelled 398 km and raised over £3,000 for Agape.

Travelling to Moldova has been made significantly harder by the war in Ukraine, as a result we had to fly to Iași in Romania. We met with Nicu, the director of Agape, at the airport and embarked on the long journey across the border to Ialoveni where we would spend the first half of the trip. In Ialoveni, a half-hour's drive from the capital Chișinău, we stayed with host families, many of whom had been visited by previous generations of Abingdonians.

Another student and I stayed with a mother, who spoke very limited English, and a daughter whose exceptional comprehension of English rendered her our translator. In the evenings we would venture into Ialoveni and meet with her

friends; this would prove to be an especially powerful part of the trip for me. Talking at length with young people in Moldova, sharing our experiences, our thoughts and passions, is what built the biggest bridge between us. Their thoughts regarding the war in Ukraine in particular resonated with me. Being so close to Ukraine, they would know people who had been displaced, affected and even killed as a consequence of the war. It added an element of humanity to a conflict so distant to Britain.

Spending time with our hosts allowed for the beauty of Moldovan culture to reveal itself. Moldova, as a consequence of the Soviet Union, grows a large portion of its food within the country, and often families will use ingredients coming from their own gardens. In this way, the food tastes remarkably fresh when compared to food bought in a UK supermarket. My friend and I helped with picking berries from their bushes with which we made suc, a delicious fruit juice that we would devour at breakfasts. Due to the mother's limited English, we were exposed to a great deal of Romanian, a beautiful language (it's a romantic language like French or Italian, and is in fact one of the closest modern

languages to Latin), and I even tried my hardest to reciprocate some back. Noapte bună! (Goodnight!)

Ialoveni is home to Petre Ștefănuță School, our 'base of operations' for the first few days. Each morning, we would make our way to the school and run a rotation of activities for the children (aged from about 8-11 years old). Each of these activities had a shared focus on improving their English, but were diverse in their execution. For example, one moment we might be playing ball games out under the sun, shouting 'Up!', 'Down!', 'Left!' and 'Right!', the next we could be found inside building towers, or making the best paper aeroplane, or creating fish out of paper plates. We would stay at Petre Ștefănuță until about midday, before swiftly hopping on a mini-bus (occasionally with seatbelts, may want to amend the risk assessment!) to visit a school in the neighbouring village Zimbreni where we would repeat the same set of activities each day. As the days went by, the number of children attending only increased as word of what was happening spread.

On our penultimate day in Ialoveni, I was especially privileged to take an extended day trip with two other students, Mr Jenkins and Mrs O'Doherty. We visited another school in the village of Umbreni,

where we received a tour and spoke with a smaller, but older group of students. It was great to get a taste of what education is like in Moldova, it really put into perspective the quality of facilities that we have in the UK. The second destination on this trip was organised by Nicu. We went to visit a family living on the edge of Ialoveni. I recognised one of the children from the camp we had been running at Petre Ștefănuță, who had been walking the significant distance from the edge of the village to the school every day. There were five members of this family, and at the time their house was essentially threadbare. All five were sleeping in the same bedroom, and the children had no quiet space where they could focus on their studies. With £300 of the money that we raised during our Travelling the Dniester challenge, we were able to help this family fund an improvement to their house. Months later, we received an update showing the progress on the construction and seeing such a tangible impact that was changing the lives of real people as a direct result of the Moldova Project was heartwarming.

Our final day in Moldova started with a ceremony at Petre Ștefănuță celebrating the 20th anniversary of Abingdon's visits before a roundabout of our final activities. Afterwards, we embarked on the journey to Chișinău, where we were

given a tour by OA Mihail Clapaniuc, who now works in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moldova. Mihail is another example of the amazing effects of the Moldova Project; he was formerly an attendee of the camps himself as a child before being offered a full scholarship to Abingdon. In Chișinău, we looked around an Orthodox church where a homeless man hugged me when I told him I knew who Tsar Nicolas II was - thanks GCSE history! We visited the parliament building, and even caught a glimpse of the President of Moldova Maia Sandu. Under the Soviet Union, thousands of Moldovans were deported to Gulags, inhumanely crammed into cattle trains for weeks at a time. In the centre of Chișinău, there is an exhibition held in one of these train carriages dedicated to these Moldovans which we looked around and this was an exceptionally moving display.

The next stage of the trip saw us take a long journey over the border to Romania; with us was a smaller group of children who had been selected by their school, as well as some Moldovan girls our own age who helped us with translation and Nicu. Lacul Roșu (Red Lake) is one of the most beautiful spots in Romania, encompassed by great, green mountains. We were staying in a building not far from the lake, with a gorgeous view of the scenery. Here, we would run





more activities, but the smaller group allowed more tightly knit relationships to form. Sprinkled among English lessons and crafts were some Team Challenges. At the start of the camp, we were split into teams with 2 Abingdonians, a Moldovan translator, and a handful of kids. Across the course of the camp, we would compete in challenges to earn points, ranging from photography challenges to sketches, banner designing and even a Dragon's Den-style pitching challenge. It added a really dynamic atmosphere to the camp that certainly brought all of the teams together.

We were really able to appreciate the stunning scenery of Lacul Roşu through a series of wider activities. We went for a hike around the lake one morning, and were only slightly terrified when a siren sounded on our phones alerting us to the presence of a nearby bear (another one for the risk assessment...) Luckily, and evidently, we survived. On another day we walked up into the hills where several of us made flower crowns amidst games of football and cricket. We even went rowing on the lake itself! Being in the middle of the hills, the light pollution was near zero which meant that at night time the clearest, most beautiful stars

that I have ever seen surrounded us. I also procured a taste for gambling in the evenings, as the exchange rate meant that poker chips were affordable and this facilitated immense games of blackjack. Our final day in Lacul Roşu finished with a talent contest, spearheaded by traditional Moldovan dancing and singing from the kids, followed by some less impressive dancing and singing from the Abingdonians. A special shoutout must go to all of the members of staff, whose awe-striking quartet with an angelic harmony between Mr Jenkins and Mrs O'Doherty took us all by surprise. It is such a shame that there is no videographic evidence that can be found by emailing the author

Whilst the whole trip was in a certain way difficult, demanding constant energy and thought to keep an army of children entertained, this difficulty was superseded by the sheer joy that stemmed from it. What ultimately turned out to be the most difficult thing was saying goodbye. Over the course of ten days, some lifelong friendships had been formed. Saying goodbye to the children was a tearful exchange, as these sweet, energetic, talented kids had made the trip as successful as it was. For me, the hardest goodbye was with the

translators; spending so much time with them and getting to know them left the biggest impact on me. Making friendships which transcend borders and cultural differences is what makes the trip so special; I am sure that we will spend time together when they visit the UK.

If you were to ask me which part of the trip has left the greatest impact on me, you would receive a list that would touch the floor. Having never been to Eastern Europe, I was shocked to see the effects of the Soviet Union so obviously on display. Moldova largely owes most of its problems to the USSR, who came and essentially took everything that they could. Moldova has shown steadfast support for Ukraine, and despite being such a small country, has shown courage against Russia, expelling their diplomats earlier this year. What struck me was how committed to international unity the Moldovan people are, hoping for EU member status in 2030. Everywhere that we went, EU flags would be flying, showing a country pledging a commitment to something bigger than itself. I found this to be inspiring, and it offers a stark contrast to the attitude of our own country. The importance of international solidarity

really came to me as a direct result of the Moldova Project. There are things in the world that are of far greater importance than what happens in the small town of Abingdon. Moldova is a beautiful country, with people that are proud and hard working, and I am proud to say that I have visited and explored such a shining culture. The Moldova Project is quite possibly the most incredible opportunity offered at Abingdon, such a life changing experience not for oneself alone, but for a multitude of people. Over the course of just 10 days, I have made stronger friendships than some forged through years of school. Thank you very much to Mr Jenkins for organising such an impactful project and being living proof that we can make a difference in the world.

Harry Litchfield 6MSC



Lower School Trip to the Black Forest

On the first day of the trip, we arrived at school at 6:30 eager for the drive into France. During the drive we had a few stop offs, but although it was an extremely long journey, it was still really fun as we could chat and mess around for hours. Once we finally arrived at the hostel it was past 10:30, so we got put into our dorms and it was straight off to bed.

The next day we went to Freiburg in the west of Germany, where we had a guided tour of the city and a Rallye, which is a treasure hunt around the city whilst exploring it. Afterwards, we had an authentic lunch in the city centre. In the afternoon we went into the Black Forest and went to a high ropes place and spent the rest of our afternoon on the challenging courses - some of which were really high up! In the evening we had a delicious pizza at a local pizzeria, which was extremely tasty.

On Saturday we went into the Black Forest again but this time we partook in team building activities, including building a raft and games on the river with the rafts. After we had lunch in the centre, we went on a 15-minute drive to the beautiful town of Breisach which overlooks the wonderful river. In this town were many picturesque little cafes and a ginormous castle which towered over the inhabitants of this town. We were given one and a half hours of free time here to relax and spend the money



we had brought on ice creams or a drink. Sadly, on the way back we encountered a lot of traffic! It added on another 2 hours to our already long journey, but by the time that we got back we were just in time for dinner which was much needed after our long day of activities.

At the start of the penultimate day, we got an early bus drive into the centre of Strasbourg in France, where we had our first Rallye of the day where we explored the city in small groups. Then we had some free time where we could yet again spend some of our trip money on some food and drink. Once our free time was up, we regrouped for lunch, which was at a local cr eperie with yet more tasty food! After lunch we went into our trip groups and had another Rallye where we explored the city's rich history.

It was really interesting learning about what the city has been through all these years, including becoming the city where the European Union's Parliament sits. We then went back to the hostel and for some of us who still had money left over, we were allowed to visit the local shop where we could buy supplies for the long journey back the next day. The final day started at 7:30, and it ended up being a long one due to our return trip. Everyone was very tired and most just went to sleep on the bus. Luckily it was a shorter drive back, but it was still extremely long - we arrived back at around 10:30 pm. Overall it was a really fun trip, and I would definitely recommend it to any 1st or 2nd years thinking of doing it next year.

Charles Nelmes 2G



Lower School Public Speaking Workshop

On Friday 23 June, instead of having a normal day where we would go to lessons and tutor period, we had a more unique day. The entire Lower School, apart from those of us that were away on the Modern Languages trip, got divided up into three main groups; each of these groups were split into six mini-groups with everyone in that mini-group being in the same year. Each group had one main public speaking teacher from the English Speaking Union who would teach that particular group all day.

We did many different tasks and activities ranging from trying to explain why a statement was correct to why something should be completely banned. Throughout the day we did many fun activities but my favourites were holiday advertisers, agree or disagree, and truth or lie. The holiday advertiser was one of the first activities we did in the day and was one that I think most involved group cooperation along with a good amount of public

speaking. In our mini-groups, which consisted of 4 others in our year, we designed a speech to advertise a holiday country destination, including details of how expensive it was, how long it was and what was included. When the elected speaker of each group presented their speech the goal was to make it sound like the perfect holiday and if you were the best group then you won.

I really liked the game “agree or disagree” because it gave you the chance to see others’ opinions and why they held them. The concept of the game was that the teacher read a statement, and, depending on how much you agreed or disagreed with this statement, you had to walk to an area in the room. One wall was completely agree and the other the opposite. In this game you had to not only find reasons for why you agreed, but you had to put them into a speech so well that it changed others’ entire opinions and that is why I enjoyed it.

The last activity that I am going to talk about is “truth or lie”. I really enjoyed this game because it tested our ability to make things up convincingly or simply tell the truth - whichever way it still taught us to make a convincing statement in little to no time. The concept of this game was that there were 5-8 images on the screen. You had to pick one and tell a story about your



life that is based on the image, but the twist was that it didn’t have to be true. After a person finished their speech that was limited to 10 seconds the rest of the room voted on whether it was a truth or a lie. The aim of the game was to fool the audience. It was also fun to try to see through people’s lies.

Overall I believe that it was a very productive day and taught me and the rest of the students crucial skills and most importantly gave us the confidence to get up and have a go at public speaking because, if you do that, you can’t do worse than a person that didn’t even try.

