

Abingdon News



Regatta ready

Abingdon School's 1st VIII pre-qualified for the 2025 Henley Royal Regatta, and whilst not progressing past day one, delivered the fastest Princess Elizabeth race of the day. Our Prince Albert and Temple Challenge Cup crews showcased good performances, with the latter ranking as the 8th fastest schoolboy crew in their event.

Message from the Head



I've had plenty of opportunities this term to catch up with Old Abingdonians, including at the Henley Royal Regatta and various reunions that have taken place. I always enjoy hearing their memories: invariably it's the characters that they recall best, amongst both their peers and the staff.

I suspect that the current generation of Abingdonians will, in future, recall with great respect and affection the Reverend Simon Steer, our recently retired chaplain. Simon has ensured that our Chapel services have offered a warm and inclusive atmosphere, kicking off proceedings with a hearty introduction before inspiring students to join in with

his cheerful singing of the school's favourite hymns. He's also made sure that we've benefited from those key moments of quiet and reflection that are so precious in the busy whirl of school life.

We all wish Simon well for the future of course - as we do to his successor, the Reverend Paul Gooding. But reflecting on Simon's contribution has also reminded me of our key responsibility to develop our pupils' spiritual life, to help them recognise the importance of life beyond the material and to engage with the big questions of the human condition, all aspects which underpin our collective lives of study and play at Abingdon.

Army scholarships

Very many congratulations to Harry, Harold, Freddie, Max and Ed. Each of these cadets has been awarded a prestigious full or part Army scholarship, providing them with a place at Sandhurst for officer training - either after Sixth Form or after university. Contingent Commander, Abingdon School CCF, Lt Col R Cottam, comments: "I am thrilled for the cadets - this is a great honour and a new record in my tenure."



A big, green, thumbs up!

Joe and Freya in our grounds team, ably assisted by students Lucas and Chi-Hoi, have been busy planting a small new garden outside Greening Court.

It features a colourful collection of plants which, aside from brightening the environment, will provide food for passing insects, helping to boost biodiversity.



Eight Lower Sixth students completed a four day Duke of Edinburgh Gold canoeing training and practice expedition in April. Focusing on paddling skills, capsize and rescue training and learning to portage locks on the Kennet and Avon Canal. They then went on to undertake and complete their assessment expedition on the River Wye from 29 June to 2 July. Showing great determination and teamwork, they paddled over 110km across four days to Monmouth. This was no small feat and they left the Wye with lasting memories and newfound confidence. Congratulations to all!

A visit to Narnia



First and Second Years performed *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* for two nights in the Amey theatre this term. The audience joined siblings Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter on their extraordinary journey through the magical land of Narnia - a kingdom locked in an eternal winter by the malevolent White Witch. The cast and technical crew put in an extraordinary amount of effort to bring this impressive production together.



Fantastic France

In the first week of the Easter holiday, 33 Fourth Year students from Abingdon and St Helen and St Katharine travelled to Lyon for a language and culture trip. The students spent each morning in language lessons tailored to the GCSE course and afternoons were dedicated to exploring the city, including the Groupama football stadium, the Roman and Renaissance architectural sites of the old town, and the Institut Lumière, the birthplace of cinema. Students particularly found their experience living with host families invaluable for their spoken French. A la prochaine!



Sustainability sells!

Many congratulations to this year's Young Enterprise team. Based on their product range of chopping boards, coffee coasters, dog pulls and passive amplifiers, which they made using a variety of upcycled materials, they won the *sustainable product - best presentation* award at the area final in April. They progressed to the regional final on 15 May where they narrowly missed out on the *innovation and technology* award. Well done to all involved.



Engineering with their peers

On 29 April, three budding Lower Sixth engineers attended an All Party Parliamentary Engineering Group lunch discussion on 3D printing at the House of Lords. Students heard from two industry experts about the current advances and challenges with 3D printing and AI in engineering applications; and talked to other students, teachers, engineers and MPs. The day finished with a Q&A session.



Ring for victory

As part of the national campaign to ring as many church bells around the country as possible at 6.30pm on 8 May to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day, two members of the school bellringing club joined local campanologists from the town to ring the bells of St Nicolas' Church. At the same time, the school bell was chimed 80 times by a member of staff.



Getting quizzical

Lower School families enjoyed a curry and quiz night in April. There was healthy competition as teams puzzled their way through rounds on sport, literature, and history, as well as their understanding of how the mind of a pupil works! Congratulations to the *Lower School Legends* for winning the coveted trophy after a tie-break final.



Fun together

Fifty four First Years enjoyed a team building adventure in Wales over Easter. Activities included abseiling, archery, canoeing and a high ropes course.