Orson Paleit 1P



Senior Rugby Tour to South Africa

In July, a touring A, B and C team set out to take on the challenge of South African schoolboy rugby. We landed in Johannesburg and drove to Konka Camp in the Magaliesberg Mountains. Across the two days we were there, we completed various group activities. This included kayaking, ziplining, and visits across the camp, where we saw lions and other animals. We finished our stay with a fantastic block fixture against Bergsig Academy under the sunset, with some promising rugby on display across all teams. We finished the matches with a traditional South African BBQ and exchanged match awards with the opposition.

We then moved into Gauteng for two nights, where we visited the Apartheid museum to learn about South Africa's history, the people's resilience, and what something like rugby can mean to their country. We finished the day with a fantastic steakhouse team meal in preparation for the tour's second match. Before the match, we visited Gold Reef City, an amusement park in Gauteng, and spent the afternoon at Pretoria Boys School, one of the oldest rugby schools in South Africa. After a brilliant afternoon playing rugby at a historic location, all three teams left the pitch with a victory. There were various star performances and an overall strong display of Abingdon team rugby. The following morning, we drove to Pilanesberg National Park, a game reserve where we went on multiple safaris throughout the day. We were extremely fortunate to see elephants, several giraffes, buffalos, and



other animals. We then spent the night in lodges of 5 or 6 people and came together to complete team activities, give out the rewards for the day and enjoy the famous Sun City waterpark.

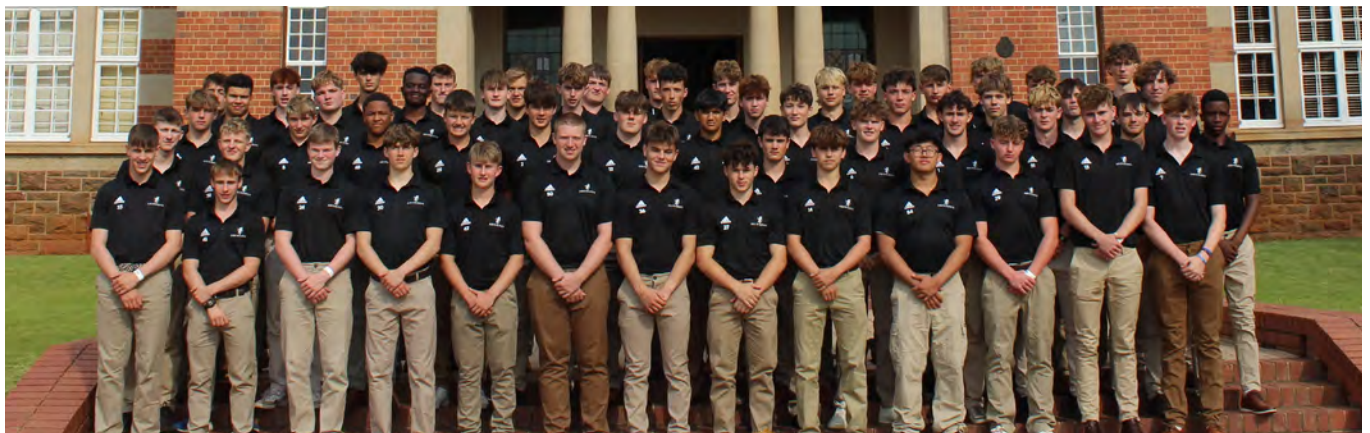
On day number 8, the squad flew down to Cape Town, where we were lucky to stay in a hostel near the beach. We spent a whole morning doing activities with the children of South African farmers under the Pebbles Project, our designated charity for the tour. Spending time with the children we had raised money for was fabulous - it was an experience that will be remembered by all the players for a long time. In the afternoon, we took on the mighty Paarl Boys. Paarl Boys is one of the most famous rugby-playing South African schools, and the challenge was exciting. The C team put in an incredible exhibition of rugby to defeat their opponents, whilst the B team suffered a nail-biting, one-point loss, and the A team had a tight match on a historic pitch. Following the match, we exchanged man-of-the-match awards and school tokens with the opposition and had the chance to socialise together. For our remaining time in Cape Town, we had a thrilling Cape Canopy Tour, an opportunity for some to

conquer their fear of heights (!), followed by a beachside team training session. Our stay finished with an authentic African meal at Gold's restaurant, where the team had their faces painted traditionally before we all learnt to play the Djembe drums together...

Before leaving the south of South Africa, we travelled to Stellenbosch for two nights where we visited a Cheetah outreach centre and played our last fixtures. We took on Somerset College, where we achieved another day of victories for all teams, including a dominant final performance from the As, who were victorious with a 50-5 win.

After victory in Stellenbosch, we returned to Johannesburg to watch South Africa take on Argentina at Ellis Park, which was a truly fitting end to an incredible tour. The experience created strong connections across the teams and year groups, taught me so much about the country's history and the population's deep-rooted resilience, and took us to the heart of South African schoolboy rugby, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Zach Broad 6JMA



Charities Committee

The Charities Committee has had a very successful year, seeing around 50 different students attend various meetings on a Monday period 8, and has successfully raised money to support our chosen charities in many different innovative ways which managed to get the whole school involved.

These charities included The Abingdon Bridge, Moldova Project, DEC, SSNAP and GOSH and we raised £12,000 for them. Abingdon has supported the Moldova Project since 2000 raising money and providing support for the charity which aims to provide education and services to children in the poorest

country in Europe. In addition to the Moldova Project, Abingdon supported SSNAP (Supporting Sick Newborns and their Parents) which is an Oxford-based charity that works very closely with the John Radcliffe Hospital. They fundraise to support the neonatal care unit, and students were keen to vote when they heard first-hand of the emotional support provided to the parents of sick children through a member of staff's personal experience. Moreover, we supported the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in the hope of supporting people who had to flee their homes due to conflict; in this case, the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Throughout the year we ran events like home clothes days, a Christmas jumper day and ran the tuck shop during break times and Period 8s, giving profits to

charity. We saw the most success through our three home clothes days, raising a total of £4,500 for our chosen charities. On top of this, the school saw a donation to the Moldova Project of £3,044.27 and to the DEC we donated £4,117.

We look forward to bringing this into a new Academic year where we will have a sponsored walk and we look to raise money for Thames Valley Air Ambulance and Water Aid. If what we do interests you and you would like to join the charities committee you are always welcome to come to a session on Monday Period 8 in A216.

Thomas Mennie 6ALD



LS Peter Pan Production

This year's Lower School play was an epic production of Peter Pan, directed and adapted by Mrs Sharman in her first year in the Abingdon Drama Department. There was a lot of excitement about who would be cast in which parts and we got to work straight away.

From September we looked through the text, beginning to think about characterisation, and then had the auditions which took place before Christmas. Competition was fierce for parts and I was delighted to be given the role of Captain Hook.

In the other main roles Kwame Abayateye was cast as Peter Pan, the part of Tinkerbell went to Leo Minns, Wendy to Jack Boumphrey, Smee to Freddie Farrell and there was lots of opportunity for others such as McDee (Ajeet Nagi), Croc (Will Harding) and Tiger, Liz and Lee (Oli Blaylock, Henry Bond-Smith and Oscar Day) plus all the pirates and Lost Boys.

January came and rehearsals began in full force with the cast required to come to two sessions a week on Mondays and Fridays. However, for some characters who needed more work we would spend lunch breaks working on them as well.

Mrs Sharman set us the task of learning all our lines by Easter – which was more of a challenge for some than others! In April she revealed that there would be



actual flying with Peter, Wendy, Michael, Tinkerbell and others up in harnesses in a first ever for the Amey Theatre. Of course, there was great annoyance among the pirates that flying was not an option for them. Aaarrhhhh!!

Because I had some background in stage combat, I choreographed all the fights between me and Peter Pan. Kwame and I took many breaks and lunchtimes to craft it into a well-oiled battle between foes!

I was one of a few people who got a sneak peek at their costume before the final rehearsal week, along with Kwame and Leo. A few costume highlights for us three were Kwame's face paint, my long leather jacket, and for Leo it was definitely the glowing wings (although his furry leg warmers were hilarious). Alongside the brilliant costumes Mr Cook did an exceptional job of the make-up – especially with Tiger, Liz and Lee.

As the show got closer, we spent a whole weekend and two school days in

intense rehearsals. This involved multiple dress rehearsals and one full technical run-through that took over two days to complete but it was worth it as the tech crew made the show even better with their amazing lighting, sound and special effects. They also built an incredible set which included a massive pirate ship fitted with a sail, wheel and rigging.

Professional stage flying company Blue Chili Flying arrived to instruct members of the Drama Department on how to operate the pulley system, and train the cast members on how to clip themselves in and out. While it took a long time to set up the system it was definitely worth it as the show gained a real 'wow factor'.

The day of the first show arrived. Everyone was nervous and it was hard to concentrate on lessons. I think I ended up running my lines in French class!

After a long and tension filled wait, we could hear the audience gathering, and after a few encouraging words from Mrs Sharman it was curtain-up. There were a few hearts in mouths when the first flying scene arrived, but we knew from the gasps from the audience and applause it had worked! Apart from a few bumps along the way, to all our relief everything went incredibly smoothly and we left the stage in great triumph.

On night two everyone was a little bit less nervous, including those who were in charge of keeping the cast in the air. Everything was going fine until the beginning of scene four when Captain Hook became Captain Hook-less! Just before I turned around I realised I'd left my hook off stage. Luckily my brilliant



leather coat had a deep pocket, so I carried on as normal... I don't think very many people noticed. Well, I hope they didn't.

Overall highlights were Tink's South American accent, Peter's brilliant dance and rap, Jack's flawless portrayal of Wendy and the deep scary Croc's voice. Then there were the Mermaids who had the whole audience in stitches with their swishing tails and alluring charms. I'm biased I know but I was also really proud of all my pirates who roared their way through both shows brilliantly.

Overall, the second show was even better than the first and the sense of teamwork in such a massive ensemble was something special and we walked on stage for the final bows to tremendous applause.

Behind stage we had time to thank Mrs Sharman and all the Drama Department and crew for their hard work putting the show together as it would have been impossible without them. Even though it was my last Lower School play I'm looking forward to seeing what Lower School do next year and will definitely be in the audience to cheer them on.



Arran Bell 2C



Partnerships at Abingdon

The aims of Abingdon School in Partnership are to build relationships within the local community, collaborate on projects with partner schools and to challenge our students and teachers through work with partner schools. The school runs a range of different activities with local primary and secondary schools and is also proud to be part of the OX14 Learning Partnership. Opportunities for collaboration are varied and we would like to share some of those with you in this article. 2022/23 was a bumper year for partnerships with over 19000 hours of student experience across schools. Abingdon students supported, got involved with and helped create over 250 activities with partner schools. By getting involved, students stepped out of their comfort zones, met new people and felt the benefits of collaboration.

'To see students from our 6 schools mixing, chatting and laughing together in our safe space was a privilege to witness. Having a sense of community and togetherness is exactly what our partnership is about.' **(Teacher)**

Programmes such as the Peer Support Leads, Academic Coaching and Primary Science Club are now fully embedded at the school. Student leadership is at the heart of these activities while helping students upskill in areas such as communication, listening, empathy and coaching. If you have taken part in any of these you will know that the time and effort put into the role is rewarding and helps prepare you for the world of work.



'I enjoyed the opportunity to learn something new and develop skills that will be useful for life.' **(Coach)**

Working as a team with a diverse group of peers helps Abingdon students develop skills of collaboration and creativity which are core skills in the future workplace.

Primary partnerships are also a large part of what we do and student involvement and support in these activities is invaluable. Activities such as the Times and Places topic morning, Primary Business Challenge, Let's Communicate and primary clubs have all been a huge success with positive feedback from all involved. Students who have helped with primary clubs such as the chess or book club have shown maturity and consideration for their younger peers. OA Mac Adams accompanied Jason Preece to Thameside Primary School to run a popular music club, the introduction of a nurture/craft club was also very well received. Collaboration with the Puppet

Barge, a floating theatre company, helped us welcome over 200 primary school children to performances of the Selfish Giant using marionettes. Workshops in the Amey Theatre prior to the event allowed students to create their own puppet movements and meet the cast.

Science Partnerships remain a real strength of the school along with our Arts partnership programmes. Primary schools and other groups continue to attend a range of workshops in the Yang Science Centre. Abingdon students lead weekly Primary Science sessions for children and, through this, gain experience of presenting, teaching and preparation of materials. In collaboration with local company GKN, the new Green Go Kart motorsport club was developed. As part of a Confidence in STEM project funded by the Mercers' Company, the school ran a series of revision and science practical sessions as well as trips to local institutions for students in partner schools.





Working with students from nearby schools on team challenges or competitions has been a fun way to get involved in partnerships. The Business Language Challenge and Faraday Challenge saw teams compete and use important real life skills. Model United Nations events encourage healthy debate and participation from a wide range of students and the new Robocon

competition was an exciting challenge for budding robotics engineers. All these events were enhanced by the fact they included a great diversity of students with different life experiences.

As well as experiencing a breadth of perspective and experience, meeting like minded peers is also an important part of working in partnership. Students have had the opportunity to attend

Oxbridge club, BMAT and other medic days as well as attending careers fairs and lectures. These opportunities allow for networking and shared learning as well as giving students a chance to find out more from their community peers. Students from other schools also value the opportunity to join additional GCSE classes including Latin and Astronomy. Teaching staff at Abingdon also support students with University applications and interview practice.

It is not just students who benefit from these partnerships. 2022/23 saw teachers come together for training sessions and as part of informal networks. It is useful for teachers to share ideas and best practice as well as collaborate on events. Parents also attended webinars on topics such as online safety, supporting your child through exams and to learn more about the teenage brain.

Jessica Burns and Robin Southwell-Sander



Lower School Gala Concert

Everyone in Lower School should be proud of themselves after a series of absolutely outstanding performances that made up an incredibly successful Gala Concert, with a vast range of performances including an exciting rendition of highlights from *The Lion King*, an excellent guitar solo of *November Rain*, and finishing with a whole Lower School Choir performance of *Dumb Ways to Die*, perfectly arranged and organised by Mr Fox.

The concert started with a bang as the First Year Choir performed *Mr Blue Sky* by Jeff Lynne, conducted by Mr Fox. It was a very high rendition of the piece but the first years definitely pulled it off! It was a very good showing from the First Year Choir, showing how hard they have worked (along with Mr Fox) to get to this stage. It certainly set the standards high for the upcoming performances.

Next up was the Second Year Choir, and they certainly continued the standard set by the first years. Again conducted by Mr Fox, with the backing of Revolution made up of George Lethaby (guitar),



Kwame Abayateye (piano), Ajeet Nagi (drums) and an honorary member, Dr Preece on bass. The second years performed *Thank You* by Dido and it was nothing short of excellent, again showing how much hard work all of the second years had put in and how important music is in Lower School.

After both year groups in Lower School had sung, it was time for Lower School Band. Led by Dr Preece, they produced a powerful performance of highlights from *The Lion King* by Elton John. The highlights included *Hakunah Matata*, *The*

Circle of Life and *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*. It was a truly memorable performance with involvement from all the parts of the band.

Junior Strings then performed two great pieces: *Cielito Lindo*, a traditional Mexican song, and *Quinzas, Quinzas, Quinzas (Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps)* by Osvaldo Farres. With some fantastic conducting from Miss Stulting, this was a very enjoyable performance.

After the two instrumental groups we



then had two first year soloists, Owen Ngai and Brian Chu. Owen performed a very advanced piano piece: *Petit Jeu* by Telmann. Then Brian performed a blissful violin piece: *Czardas* by Monti. Some very brave and talented first year soloists on display!

Then the Chapel Choir came to the stage and performed *Lift Thine Eyes* by Felix Mendelssohn. This was an incredible performance that was made all the better as it was only for upper voices. It was a very beautiful performance.

Second year soloists then stepped up with Justin Mi performing *New Kid* by Norton. This is an amazing classical piano piece, which I believe is on the ABRSM grade 7 syllabus. Justin should be very proud of himself! Justin was followed by another up and coming Lower-Schooler, Felix Price. Felix, even though he was slightly worried before the performance, completely nailed the Theme from *Rhapsody in Blue* by Gershwin. It was a very brave performance from Felix and the crowd loved it!

Words can't even begin to describe how much I was impressed by the next performance. Harish Sivakumar performed *Idylle* by Chamindale, an already very difficult piece, blindfolded! This perfectly executed performance completely reflected Harish's hard work and commitment. I often heard him practising during break times and lunchtimes and it certainly all paid off!

Our last soloist of the night, but certainly not the least, was George Lethaby who performed *November Rain* by Guns N' Roses on guitar and it was certainly a crowd favourite! Since starting just over a year ago, George has managed to get to a grade 7 standard on his guitar, and he is still improving. It was an absolutely spectacular performance by George!

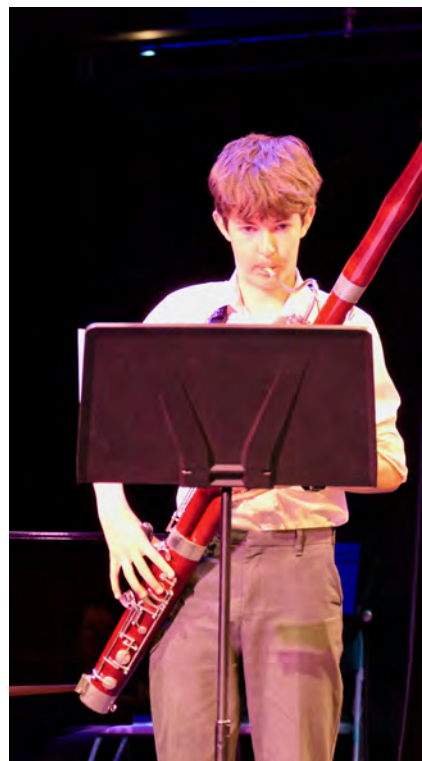
Then we had Junior Rock who performed *Back in Black* by ACDC and *Song 2* by Blur. They were two very good songs but the highlight of this performance for me (and certainly the crowd) was *Song 2*. This was the only song during the Concert that got the crowd singing and the atmosphere was magical. I have never seen Mr Owen so

happy!

For our penultimate performance the whole of 2H performed *Beggin'* by Gaudio and Farina. Earlier in the term 2H had won the Lower School inter-tutor group music competition with this piece, meaning they got to perform again at the concert. I also competed in this competition and I have to admit that 2H were by far the best tutor group, with an amazing guitar solo from George Lethaby, great piano playing from Kwame Abayateye, amazing percussion from Ajeet Nagi, and some really good singing from the whole of 2H.

Finally to round off the evening, the whole of Lower School performed as a massed choir. Firstly, I just want to say, having done it before myself, how difficult it is to conduct 130, sometimes grumpy, Lower School students, teach them all a song, and for the song to sound nice. Mr Fox managed all of this and more. With a brilliant performance of *Dumb Ways to Die* by McGill and Mescall, the whole of Lower School sang beautifully with the backing of George on the guitar, Kwame on the keyboard, Ajeet on the drums and Dr Preece on the bass. It was the perfect way to end a fabulous concert!

Leo Minns 2C



Coronation Celebrations

On Saturday the 6th of May, Abingdon pupils and staff celebrated His Majesty King Charles III and the Queen Consorts's coronation by having an entire school ceremony and address from the Chaplain and the Head, and a fantastic CCF inspection parade. The National Anthem singing, accompanied by the Concert Band, was followed by a truly delectable BBQ lunch and, at tea time, even Coronation cake!

Abingdon art students celebrated the Coronation day by designing and constructing their own crowns which were exhibited at school, for a unique



one day occasion. Mr Williamson, Head of Art, praised their work and in particular their inventiveness and creativity. There was a huge variety of creations which were inspired by both His Majesty's crown and also fiction, meaning that there was a wide array of different material and designs-some even being spray painted or embellished with jewels and metallic colours! The overall winners were Kwame Abayateye, 2nd Year, who constructed a crown of 3 tiers which featured plates of delicious food with jams, fish and chips, a traditional English breakfast, jam and scones, and Akram Al-Amodi, 1st Year, who built a crown encrusted with silver diamond and protected by 3 spitting snakes.

Abingdon School Bellingring Club also joined forces with bellingrings from the village of Sutton Courtenay to call changes at All Saint's Church and 'Ring for the King' on the Coronation weekend. Celebratory cake and tea was revelled by invited parents-who came to see the ringing in action, as well as the bellingrings themselves.

Rory McLaren 2H

Music Tour to the Twin Towns

From the 4th to the 13th of July, the Abingdon First Orchestra and Big Band toured Abingdon's twinned towns across France and Belgium. After a bleary eyed 5:45 start where Mr Fox's visuospatial skills were challenged by cramming instruments into the trailer, we set off. Our first stay was the extensive Château Le Kinnor, where we explored the picturesque grounds: Mr Stinton's translation skills giving us a mere soupçon of its rich history.

Day 2 brought us a historical snapshot into the area. The coach dropped us at the Coudehard-Montormel Memorial, an insightful look into the story of the Poles who defended the Falaise Pocket in 1944. After touring the Château Guillaume-le-Conquérant, Big Band set up for the first performance of the tour! However, the highlight of the day was the Orchestra performance in the Église St Gervais, setting off the tour in good stead.

Le Seigneur Dawswell led us on Day 3 into Argentan, featuring a Big Band performance for the Collège François where we met local students and practised our French. Our Argentan concert was met with a full house of locals who enjoyed perhaps our best performance of the trip.

After travelling to Colmar, our 5th day



was marked by the Festival International de Colmar that brought orchestras from across Europe. We took part in a 500 musician flash mob with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, performed a jam-packed Big Band show in the park and finished off the day watching a professional concert.

After a coach journey to St Niklaas in Belgium, we spent the day exploring the town. A Big Band performance in the Grote Markt and another fantastic concert set the scene for our final stretch in Paris.

Having arrived in Paris in the early hours of Day 8, we unpacked outside L'église de la Madeleine for our last concert, attended by many of our parents. Our audience at La Madeleine gave Mr

Stinton's final concert a standing ovation, demanding two encores! A triumphant Big Band performance in our youth hostel marked an end to our musical adventure, with students (and teachers) dancing in a conga.

We were truly lucky to have the opportunity to experience such a memorable tour and gratitude has to be expressed to all the teachers, guides and Abingdon School staff who accompanied us. In particular, we would like to thank Mr Stinton who not only put in so much effort to make the tour run smoothly, but has provided us all with a musical education to last a lifetime.

James Kilroy 6/NDB



Upper Sixth Prizegiving Speeches

Seven years is, in a relative sense, very short. Stonehenge has been around for about 5,000 years, humans around 300,000, and Abingdon School about 900. Yet quite a lot has happened since 2016. We have had a referendum and left the European Union, scraped the barrel for four sub par prime ministers, and suffered from a pandemic.

Yet since 2016, not all has been catastrophic. There is in fact a dedicated BBC podcast explaining why 2016 was the best year for music ever, with 117 episodes, commentating on albums such as Beyoncé's 'Lemonade' and Kanye West's 'The Life of Pablo'.

Perhaps of greater relevance is that it's also been seven years since many of us joined Abingdon. Seven years to develop maturity and turn into intelligent, thoughtful, proactive and upstanding citizens. The depravity of the first draft of the year book, especially that of Angus Carle's page, perhaps suggests otherwise. For some, the seven years spent here may have been seven years war - for others, it may have flashed by. Whatever the story, reflection is important.



This speech has forced me to do so. I urge you to do the same. Reflect on how immensely lucky we have been to come here, and the privilege and opportunity we've been able to benefit from. Perhaps, over the seven years, this privilege has become normality - it's become a monotonous task trying to choose between climbing and water polo, shooting and robotics. Maybe it's only after we leave that we will realise how lucky we have been.

But we are, for good or bad, at the end of our school journeys. We're condemned to an eternal present, to experience the now. We can't rewind ourselves back to Lower School, to the days of pile ons and a deep rooted fear of Mr Jenkins. Nor can we fast forward to results day, to see where our futures

lie. And so, being forced to experience the now is sometimes pretty unpleasant - maybe one of longing, of regret for things gone by, or a deep rooted dread in having to answer a question in an exam that you don't know. But it can also be joyous, almost too good for us to notice, and we fail to relish the highs. The now, at the moment, could be feelings of nostalgia, of sentimentality, or of uncontrollable relief at leaving school. Whatever it is, dwell on it, because, echoing Mr Windsor's speech on leavers day, this too shall pass.