Miles for Moldova

The Sixth Formers who travelled to Moldova and Romania this summer on the annual Moldova Project trip undertook a sponsored challenge in May using equipment in the school gym to travel 398km - the distance that the River Dniester flows through Moldova. Through this initiative, they raised over £1,000 to support the work of Agape, our partner charity, and help to improve the education of young children.

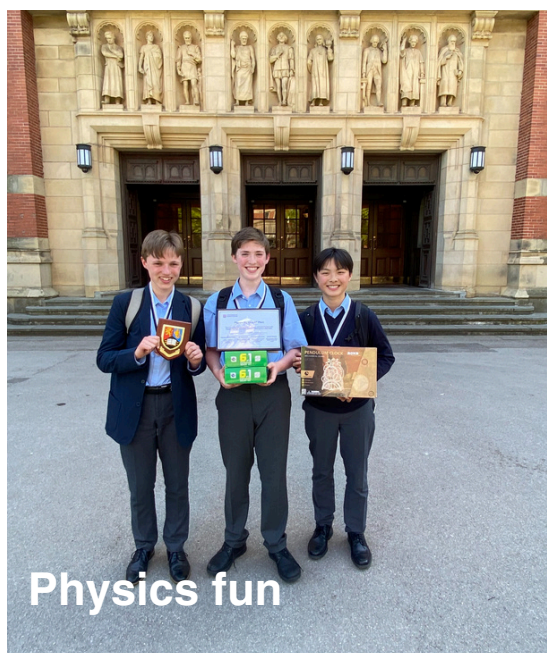


Lower Sixth student Hao has reached the national final of the *Poetry By Heart* recital competition. Hao wowed the judges with captivating renditions of *Ode to a Nightingale* by Keats and *The Applicant* by Plath. He will recite the poems again at the final which takes place at London's Globe Theatre in July.

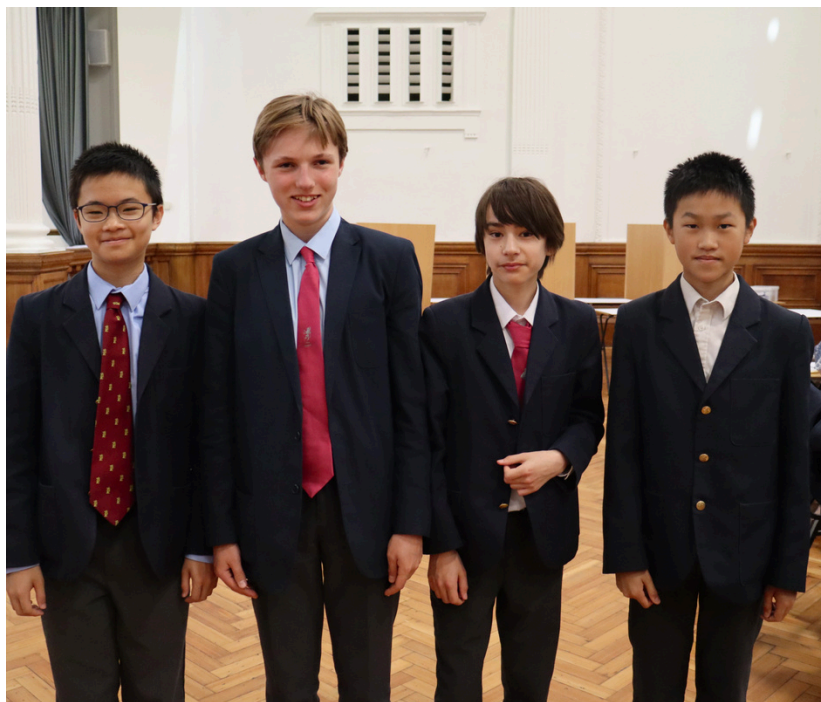


When in Rome... play cricket?!

Members of the Second Year stepped back in time on a trip to Caerleon in Wales during May. The pupils visited the remains of the legionary fort, as well as looking round the military bathhouse and barracks, and viewing the exhibits in the excellent Roman army museum. They even spent time at the well-preserved amphitheatre, where impromptu battles (and cricket matches!) broke out.



On 30 April, 11 Third Years travelled to Birmingham University to take part in the Physics Big Quiz 2025. Divided into three teams, they competed with other schools over six different rounds, testing everything from Kinematics and Materials to Quantum Physics. There was also a keynote lecture on Quantum Snakes and Ladders. One of the Abingdon teams, comprising Albert, Leo and Monty, managed to secure 3rd place overall - a great achievement against some tough competition. Well done to everyone who took part.