Of course, thank yous are absolutely due. Thank you to the teachers. Thank you to all members of staff, forever organising, feeding and trying to guide rabbles of sometimes rude and insensitive young boys. Thank you to





everyone we don't see at school everyday: cleaners, governors and donors. And, thank you to the parents for investing in us. You have spent a hell of a lot of money trying to educate us, as well as time in the rain at rugby or in the car upholding a strong 'mum and dad taxi' service. I hope that this investment of cash, time and love might pay dividends - not just in the form of an Old Abingdonian tie.

But, I think it's also important to think about what these 'dividends', or the products of success, may look like. Have I been 'successful' at school, may be something many of us think about - especially so at prize giving. Perhaps one of these trophies validates your time here. But I don't necessarily think 'success' manifests itself in grades, or in

trophies, but rather in appreciation of the now. Success may not lie in the consequence, but in the process instead. That's not to say that these trophies mean nothing, because your hard work and perseverance deserves to be recognised. But maybe real success is, as the school marking may suggest, 'reviewing and reflecting' on your homework, not trying to hit a certain mark or beat someone else. Success might just be appreciating the present for what it truly is.

Alternatively, success may merely be a figment of our imagination. A lesson that will remain with me for a long time comes from Mr Barnes, my philosophy teacher, who, as an adamant nihilist, believes in nothing but meaninglessness, and argues that success doesn't even

exist. Instead, we are like Sisyphus, an individual who had been condemned by the gods to roll a ball up a hill for eternity, only to see it immediately fall back down and have to start the process again without reward or any tangible measure of success. Yes, it is now, gentlemen, now at the end, that we realise all that homework, those hours of revision, weeks of anxiety, these trophies, maybe mean nothing at all.

No I'm joking, but in all seriousness - relish the moment. Reflect on what enormous privilege we've had over the last two, five or seven years. Say thank you to people: parents, teachers, tutors and groundsmen - because if we are just individuals, rolling balls up meaningless hills like Sisyphus, then I think Abingdon has been a very pleasant and rewarding place to do it.

Felix Kind 7EMH

Good morning everyone,

It's a strange thought that after all of this time at the school, we are sitting here together for one last time. It's both a sad and exciting prospect. We should be incredibly proud of all we have learnt, achieved and developed in our time here, and we definitely had our fair share of challenges along the way, with a two year pandemic that brought a year group wide despair as we learnt we wouldn't be going to school for months.

As we move on with our lives from here,



we will always remain Old Abingdonians, holding on to those great memories, from Lower School PGL, CCF standing out on the bricks, the wings and stage of the Amey Theatre, or playing on the many sports pitches of Abingdon. 7 years ago as Lower Schoolers we had 30 person pile ons at the beat drop of 'Black Widow' and now we're in suits leaving school as adults, finally matured.

It really has been an amazing time. Abingdon is a place where you are allowed, as well as challenged, to be the best version of yourself. Whether you began in Lower School, Middle School or Sixth Form, I think we can all agree that we've had an immense amount of support from the excellent cohort of teachers, either in lessons, the Other Half or tutor periods. We owe a debt of gratitude to each and every teacher who has guided us along the way. You have imparted knowledge with unwavering patience, understanding, and a genuine passion for your subjects.

While this is the case, it's not just academic knowledge that you have helped us develop. In an article on the school website, maths teacher and rugby tactician Mr Ball wrote,

"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." And I believe that this depicts the culture of Abingdon guided by our teachers.

You have all helped us in becoming well rounded individuals, as well as prodigies for your respective subjects. So, on



behalf of the Abingdon Upper Sixth, thank you.

To our parents and guardians, we owe a debt we can never fully repay. Your unconditional support, love, and sacrifices have been the bedrock of our achievements and we will be forever grateful for your strength as you powered through lockdown with our bored and impatient 15 year old selves.

It really does seem that overnight we have moved from white shirts, to blue, to striped and finally to the suited young men that we are today.

I can confidently stand here having had the best time, made amazing friends and moving on towards a gap year, university and hopefully a life full of enjoyment.

It wasn't long ago when we walked through the doors of Lower School as young and eager 11 year olds, filled with a mixture of excitement and uncertainty, a daunting step into a large new school. We were a group of diverse individuals, each with our own backgrounds, talents, and quirks. Yet, despite our differences,

we became a tightly-knit community, bound by friendship, support, and enjoyment.

Our time at Abingdon has been a time of growth, both academically, in other half activities and personally. We have sat through countless lessons, both in class and in our bedrooms, performed at incredibly high levels, year in year out in house singing and now we've sat proper exams for the first time. In the process, we have discovered not only our own strengths and passions but also what makes us tick.

I'll leave you on a thought expressed by acclaimed philosopher Winnie the Pooh.

"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard"

Max Siriwardene 7LNH





House Reports



Austin House

To say that this has been a year of limbo would be an understatement! With a number of our new 3rd year boarders seconded to School House for the start of the year, it was a year of hope that would see the new Austin House building rise up and be occupiable in the immediate future. Sadly, this was not to be the case, but under the umbrella of optimism, the year started in some positive fashion - the demolition of the wooden-clad, (some liked; most hated) 1960s extension to the house signified the start of the project, before the arrival of the huge yellow crane and the works had begun.

House Singing is always a major event early in the House calendar. Rehearsal 1 started in fantastic fashion, and there was huge optimism for the remainder of the week. Sadly, as the week progressed, the reality and relief of getting a complete performance out there on the day of competition became priority - which we did - and we

obviously lay claim to our coveted 4th place, as ever. I have no doubt that next year, we will be in a far stronger position to challenge for greater glory under the tutelage of Eugene Leung.

There have been some incredible performances and representations from our students over the course of the year. From a sporting perspective, Will Canter has been involved in the GB Shooting Squad, Ethan Richards-Knight continued to break school records in the pool and Dan Phillips has continued to excel on the bike. The U15 Rugby side made the plate finals, which was an amazing and well-deserved achievement with a huge representation in the squad from students in the House - Rhys Whinfrey, Jacob Goldader, Charlie Taylor and Jack Watson all in the starting line up for this side.

In Inter-House competitions, there were also some outstanding efforts from a great number of students: The summer events contested most recently saw Dan Gifford and Lachlan Marshall winning the 3rd Year Tennis Doubles; the Basketball Team of Albert Park, Toby Jia, Chetwin

Lo, Henry Pinnington, Max Chan and Hayden Law winning the U15 Basketball title; Mikey Popescu winning the U14 100m; Ethan Richards-Knight bringing home the U15 high jump, with a jump high enough to beat anyone on the day, including the years above; Jack Duffield, Charlie Symington, Dan Phillips and Mars Yan all winning their respective Shot events, and Eugene Leung throwing to victory in the 6th form Javelin.

With huge excitement and a degree of trepidation, we look forward to the opening of the new house building next year. It will provide an amazing space for future Austinians to use and enjoy, whilst significantly improving the quality of our boarding accommodation. Without wanting to echo my finishing statements from last year, we look forward to a year of near normality in 2023/24!

James Golding



Crescent House



As another academic year draws to a close, Crescent House stands on the cusp of an exciting transformation, and next term brings the long-awaited move into the new building. At the same time, this is a good opportunity to reflect on the fact that it is the people and their achievements that make the House, and it is so much more than just bricks and mortar. In Summer 2023, we temporarily relocated from the old Crescent building in preparation for the joining up work, with some boarders moving into Whitefield for the term. A heartfelt thank you extends to the Health Centre team for their patience during this transitional phase.

After a two-year hiatus, the much-anticipated return of House Singing, with a very spirited rendition of "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme" by Abba, might not have secured a top-three position, but the experience was undeniably enjoyed by all. The fun and camaraderie displayed by our students truly epitomises the spirit of Crescent House.

In the Michaelmas term, Crescent House did very well in a number of Inter-House Sports competitions. The prowess of the badminton team, comprising Thierry Tsai, Conrad Chung, Timmy Wong,

William Echevarria, Harold Chung, and Anson Chan, clinched the top spot overall, with Thierry claiming victory in the U18 singles competition. Meanwhile, in table tennis, Jimmy Ip, Andrew Emefiele, and Beam Mongolchaipak formed an unbeatable trio, securing the U16 title. Additionally, Lucas Mueller Quintino and Ewan Ellson showcased their skills with a cue by triumphing in the

pool competition.

The momentum continued into the Lent term with more outstanding achievements in badminton. Tim Law, Ryan Lam, and Jerry Feng secured victory in the U14 competition, with Tim winning the U14 singles title.

As summer unfolded, Archie Trietline and Matt Gabriel shone in the U15



doubles tennis competition. The Inter-House Athletics events saw Charlie Collins win the L6th High Jump, Ralph Allen the 4th Year 1500 and Papa Twum-Asare the 3rd Year Long Jump. This capped an impressive year for Ralph, who also broke the 4th Year record in the Road Relay with an impressive 8 minutes 23 seconds.

Celebrating academic achievements, several Crescent House pupils achieved exceptional results in public examinations. Stephen Lin, Lucas Mueller Quintino, Thomas Zhang, Freddie Clark, and Arth Gupta achieved an average of over 8.5 in their GCSEs. At A-Level, an impressive six Crescent pupils achieved a complete set of A*s or As, including Shawn Xu with 2 A*s and an A, and Walter Liu astonishingly

earning 5 A*s.

A heartfelt thank you is due to Heads of House Chester Shen and Angus Carle, as well as school prefects Xander Orchard, Oscar l'Anson, and Chester for their exemplary leadership. Farewells were bid to Miss Dutton, and we extend a warm welcome to Mr. Robins joining the house in September.

Special appreciation is reserved for Mr. Chase for his unwavering support as a Crescent tutor over the years, and to Miss Poole for stepping up to look after Crescent as Acting Head of House during the summer term. I congratulate her on her forthcoming marriage, and look forward to welcoming her back as Mrs Ghosh in September. My thanks go to all the tutor team, and to Mrs.

Deaves-Small as Matron for their dedicated contributions.

Looking ahead, the reins of leadership for 2023/24 will be in the capable hands of Heads of House Timmy Wong and Christian Lyons-Appiah, with Timmy and Sammy Jarvis appointed as School Prefects.

As we eagerly await our return to a new building, Crescent House is poised to embark on a new chapter in its storied history, promising a future filled with growth, accomplishments, and enduring camaraderie.

Matthew Kendry



School House



The past year has been a remarkable one for School House, with plenty of events to make up for the lost opportunities from the COVID years. House singing was a hugely successful event for the house, with the amazing rendition of *Some Nights* putting School House in third place overall. Special thanks to our brilliant conductor Oliver Glover, pianist Yubo Gao, drummer Alex Purvor, and Enoch Hung for his unforgettable solo performance.

School House sent out many teams for Road Relay, with Jim Allen impressively completing 4 legs of the run all by himself - a total of 8 laps around Albert Park! Jim's fervour for running is not to be outdone by our costume team, featuring Jonathan Huang as a Hawaiian policeman, Wit Ingpochai and Isaac Ip as police pikachus, and Alvin Tang in a cute pink tutu. Leo Miller and Henry Skelson also joined in on the fun by donning blue tightsuits with fairy wings. It is a complete miracle that neither of them tripped seeing as their vision was heavily compromised by the suit.

Ollie Ellard and Troy Gumbrell put on fantastic showings in the drama productions *Grease* and *The Visit* respectively, with many praising their performance. In the boarding house, the annual production of House Review,

written by Tunmise Adebutu, united the 6th form against the whole house with completely appropriate skits.

Many sporting events happened over the course of the year. Can Tugcetin swam at the London Aquatic Centre and skillfully won a silver medal at a national competition. Tunmise Adebutu in the 1st XV rugby team consistently plays big roles in fixtures. Similarly, Max Struthers is a core member of the golf and squash teams. Nicholas Chan won a plaque for coming 3rd in the senior men's épée in the highly prestigious National Schools competition. Leon Guan led the badminton team to many victories with a highlight being yet another victory against Sankey Academy.

Inter-house sports was also a great event for the house. Although somewhat lacking in the number of victories, our sportsmanship and collective tenacity made inter-house sports an extremely fun and fulfilling time. The School House U18 rugby team came first and their performance can only be described as impressive. A special mention to Nicholas Chan and Yubo Gao for their display of skill in inter-house fencing despite the strong opposition teams.

A whole house social at the end of the Lent term saw over 70 students playing football and eating pizza together; it was

another great chance to bond between the years.

The annual work showcase gave an insight into the excellent work done throughout School House. Aside from high-scoring tests and well written essays, a fair few EPQs with thorough research were also put on display. Leon Guan, Ollie Ellard, Ludo Orchard and Jonathan Huang all completed their research and presentation on a topic they find engaging, demonstrating a high level of perseverance throughout the one year project.

Life in the sixth form for the leavers has been made much easier by the tutoring team of Mr Simmons and Miss Perry; for all their support with UCAS and life skills we are very grateful. Equally, the whole upper sixth is thankful for the constant support of Mr Litchfield and Mr Johnson, as well as our beloved matron Storm. Finally, I wish the best of luck to the upper sixth for your upcoming endeavours - the past five years have been fun!

Isaac Ip 7AMP



Border's House



In Border's House, the academic year of 2022/23 unfolded as a nuanced tapestry, weaving together moments of triumph, camaraderie, and poignant farewells. From the spirited performance of *Yes Sir, I Can Boogie* in Michaelmas to the athletic prowess showcased in the Summer, each term etched its chapter into the history of this vibrant house.

The academic year commenced with a musical crescendo as Border's took the stage in the house singing competition. Under the baton of Felix Kind, accompanied by Lawrence Peverall on the piano, the rendition of *Yes Sir, I Can Boogie* reverberated through the theatre, leaving an indelible mark of unity and musical flair. It is rumoured that Mr Windsor was heard humming along even weeks later... The intellectual arena was not left untouched, with Border's House clinching victory in the house chess championship. The U14 and overall house swimming titles further underscored the house's competitive edge, showcasing their prowess not just in academics but in the pool as well.

The rhythm of triumph continued in Lent term, where the 5th-year road relay team, featuring Xavi McGuire, Michael

Bell, Felix Diamond, and Luke Skates, emerged as the fastest in their year group and secured a commendable 5th place overall. Simultaneously, the L6th road relay team, boasting Quinn Miell-Ingram, Toby Pinnington, Jay Cabell, and Tom Mennie, claimed the title of the fastest L6th team, securing a notable 3rd place overall. Quinn's individual feat as the fastest in the L6th category added an extra layer of accomplishment to the house's considerable running endeavours.

As winter waned and spring blossomed, Border's House continued to dominate the sports arena, securing victories in U16 football, U15 hockey, and U18 fencing, whilst Jay Cabell, Edgar Hughes, and Henry Maxton-Livesey's commendable performance led them to a runner-up position in the house debating competition, showcasing the diverse talents within the house.

The summer term unfolded as a symphony of athletic achievements for Border's. From Hector Brocklebank's triumph in U14 high jump to Kit Rice, Ed Zhan, Seth Stokes, and Paddy Kelleher's victory in the U15 4x100m relay, Border's athletes left their mark on the Tilsley Park track. Further individual wins

were recorded by Adam Andrews in the 4th year, and Elliot Broadbent, Tom Mennie and Zach Broad in the L6th. Quinn's outstanding achievement in winning the U18 1500m, setting a new school record, underscored his hard work throughout the year, which ultimately saw him being selected to represent England. The U18 4x100m



relay victory by Tom Mennie, Carl Riehl, Bertie Cassell, and Elliot Broadbent served as a fitting crescendo to an afternoon filled with strong performances.

Right at the end of term, Toby Pinnington and Drew Hambly's commendable 2nd place finish in house golf and Hugo Muller and Henry Clarke's victory in U18 tennis doubles added more accolades to the house's name.

Beyond house competitions, individual achievements dotted the landscape of Border's House, including Michael Bell's remarkable feat of stroking the 1st VIII at Henley Royal Regatta while still in the 5th year. Felix Kind and Max Siriwardene assumed leadership roles as Heads of School, providing a steady hand in guiding the school's affairs whilst acting as wonderful role models for younger students. In the realm of performing arts, Felix Kind and Will Grice captivated audiences with memorable performances in Grease adding a touch of theatrical flair and an uncomfortable degree of hip thrusting and sneering.

Further accomplishments included Alfie Stevenson in the 4th year making the final of House Public Speaking, Roscoe Marshall and Max Woodthorpe Browne writing excellent articles for Words and That, Toby Pinnington skilfully satirising



Abingdon on the pages of the Pupil Voice Report, Taha Khurram and Hussain Khan delivering a memorable assembly on the importance and impact of Ramadan, and Josh Mensah securing a rugby scholarship to university.

As the academic year drew to a close, Border's House bid farewell to familiar faces. The transitions of Mr McDonnell to Germany, Mr Barber to Crescent House, and Mrs Kaye assuming leadership of Donnelly's House marked poignant farewells. As these changes unfolded,

the house community reflected on the impact these figures had.

To our departing U6th students, we extend our heartfelt farewells. Your contributions to Border's House have been memorable and impactful, and as you embark on new journeys, remember that you'll always have a home here.

Here's to 2023/24!

David Border



Donnelly's House



The 2022-23 academic year was another of many positives for the House. Peter Harris got the year's inter-House competitions underway with a well-prepared speech in the public speaking competition, representing the House superbly. Next came the return of House Singing. A new event for many, and it certainly didn't disappoint with an inspired House effort led by Edward Bennett and Oliver Hobbs securing victory with a rendition of Counting Stars by OneRepublic. Next up was the third House Pizza and Football evening, as we all continued to settle positively into the House.

This was followed by inter-house sport in which yet again the House managed to fill every event. Will Darbishire came third in table tennis, whilst the joint under 15 / 16 rugby team came second. In the swimming pool overall the House came fourth, with the bike and shooting teams finishing third overall.

Monty Salmon secured the House Pool trophy for 2022, whilst in the end of term assembly the Renaissance Person Of

The Term Award was awarded to upper sixth Rohan Chandrasekkakaran for his continued portrayal of the House values.

Before term closed it was a pleasure to welcome over 100 members of the House community to the annual carol service, for a very festive evening.

The Lent Term started on the stage again with debating, in which Archie Leishman, Harry Litchfield, Killian McKay and Edward Lam gave their all in representing Donnelly's.

The pace of events then returned with the Road Relay, in which the House entered 20 teams (one more than last year!), finishing first overall. The fourth-year team of William Walters, Monty Salmon, Sam Wood and Hugh Clarke came first in their year group (6th overall), and Oliver Wardle was the fastest third year.

Returning to the stage it was great to see a number of the House represented in both Eleven, and Grease, particularly those taking to the stage for the final

time. Both were fantastic performances which were very much enjoyed.

All of the above was quickly followed by inter-House sport. In football Donnelly's finished second overall with the U15's winning their competition; the U16's and U18's both fourth. The House also won the U18 rowing alongside the U14 rowing, securing first place overall! Daniel Harrison came first in pool, with Josh Wilson third, again securing yet another first place on a highly successful afternoon for the House.

As the term came to close it was a pleasure to present Sam Wormald with the Renaissance Person Of The Term award – partially for his work within the Young Enterprise programme.

The summer term as always came and went in a flash. Sports Day was early this year, and there were a number of fine performances. Alec Vincent, Luca Centazzo-Hammersley, Hugh Clark, Orson Kenth, Ed Millbourn, James Grubb, Jacob Charity-Williams, Fergus Chettleburgh and Felix Salmon all



winning their events, whilst there were a number of last minute calls ups to help earn every important point. Overall Donnelly's came second, the House's best performance for many years.

Sports day was followed by inter-House sport in which Lawrie Lane, Conor Mead, James Grubb and Edward

Millbourn secured the U15 rowing title. The U15 cricketers secured third, whilst in the golf Joey Rehman and Will Masson finished 4th. The volleyball team went one better finishing 3rd, whilst the tug of war team were a formidable force securing 1st place! Daniel Harrison and Leon Harris took the climbing wall by storm, winning the competition despite

being the youngest year group entered. In the squash Jeetu Raj came 4th, whilst Oliver Hill came 1st in the third-year squash. On the tennis court, Fred Thorp and Josh Sharff came 2nd in the sixth form doubles, with Monty Bowles also coming 2nd in the 6th form singles.

As we came to a close, the departure of this year's Upper Sixth was an emotional one as they are a fantastic group of young men that it has been a pleasure to watch grow and develop over the past four years. I very much enjoyed being able to share a drink with them at our House leavers BBQ, and I look forward to hearing the paths they have trodden when they return for events in the future.

The final Renaissance Person Of The Term award for the academic year went to Sam Corbett.

Whilst the House may look slightly different for 2023-24, I am in no doubt that it will be another highly enjoyable and rewarding one.

Tom Donnelly



Franklin's House



The Franklin's House prefect team this year was led by Ben MacLennan and Sam Turner as Heads of House, supported by Lachlan Borthwick and Krishen Rao as Deputy Heads, and Zac Connell, Johnny James and Christopher Skelton as House Prefects. They were a tremendous team, leading with enthusiasm and setting a superb example of commitment, good humour and friendliness. I thank them all warmly for helping to make it such a successful year for us.

The Michaelmas term began as usual with the House Singing Competition, and our version of Lovely Day was certainly mellow. Team spirit was good, and Josef O'Connor led us with commitment and style, but there were to be no prizes this time. Next year!

The first house sports event of the year was where we really stepped up to show what we could do. We had one of our most successful days ever, with everyone turning up and competing with all their talent and commitment. We won the U16 rugby competition and the overall rugby trophy; the U18 swimming competition; the individual pool tournament; the house bike relay; the

U18 table tennis, and the table tennis event overall. We were also runners-up in the badminton and squash competitions, with the top individual

squash player. It was a fantastic day of cooperation and genuine house spirit.

The Lent term brought more competition and more house success. The Franklin's



team of three reached the semi-final of the debating competition. In the road relay we had some excellent team performances, and the highlight was Johnny James running the course in an astonishing 7 minutes 32 seconds despite gale force wind and rain. Then, in the second house sports day, we were the runners-up in the inter-house football, the fencing, and the ergo relay, which also clinched us second place in the rowing overall. We went one better in the U15 table tennis, where both our singles and doubles players won, giving us a convincing victory overall. We also won the badminton singles and doubles, and therefore the whole event. Finally came the water polo competition, where we defended our title from last year to win again after an exciting battle. It was another day of brilliant cooperation as well as individual success.

The summer term inter-house competition was also a great day for us. We were runners-up in four events; the U15 cricket, the open golf competition,

the tug of war, and the volleyball event. Our squash players did even better to win the squash, and we had a brilliant day in the tennis; totalling the results from all year groups in singles and doubles events, Franklin's emerged as overall winners by a convincing margin.

The athletics day is always a highlight of the school year in terms of house competition. Franklin's had a wonderful day, with winners in eight individual events, and a host of excellent individual efforts. In the end our 3rd year team came 3rd, and our L6 team came second. Combined with a strong result for the 4th years, and culminating in a fantastic victory in the Golden Mile relay, this meant that for the first time ever, Franklin's were overall athletics champions! It was the perfect finish to a great year of team effort and house spirit.

As always, Franklin's students received brilliant help and support from their tutors, and I owe them my heartfelt

thanks once again. We were sorry to say goodbye to Jason Preece, who has been such a great tutor for many years; his good humour, kindness and concern for his tutees enhanced their progress and school lives beyond measure. He will always be welcome in Franklin's House.

Well done, last but not least, to the Franklin's boys themselves, for their good humour, friendliness, energy and commitment in every aspect of their school careers.

David Franklin



O'Doherty's House



Wow, what a busy year! The new academic year welcomed the third year cohort, alongside Mrs Powell, who is a 3rd year tutor and teaches psychology. We also welcomed Mrs Zhang, Head of Mandarin, in January and both quickly settled in and have been a huge asset to the house. The new House Prefects took up their role in earnest and have been dedicated role models and ambassadors for O'Doherty's. Probably the most popular addition to the house though, was the new pool table that converts into a table tennis or air hockey table. This has been used throughout the year and I am acquiring quite a collection of broken pool cue tips due to wear and tear!

Our annual 5-aside football and pizza event was as popular as usual and we kept up the tradition of Christmas decorations being put up by the 3rd year on the first Thursday of December. Our mentoring program continued to grow and it has been lovely to see the L6th mentors guide and support the 3rd year as they navigate the year. Our collection

of fridge magnets collected on travels far and wide has grown and it is providing some great topics of conversation around the world map. House Singing made a comeback this year and Freddie Chelsom did a fantastic job of leading the house through rehearsals and the competition itself. Orlando Scott represented us in the Public Speaking Competition and made us proud with his

Henry V speech and Tom Sherwood, Barney Church and Orlando Scott represented us in the Inter House Debating where we stormed through to the final and were overall winners. This is the first time in the seven years that I have been Head of House that O'Doherty's House has won, so I was especially proud.



We try and do something new each year and this year Will Howat set up a weekly house podcast. These were organised and recorded by him and were incredibly professional. The inaugural episode was Will talking about how he got into podcasting and his work experience. Other guests included Oliver Absolom, talking about Formula 1, Bertie Dinsey on AI in the arts, and a group of L6th talking about the Rugby World Cup.

Inter house Sports saw us in full force, winning the U15 swimming competition, being overall winners of the hockey and football, and our U15 Ergo team won their competition. We also won cricket, volleyball and the U15s singles won tennis. The road relay was a fantastic event and O'D's fielded an impressive number of teams.

As the year drew to a close the House Prefects were awarded purple bow ties and the U6th Leavers were given handmade cufflinks as a reminder of their time in the house. They were an amazing group with lots of talents and personalities and they will be missed. We wish them much luck for the future.

Emily O'Doherty



Pygott's House



The start of Michaelmas 2022 was truly the start of a new era. The Queen died and we entered the 3rd Carolean age. It was logical in such circumstances to consider some of the big questions and the first house assembly began by solving the meaning of life (I can't tell you what it is, you had to have been there). Duly inspired we went on to have one of our most successful terms. Once again we topped the school commendations charts and three people had hit 30 by Christmas (Shestopal, Saunders and Farr). For the house public speaking we had our internal competition first with Edmund Kimber, Alex Serbinenko, Alex Woolmer, Alex Lees and Tom Harding battling it out in the Amey Theatre. This contest was won by Alex Lees (L6th). After years of being robbed in the whole school finals, I'm pleased to say that Alex went on to win the whole thing. What a triumph!

I'm sorry to report that house singing did not go fully to plan. Despite picking one of the greatest songs ever (Meat Loaf's "I Would Do Anything for Love, but I Won't Do That"), despite having Oliver Simpson sing an incredible (very high up) solo, and despite performing better than any other house, we didn't even place. Well done to Rory Kind, however, for conducting, Philip Kimber for playing the piano and Edmund Kimber on the

drums. Next year perhaps ...

In inter-house sports, we aim for total mediocrity in all things, and the house didn't let us down. Another last place in chess was humiliating (1.5 points this time though instead of 1 last year) and last place in swimming was expected. The mediocre sweet spot was found in the shooting (5th), bike race (4th), pool (5th) and badminton (7th) while there were famous 1st place victories in squash and rugby (first time). Well done to all who took part.

This term also saw Michael Winstanley

represent GB at windsurfing, Will D'Arcy represent GB at biathlon, Oliver Simpson play Elgar's cello concerto and Alex Lees perform in a professional production of a *Monster Calls* at the Windmill Theatre. Will Simpson also was part of the national T20 winning team at cricket. Well done all!

At the start of Lent, we considered whether A Christmas Carol was the new Christmas story, supplanting Mary and Jesus. "I wear the chain I forged in life" warns Jacob Marley. Forewarned we were determined not to forge ourselves a



chain during the forthcoming term by making sure we put in 100%. Lent 2021 was our "termus mirabilis" winning almost everything. This Lent, I'm sorry to say "termus horribilus" and we went an entire Interhouse Sports without winning a single event, for the first time! Even the squash, which we invariably win, was a disaster (6th place). However, honour was restored through the high levels of mediocrity on display from all - fifth place in the rowing, hockey and badminton. The debating is usually an event we do well in and after last year's victory, hotly anticipated. I'm sorry to report that the team (Matthew Lawrence, George K-H and Harry Boumphrey) was knocked out before the first round losing to a scratch debating society team. Next year eh?

The road relay on the other hand was a terrific success. I'm very pleased to report that Pygott's had not only the fastest team in the school but also the fastest schoolboy team ever! Henry Channon, Will D'Arcy, Robin Hambidge and Tommy Harris ran it in 35 minutes and 12 seconds – an absolute triumph – well done!

The Summer term started with us considering the many lessons to be learnt from the great musical Hamilton,

the main one being to not waste the time we have or the gifts we've been given.

The big ticket item this term is of course House Athletics and it's an event we've never come close to winning. I'm sorry to report that like the Scarlet Pimpernel, it remains elusive! However, there were some fabulous performances: Quinlan Fieldgate won the 800 in a speedy 2:11, Seb Broad and Foon Chan won the 200, Nathan Corbin and James Henderson won the 1500 and 800 respectively, and Foon and Alcuin cleaned up in the senior discus (winning A and B). Much coveted 5th places were also won by George K-H and Alex Serbinenko in the 100, Max Sheriff in the long jump, Alex Fleming in the 200, Takumi in the 400 and Yasin Saoudi in the shot putt. Well done! Alas, these Herculean efforts were not enough to procure us a podium finish and overall we came 6th.

The summer inter-house sports was another story entirely and I'm pleased to say there were some notable successes. Once again, we won the squash (Sammy Kleinknecht & Nathan Corbin) and we also smashed all comers in the golf (Will Barrett and Tom Ferguson). 3rd places were had in the tug of war and the climbing (Piers Johnston and Harry Boumphrey) and the volleyball and

cricket teams took respectable 4th places. Finally, in the croquet (the most coveted trophy) we won spectacularly with devastating performances from Archie Williams and Alcuin Wright. Well done!

Academically, it was a hugely successful year. Once again (every year I've been housemaster) we topped the commendation tables and Balraj Purewal won the house competition for the most commendations (not quite reaching Nathan Shestopal's record, however). There were house prize-winning exam results from Ben Farr, James Henderson and Alcuin Wright while the U6th and 5th year all did fabulously well in their A levels and GCSEs.

Special thanks go to the heads of house – Peter Bradley, Tom Harding Milo Lennox and all of the tutors. We were especially sad to say goodbye to Mr. Bignell, an absolute Pygott's legend and all-round good egg. Here's to more victories, or at least mediocrity, next year!

Richard Pygott



Stockdale's House



Starting as a new housemaster and taking over from Mr James, high standards had been set and there was much to build on as the only brand new day house of the academic year. It has been a fantastic 12 months, with many successes to celebrate.

Early on in Michaelmas, Oliver Smith stepped up to conduct the House singing, with a rousing rendition of Backstreet Boys' "I Want it That Way". Special mention to Mark Taylor and Joe Watkiss for their solos in front of a packed Amey Theatre, with second place an excellent result to start off Inter House competition for Stockdale's. One cannot ignore the mastermind behind House Singing, Mr Stinton, as well as being a loyal tutor to the House, who retired at the end of this academic year. He has been an incredible support to the House and students who have moved through Abingdon, musical or otherwise, and we wish him the best in the next chapter.

Charlie Knight in the third year was then selected after internal 'speak-offs' to represent the House in Public Speaking. He put in a near flawless performance and judges highly commended his efforts, narrowly missing out on first

place. An outstanding achievement considering many other Houses fielded much older and more experienced competitors.

Michaelmas Inter House Sport had wins for Jamie Ross U15 and Charlie Knight U14 in squash singles, Ben Brewster and Rahul Singh U18 in doubles badminton, Ollie Sherratt and Alfie Smethurst U16 in table tennis doubles, Dennis Pym and Dominic Schneider in pool and Marius Williamson and Kevin

Rao in shooting. There were plenty of podium finishes, with two standouts being second places in the U18 swimming and the bike challenge. Special mention to Aryan Lyal, who stepped up to the bike challenge last minute to help the team achieve second place.

After Christmas, we moved on to the road relay event, with Oliver Sherratt taking the fastest 5th year and the third year team of Josh Costello, Oli





McGuinness, Gregor McVie and Benedict Furger the fastest in their year group. There was great representation on the course, as well as supporters cheering on the runners and special mention to Alex Leech who ran all four legs of his team event (due to illness) in full school uniform (due to forgetfulness).

The Lent Inter House sports saw many tough battles, with the U18 squash team of Luke Remington and Wilf Barter victorious. In hockey, both U18 and U15 teams came in second place and the U18 footballers achieved third place. The water polo team narrowly missed out on first place to Franklins with evidence of a strong core of emerging talent for future years.

The Summer term welcomed the return of Inter House debating with Dylan Dodson, Nathan van Blerk and Jack Summerley representing the House on whether artists have a moral responsibility to be political in their work. A fascinating discussion with the team

narrowly missing out to Borders (by one point) in progressing to the next round.

Inter House athletics was an opportunity for the younger years to shine, with the 3rd years winning their age group and the 4th years placing third overall. On the track there were plenty of first place finishes; Sam Wilkins U14 and Thomas de Kauwe U15 in the 100m, Peter Fleming U15 in the 800m, Josh Costello U14 in the 300m, Mack Cusk U18 in the 1500m and both U14 4x100m relays (Benedict Furger, Toby Gadney, Liam Sadler, Josh Costello, Adam Slatter, Joe Richards, Oli McGuinness and Oliver Cloke) and the U15 A relay team (Ben Bromage, George Austin, Alfonso Aquitania and Thomas de Kauwe). On the field, again, first place finishes with Alfonso Aquitania U15 in the Long Jump, Tom Bodley and Gregor McVie U14 in the javelin. These first places do not tell the full story and there were many other close finishes across the events of the day.

The final sporting event of the year showed the fatigue / injury of competitors fighting hard to win in school fixtures every weekend. There were some respectable performances and the podium finishes were; Oli Cloke in the U15 singles tennis playing up a year and Mack Cusk and Kajan Sivakumar in the U18 croquet.

Running the House takes a team and I am grateful to Freddie Stanford, Alex de Beer, Ben Anker, Josh Braich, Ben Brewster, Henry Beer and Kyle Walsh my House prefects this academic year. I am looking forward to welcoming the new team in September to take on the mantle and continue their good work.

Saying goodbye to our leavers is always a time of mixed emotions but this group has developed into a strong group of leaders. To summarise some of the positions of responsibility they have found themselves in during their U6th; Head of CCF, First Orchestra 1st violin, School prefects, swim team and water polo captain, senior football captain, Peer Support Leaders, leading Debating Society, as well as prizes for academic excellence in their A-level study.

It has been a great first year as a new House, with pupil engagement and enthusiasm borne out in competition but also in helping to shape the new values introduced in September in their everyday actions. I look forward to seeing the House continue to grow and develop further over the coming terms.

Will Stockdale



Lower School



The new academic year got off to a great start in Lower School with a visit from Mike Mullen, former BMX half-pipe world champion who, as well as demonstrating his skill on two wheels with an impressive display of tricks that included jumping over no fewer than four of the tutors, gave great advice for the year ahead by sharing his belief in the power of “flearning” or learning from failure.

The House Singing competition, back after a two year absence due to the pandemic, offered a great opportunity for the whole House to come together with a common purpose. “When I grow up” from the musical Matilda was the song chosen due to the appropriateness of the lyrics and the very singable tune. Justin Mi and Ajeet Nagi provided an excellent accompaniment and Leo Minns was a very calm and confident conductor. Although we didn’t quite defend the title that we had won in 2019, the final performance was a great effort – even if the judge felt we didn’t smile enough!

In the term’s tutor group competitions, 2G set the early pace with victory in the reading challenge, rugby and the Lower School Challenge, while in the first year

1P were dominant on the rugby pitch and 1F the kings of general knowledge.

Christmas was soon upon us with an impressive array of Christmas jumpers on display in aid of charity, if not good taste, excellent performances by Lower School Band and Chapel Choir at the carol service, and the whole of the first year throwing themselves fully into performances of “Frosty the Snowman” and “I shoulda been a North Pole elf” under the enthusiastic direction of Mr Fox at the Christmas Concerts.

Early in the Lent Term, the six tutor groups did battle across the chess board in a very competitive tournament. There were several very close games but 1F and 2C were the year group winners, and 1F (Albert Eaglestone, Carl Hana and Owen Ngai) went on to win the overall title. Later in the term, 1F also showed their ability to disrupt the form book and defeat second year opposition when they beat 2H in the grand final of the public speaking competition with Will Harding, Carl and William Pearce Harvey talking on the dangers of climate change. 1P and 2C were the inter-tutor group cross country champions, while 1M and 2H won both the hockey and road relay, with Miley Vann and Freddie

Stevens posting the fastest times in the latter.

A key component of the Be More Griffen programme is the idea of encouraging the boys to be empathetic and nurturing, thinking of others and appreciating diversity in the school and the wider world. It was great to see the JEDI (Junior Equality Diversity and Inclusion) group organising several events over the course of the year to promote this. A particularly successful activity in the Lent Term saw Chinese New Year marked in the Houseroom with the opportunity for the boys to get their names written out in Chinese characters with Owen Ngai taking the lead with some beautiful calligraphy. £220 was raised for Meningitis Research by the annual charity football tournament which, after an exciting penalty shoot out, was won by Team No Name (Yiannis Black, Joe Campbell, Rhys Green, Archie Haynes, Zaki Saoudi and Jack Taylor).

It was one of the most successful years in living memory in terms of the number of scholarships awarded to second years after the various examination and audition processes. Congratulations go to Kwame Abayateye (drama and music exhibition), Arran Bell (drama), Oli

Blaylock (sport), Louis de Chazal (academic and music), Anthony Galvanovskis (art), Archie Haynes (academic), Andrey Kavalov (academic), Joe Kerrigan (academic), Ajeet Nagi (music exhibition), Evan Pollard (academic), Felix Price (academic and music exhibition), William Reid (academic) and Wilf Rice (sport).

After two very successful adventure trips over the Easter break, sporting endeavours focussed on the cricket pitch, tennis court, and athletics track with a very high number of the boys participating in one or more of these. Particular mention should go to first year Cyrus Hui who was selected to represent the school in the second senior team, playing against boys 6 years his senior in tennis and, by winning the Oxfordshire Play Your Way to Wimbledon U14 tournament, got to play at SW19 in the summer holiday. Team success saw the U12s get to the final of the County Cup after winning their semi-final against MCS in which Patrick Dineen starred with both bat and ball, taking 4 for 17 including a hat-trick to rip through their top order batting and scoring an impressive 61 not out.

Creativity was also very much on display in the summer months with a very elaborate and flamboyant range of crowns designed for the Art Department's competition to mark the coronation of King Charles III, and very high standards of musical performance in evidence at both the inter-tutor group music competition, which was won by 2H with their rendition of "Beggin'" by Maneskin, and the annual Gala Concert which involved every single boy in Lower School. Arguably the artistic highlight of the term however was Mrs Sharman's very ambitious drama production of Peter Pan: the Lost Boy. Peter Pan, Captain Hook, Wendy and Tinker Bell were joined on stage by an accordion-playing crocodile, mermaids, and a large cast of pirates and lost boys to put on a very professional performance which, in a first for the Amey Theatre, saw some of the cast flying around the stage on wires – the risk assessment was a rather lengthy document!

Tutor group competitions came thick and fast as the term went on. 1M had an

impressive string of victories in water polo, athletics, reading, cricket and swimming and, despite a last minute rally from 1P who took the Countdown and tug of war crowns, were not to be denied the overall year group victory, even if only by a mere 2 points. 2H had things more their own way in the second year, winning half of the year's competition and claiming second place in all but one of the others, and were 20 points ahead of their nearest competitors 2C at the end of term.

The final week of term saw the annual Be More Griffen Celebration when we were joined by Paralympian Ian Rose, a blind judo player, who talked about the dedication and resilience he needed to show to win his two Paralympic medals. Ian then presented the special end of year prizes to Louis de Chazal, Felix Price and Harish Sivakumar (Baker Award), Charlie Bodley (The Broadbent Cup for sporting excellence), Rhys Green (The Cooper Cup for excellence in reading), Nikita Shchepinov (The Dillon Cup for service) and Freddie Farrell (The Woodgett Cup). The academic prizes for coming top of their tutor group in the

summer exams were awarded to Louis de Chazal (2C), Anthony Galvanovskis (2G), Felix Price (2H), William Pearce Harvey (1F), Brian Chu (1M) and George Fergusson (1P).

As the above clearly shows, it has been a very busy and successful year and that is only possible due to all the hard work put in by the excellent team of tutors. My thanks go to all of them, especially Mr Fox who, although only with us for one year before moving on to a new job closer to home in Cheltenham, has made a big impact on music-making in Lower School. I wish the second years well as they enter Middle School and, given how well they have responded to all the challenges and opportunities offered to them over the last two years, am confident that they will go on to achieve great things as they move up through the school.

Adam Jenkins



Staff Farewells

Alice Perry

Alice joined the Physics department five years ago, brand new to teaching, and her immediate enthusiasm and commitment to the profession were quickly apparent. Many long evenings were spent typing up her own fabulous worksheets on LaTeX before realising there were easier ways to do things! After her initial year, she was able to complete her PGCE and become a fully-fledged teacher and valuable member of the school community.

Alice spent her whole time at Abingdon as a boarding tutor in School House. She had the ability to laugh at herself and to bring cynical students around and see that she was usually right; all of her tutor groups ended up loving her approach and support for them. In the boarding house she was caring and helpful to everyone and spent hours helping sixth formers with their personal statements, understanding physics or discussing the origins of the stars. Her weeknight duties featured nachos and lots of socialising, whilst she introduced

dozens of boarders to the joy of an afternoon playing board games; Alice will be hugely missed in School House.

As well as teaching and boarding, Alice was teacher in charge of croquet and relished the (few) opportunities to contend in the highly competitive national croquet scene. Abingdonians will be grateful for the very fetching croquet sweater vests she managed to secure for years to come.

Alice's passion for astronomy was widely known among students and teachers alike and she became the go-to member of the department for space-related advice and an advocate for the contentious Hertzsprung-Russell diagram. Nothing would vex Alice more than mistaking astrology for astronomy, so naturally this quickly became a favourite pastime in the Physics department.

As well as taking a lead in providing observation evenings for A Level physicists, she supported students through the GCSE Astronomy course using her expert knowledge to develop resources and run revision classes for

those taking the exam. This resulted in several Abingdonians getting good grades in an additional subject that not many people can put on their CV. The recorded presentations that Alice produced for the school planetarium will be a lasting legacy as much of the audio is in her own voice and will continue to pass on her enthusiasm for Astronomy to many future cohorts of students both at Abingdon and in partner schools that come to visit.

Alice moves on to Oundle to pursue her passion for outreach and we wish her all the best as she progresses her career and continues to inspire more generations of young physicists and astronomers in the local community.

Ben Simmons

Cassie Westwood

A former academic at Oxford, Cassie joined the English department in January 2023 to cover Kate Isle's maternity leave, and before long she was making a huge impact. Despite joining us in the middle of the year, she settled in extremely quickly, teaching A Level, a GCSE specification that was new to her and several Key Stage 3 classes, while also contributing to the Inklings Lower School creative writing activity and the AFA creative writing course in the 6th Form. Her refreshing style - reassuringly scholarly but anything but stuffy - was popular with the pupils, who made excellent progress in her classes. Although Cassie was only with us for two terms, she was a full and active member of the department, collaborating widely with English colleagues on planning and other projects and touring interview candidates around a campus that she had barely had the opportunity to explore for herself.

I will miss Cassie's proactive attitude. She was always first in the office in the



morning and relished the opportunity to do and experience more in the department and cover absent colleagues, which partly explains why she was one of the few of us teaching a full timetable in June and July. She is also a superbly reflective teacher, quickly adapting her teaching style to suit Abingdon classes, which, she explained, are quite different from those encountered at her previous school, Lady Eleanor Holles.

Cassie also made a significant contribution outside her English classroom. She was active in LGBTQIA+ matters across the school and put forward several titles for the Pride reading list. Plus, in a department largely comprising parents of young children, she dazzled us with news of her social calendar and offered a welcome injection of fun. Alas, within a few months of joining us, Headington snapped her up with a permanent post for September. We wish her all the best in this exciting new venture!

Matthew Coolin

Katherine Burrows

Katherine joined the English department in September 2016 with much enthusiasm and energy for teaching and learning. During her first year, she sought to create excellent relationships with students and staff. She was a strong advocate of the 'department social' and organised many department trips to the various pubs of Oxfordshire before she went on maternity leave in 2018 to have her second baby.

In her seven years with us, Katherine gained a reputation among colleagues and pupils as a teaching and learning innovator, constantly trying new things in the classroom and encouraging her fellow English teachers to reappraise their practice. For example, she frequently experimented with quizzes, retrieval work and instantaneous verbal feedback, sharing her experiences in department meetings. In doing this, she wanted to continuously improve outcomes for her pupils, but she was also driven by a desire to make a bigger impact on learning in more efficient ways



that did not increase workload. She also pioneered the 'Let's Think in English' lessons, which provided an opportunity for pupils to explore morality and philosophy in their study of literary texts. Katherine's interest in teaching and learning also led to her joining the ADTL team and writing several articles for the Times Educational Supplement on subjects such as collaborative planning and using a visualiser in lessons. The boys will miss her thoughtful, calm and unfailingly kind presence in the classroom and her willingness to dedicate personal time to helping them improve their performance.

We will also remember Katherine for her significant contributions away from the chalk face. A former actor, Katherine brought some theatricality to the English Other Half programme in her leadership of the 'Poetry By Heart' activity, and in recent years she has overseen Words and That, introducing theme-based editions to keep the magazine relevant in an increasingly competitive internal publications market. Moreover, we will miss Katherine's presence in the department: the laughs; the tales of wild swimming in the dubious waters of the Thames Valley; her athletic contributions to the departmental road relay team that masked the embarrassingly slow times of her colleagues; and, of course, her love of stationery which was always a fruitful topic of department meetings and INSET days.

Having taught in this all-boys independent school for the past seven years, Katherine leaves for a new adventure (and shorter commute) at Didcot Girls' School. All of us in the English department wish her the very best for the next stage of her career.

Matthew Coolin

Richard Jackson

Richard joined Abingdon in 2005 as a part-time history teacher. He was working in GCHQ at the time and had been in the navy so he had had an interesting career prior to joining Abingdon. Richard soon established himself as a character within the school common room. His love of uniforms, secret societies and dinner clubs meant that he was always ready to organise an evening out. Memorable ones included attending the annual commemorative mass at St Benet's to commemorate the martyrdom of Charles I (I didn't know such an event existed prior to Richard joining the school) and a seafood jamboree at Radley College. He also organised 'safari' dinners and entertainments for fellow boarding staff. He was also always keen to join in departmental trips and on his tours around Berlin and Belgium was never shy of sampling the local food and drink.



I recall him ordering a 'moules mariniere' at a coffee break in Arras and also managing to put away a three-course meal in a shopping centre in Berlin on a 'tea break' one afternoon. He also won the 2013 Berlin Currywurst challenge with ease. Richard was always great company on these trips and he organised an annual outing to the Chalke Valley History Festival, a key moment in realising we were nearing the end of the year and the summer holidays beckoned.

Richard married in the summer of 2021. The wedding was followed by an adventurous honeymoon in the Middle East – including to locations on the FCO's red list. Richard's white line suit and Panama hat ensured that no one could mistake him or anyone other than an Englishman. He leaves now for St Edward's, Oxford. The History Department will miss him – his easy rapport with the students and wide-ranging intellectual interests meant that he was a popular teacher who engaged his classes with various diversions. In addition, he was always ready to help out. It is the end of an era: no longer will his Jaguar be seen gliding through the school just as registration ends after another delay on the 'Kennington interchange'. No doubt, however, the Common Room at St Edward's has already been enlivened by his presence.

David McGill

Joe McDonnell

Joe came to us in September 2016, originally to fill a part-time position in the department and then filled the rest of his time with boarding duties in School House and coaching quite a bit of rugby and hockey. His can-do attitude soon earned him a reputation as a positive and outgoing member of the Common Room, and he was invited to accompany a number of trips including the Lower School Easter adventure jaunts. We gave Joe quite the baptism of fire in his

first year; we decided to present a double bill of Lower and Middle School productions on the same night at the end of the Michaelmas Term. Joe managed to pull together a dynamic production of *Treasure Island* with about 45 Lower School swashbucklers who barely fitted on the Amey Theatre stage, just in lunchtime rehearsals! Quite the feat.

After a couple of years Joe went full time, and turned his talents to teaching drama A Level jointly with SHSK. Joe's lessons were always convivial to drop into, with a light and creative atmosphere running through the hard slog of coming up with *Lysistrata* concepts on a weary Thursday afternoon in January. Joe also developed his directing skills by putting on a memorable production of *Lord of the Flies* in which he managed to not only utilise the Kind brothers for the script's requirement of identical twins, but also successfully convinced Mr Lloyd-White to cover the Amey Theatre stage in sand to immerse the audience in the setting. The following year he took on his first senior production which was a splendid production of OA Mike Bartlett's "future history" play *King Charles III*. Keen to add as much breadth to his extracurricular as possible, he also found time to join the DofE team, as well as taking on the role of Assistant Boarding Head of House in School House. After a couple of years, Joe and his partner (former German assistant Marisa) moved



out to Marsh Baldon where they enjoyed living in a quaint little cottage, becoming the unwitting carers of a peacock they named Philip who had allegedly become stranded in their garden after blowing there in a storm!

Joe's crowning achievement at Abingdon was, without question, his three-night sold out run of Grease last academic year. Joe worked incredibly hard with the tech team to produce a fabulous production which boasted an excellently strong company with some outstanding lead performances from an immensely talented cast who have memories which will last a lifetime. Joe has left us as he and Marisa have decided their next chapter will be in Berlin, where Joe will teach at BBIS International School. They gain an extremely kind, hard working teacher whom I have no doubt will throw himself into every area of school life with aplomb.

Ben Phillips

Alex Fox

Alex Fox came to us from Cokethorpe and quickly settled into the Music department at Abingdon. His lively, energetic nature was keenly appreciated by the staff and students here. He was certainly a popular teacher in the music department who fostered great relationships with staff and students here. Additionally he was remarkably well-organised and derived a somewhat inexplicable satisfaction in putting together his spreadsheets to prepare for the many events he organised during his time here.

Alex was a real team player who dived into musical life at Abingdon. In his short time here he directed a highly successful production of Grease, headed up the inaugural Rock concert, led the Chapel Choir and stepped in to cover the Big Band on the France and Belgium tour. A real highlight of his time were the extraordinary performances he put together with the Lower School choir who performed with real verve and enthusiasm under his direction. Not only that but he was willing to step in to cover keyboard parts, play bassoon or saxophone, or lend his voice as a singer



to support various ensembles when needed.

Aside from Music, Alex was a coffee enthusiast, cat-lover, cricket fan and long-time Crystal Palace supporter, often travelling down to Selhurst Park to see his team play when he got the chance. Alas, the 90 minute commute between Cheltenham and Abingdon proved too much: he left us to join the music department at Cheltenham College a mere 10 minute walk from his home. We wish him all the very best.

Jason Preece

Raquel Fraile Munoz

Raquel started off her Abingdon life as Spanish assistant back in September 2016. Right from the start, the qualities that were to make her such a respected teacher were in evidence: commitment, professionalism, passion and a great warmth and sense of humour.

From day one, Raquel worked incredibly hard, always going above and beyond, always keen to help with anything and everything. She was so effective and popular in her role of language assistant that of course we wanted her as a teacher. She did Mrs Engel-Hart's maternity cover from 2017, and then

luckily the number of Spanish sets increased enough for us to be able to create a new space for a full-time teacher.

Raquel was without doubt a vocational teacher, an outstanding one. Her clear explanations were second to none, as were her resources. Along with her high expectations and great rapport with students, it all combined to make her someone at the very top of her game. She was equally fantastic as a colleague - efficient and organised but also always encouraging and supportive. Friendly, thoughtful, kind... and fun! What a great smile and laugh!

Raquel was involved in many aspects of school life. She loved her DofE trips - she enjoyed seeing the pupils challenge themselves and gain in self confidence, whilst being there in case of need. Her role as boarding tutor in School House was incredibly important to her; chatting problems through with pupils, supporting them, cooking with them during her legendary Tuesday tapas nights - all of these aspects gave her great personal enjoyment and satisfaction. As a middle-school tutor to several School House tutor groups she was able to empathise with the students if they struggled and always seemed to understand and care for that individual's unique background and current situation.

In her last few years here, Raquel's interest in wellbeing and self-care grew



further, and she joined forces with Henry Barnes to offer yoga classes to both staff and students. In this role Raquel was exceptional, and highly regarded by both the student and staff attendees. Her approach was one of kindness and compassion, and she worked tirelessly to develop her own practice, create bespoke vinyasas and ensure the smooth running of all the sessions. Their partnership saw the club grow massively, with up to fifty pupils in attendance on occasion for the Friday period eight sessions.

Of course, doing so much took its toll and we ended up having to give her training in saying “No”.... We practised it: “Raquel, this weekend could you please take a school trip, run the yoga club, do an 8-hour boarding duty, write your reports and write a booklet on the literature topic?....“Yeee, NO”. Around the same time, Raquel decided that, whilst her frankness was a breath of fresh air to most, she was “too Latin” for others in terms of displaying her emotions, and that these momentary shows of anger or annoyance were offensive to British sentiments. So she trained herself to react in a different way, deciding instead to make her voice go very very quiet... “I’m not sure I agree with that way of doing things”... it can be argued that this was even scarier!

Raquel's presence, even so soon after her departure, is already sorely missed. Her generosity, warmth and beneficence are rare facets in the busy humdrum of school life; she reminded everyone of

important ideals and values, leading by example and inspiring her students.

It is a source of great pleasure that Raquel met her now-husband, Mike Davies, here at the school. And it is a source of great comfort that they have gone off together to Madrid to work in an international school there and so start a new and exciting phase of their lives; we wish them much happiness.

Sophie Payne, James Ambrose, Henry Barnes and Mike Litchfield



Tim Chase

Tim Chase joined Abingdon as an appointment of Dave McGill, who was the Head of History at the time. Tim very quickly slotted into the team, enjoying his role as head of the Lower School History Society and as an outstanding teacher of history. A profound fashion aficionado to boot, he quickly became the one of the best dressed teachers in the school, second only, of course, to Mr Windsor himself.

As mentioned in his three page exclusive interview for the Pupil Voice Magazine, Tim has a motto for his fashion habits: “everything I ever wear has been thrifted”, he maintains. Aside from the panoply of brand new puffer jackets, carefully designed suits, gilets, wax jackets, pricey Nike trainers and expensive sunglasses, this definitely holds true. However, I cannot do his get-up justice without using his own words: ‘one day I could be looking like I’m going on a Boxing Day Hunt, in a Schoffel and a Barbour jacket (presumably thrifted), and the next day looking like i’m a fifth year wannabe roadman’. Tim is also a renowned socialite. I have no doubt that it is for this reason that, in 2019, he joined the boarding community. In fact, that is probably the true reason why he took on about 5 different roles within the school over the last 6 years. As such, the History department office became the centre of useful information, briefed by Tim’s clandestine network of informers.

More significantly, however, Tim became a very well respected teacher within the school community. He set himself the highest possible standards and expected the same of others. In his last two years at the school, his bound, laminated and saddle stitched booklets became famous amongst GCSE History students. Many have gone on to query why such binding and hole punching skills have not developed across the rest of the History department. Tim was also an innovative teacher, engaged in useful historical pedagogical theories and always looking to diversify the curriculum we deliver. He was a useful sounding board for me, as Head of Department, as we sought to broaden our curriculum offer. He readily took up the challenge of teaching Chinese history at A Level and helped to construct interesting new lessons for our younger, key stage three, students.

Tim was fully ensconced within the wider school community, too. He attended numerous trips, both educational and recreational and he was strongly committed to the Duke of Edinburgh programme, particularly in the summer term when his classroom stood empty for weeks on end as he scaled some of the world's most challenging peaks. His support on the Berlin trip and Battlefields trip for History was gratefully received and he superbly led the annual second year trip to Hampton Court as well. Beyond this, he was a boarding tutor, head of Lower School Debating Society, an assistant director of Teaching and Learning and the head of Middle School Scholars. Tim will be missed by the history department but we have already been in regular contact, no doubt to fulfil his thirst for knowledge of the latest goings-on within the Abingdon School community. Moreover, his students still speak fondly of him which is a genuinely rarity in the fast moving world of teenagers.

In his Pupil Voice Magazine interview, Tim detailed all the nicknames he has acquired: "Taz, TASC, Chasey, TC, Timmy C or Timbob". Whatever you will be known by at St Paul's, I can only say that Mr Timothy Anthony Sherwin Chase will be deeply missed both as a teacher and as a friend. Thank you, Tim.

Nicholas Knowland

Pete Bignell

Pete Bignell joined the school in September 2016 to lead the Sport and Physical Education department. A wholehearted character with a lifelong love of Spurs, Pete quickly looked to put his stamp on proceedings, developing the opportunities on offer and experiences of pupils across the age and ability spectrum, whilst enjoying various football rivalries along the way. Throughout Pete's time at the school he played a key part in the build of various facilities; the MUSA, new fitness suite and Cox's pavilion, whilst he was quick to ensure staff were kitted out in the traditional cerise, whilst developing the programme on offer to pupils too. Pete enjoyed a tour, and gave up his time be it to Argentina, Spain or on more local short haul trips. Throughout the Michaelmas term he could be found on the rugby pitch, willingly stepping in to officiate 2nd XV games when required whilst leading various C and D XV's. Come the Lent term Pete's voice could regularly be heard bouncing off the walls of the Yang Science Centre and Faringdon Lodge, as Pete led the U16 A side on Waste Court.

Football was undoubtedly his great passion, and one he would happily discuss with colleagues and pupils alike, for days. Come the summer Pete could be found with the 15 C's enjoying his cricket and taking great pride in the accuracy of his score book! His contributions to sport however were much broader than that, and be it driving a team to fixtures, stepping in due to absence or helping marshal Pete would consistently go out of his way to make sure pupils to an opportunity – he would always help. As a tutor Pete enjoyed life in Pygott's, throwing himself into the pastoral side of school life in the same way he did to sport. We wish Pete well as he moves on from us, and thank him for years of service.

Tom Donnelly



Michael Stinton



Michael Stinton came from St. Paul's to be Director of Music 36 years ago. The 1996 history of the school already attributed much success to Michael and his predecessor, as they sought to use the new Amey Theatre, but much has happened since.

The music department was an early adopter of IT in the late 1980s, and musicians then included members of Radiohead. In 1993, the first house singing competition was introduced, later dropped but now a constant component of the first half of the

Michaelmas term, with accompanying bands.

Since the millennium the facilities have twice been expanded, as demand for individual lessons and small ensemble work has grown and been sustained. From a terrapin hut attached to the back of the Amey Theatre, via a temporary department housed on the grass tennis courts, the music department now occupies all of the ground floor, and much of the first floor, of the Amey Arts Centre.

Michael has been committed to high standards, insisting this is only achieved by pupil attendance at rehearsals, by students having every opportunity to enjoy playing together, and by performing in the many small solo concerts and competitions that happen both during the daytime and in the evenings.

Michael introduced the overseas tours, the Joint Choir with SHSK, and it was under him that the Big Band was formed and that jazz was introduced. In fact,



the music department expanded hugely, both in terms of the instruments taught and the number of boys involved. It has, of course, produced some very fine musicians who have won competitions, scholarships and gone on to professional careers.

Michael's aims, which he expressed in an early Abingdonian, have been to give the greatest opportunity to the largest number of boys, to stretch and stimulate the more advanced, and gifted and to introduce them all to the joys of performing.

Michael's time at Abingdon ended with a concert in the Sheldonian Theatre and another successful and enjoyable overseas tour.

We wish him and his wife Clova well in their retirement, with exciting plans for music making in France.

David Dawswell









ABINGDON