It all adds up

On 16 June, four Abingdon students travelled to London to compete in the Team Maths Challenge national final. Held at the prestigious RHS Halls in Westminster, this was a vibrant celebration of mathematical talent and creativity. Following an impressive series of regional competitions involving 677 teams, just 72 teams earned their place in the national final. Teams were asked to showcase their understanding of maths by creating imaginative and informative posters on the theme of geometry in plants. It was a fantastic day that highlighted enthusiasm, and ingenuity, of young mathematicians.

Beyond the obvious: weaving wellbeing into Abingdon's fabric by Helen Keevil, Deputy Head Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Abingdon

With the new ISI framework from March 2025, schools are more focused than ever on student wellbeing. But how do you measure something as "intangible" as wellbeing? We believe it should be woven into every thread of daily school life.

We gather a wealth of data, from staff observations and pupil surveys (like Oxwell) to feedback from RSE lectures, PSHCE quizzes, and verbal insights from pupils, parents, and colleagues. Counsellor reports, Pastoral Committee themes, and even photographs offer glimpses into student experience. Pupil interviews, school council discussions, and wellbeing displays celebrating resilience all contribute. Even our marketing highlights our pastoral care. However, these are just indicators; the true measure of wellbeing at Abingdon lies in everyday interactions and the palpable sense of a caring community.

The power of connection: feeling seen and valued

Imagine a school where every student feels seen, heard, and valued. At Abingdon, this is a daily reality. Our Senior Leadership Team and duty staff greet pupils by name, fostering immediate positive connections. We celebrate community members through assemblies and personal letters, acknowledging every strength. Heads of House nominate students for good deeds, publicly and privately, with House wall displays proudly recognising these achievements. This continuous affirmation builds a profound sense of belonging and mutual respect. We constantly reflect on our pupils' experiences, both online and offline, with psychological safety as a cornerstone. Our extensive co-curricular programme, The Other Half, allows pupils to explore shared passions, mixing across year groups and houses, fostering social connections and helping them find like-minded friends. Our staff skilfully navigate friendship issues, clearly communicating expectations for healthy relationships, with strong parental support. We recognise and support pupils facing unique challenges, adapting environments when necessary - from addressing anxieties around food choices to creating quiet zones. The nurturing interaction between staff and students, extending beyond the classroom to clubs, trips, and events, truly underscores our commitment to each individual.

Fostering resilience and support

We cultivate resilience by celebrating positive actions



and modelling core values. Mistakes are seen as growth opportunities, reinforced by our "Retrace" program for self-reflection. The Wellbeing Hub supports parents, aligning home and school efforts in emotional literacy and mental health, with tutors regularly checking on student wellbeing.

A culture of open support

Seeking help is a sign of strength. Our clear support structures, from peer mentors to a multi-layered pastoral team, ensure students and staff find assistance for academic, social, or personal challenges. We constantly refine our teaching and learning environments, promoting metacognitive thinking and empowering students through reflective feedback.

Navigating the digital world

We integrate digital literacy, teaching critical evaluation and responsible AI use. Students learn about online consequences and regulate digital behaviours, supported by policies like our age-appropriate phone use rules. Good sleep hygiene is also emphasised.

Holistic transition and strong partnerships

Our comprehensive onboarding ensures a "soft landing" for new families, with tailored support for neurodiverse pupils. Strong parental engagement is facilitated through direct contacts and the Wellbeing Hub, which provides mental health resources and training. We also prioritise staff wellbeing, fostering a supportive culture through regular surveys and dedicated groups. Ultimately, wellbeing at Abingdon is a lived experience, ensuring students thrive.

Paddle up



In June, eight Fourth Year students from completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh canoeing assessment on the River Medway, Kent. Launching from Tonbridge, the team navigated downstream developing paddling and campcraft skills. They also also took part in PaddleUK's *Big River Clean Up*.

Abingdon News

Transforming translations



In May, Lower Sixth French students took part in a translation workshop with Dr Jennifer Higgins looking at how best to translate the beginning of novels. The workshop started with a discussion of key principles of translation, before working on the opening of an as yet unpublished French novel set in Marseille, and Camus' *L'Étranger*. Students enjoyed putting their translation skills to the test to come up with a fitting translation of the first paragraph of both novels.

Being by the sea

On a hot and sunny mid May day, First Year pupils visited Hengistbury Head to investigate the coastal landforms found in the area. They saw evidence of longshore drift, coastal erosion and how humans are trying to defend the coastline with man made structures. Some excellent field sketches were drawn, before a well deserved ice cream was enjoyed.



A classical trip

A group of First Years travelled to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford on a Classics Department trip one weekend in May. After an initial treasure hunt task, they explored the truth behind the myth of Theseus and the minotaur by examining objects from Minoan Crete, looked at representations of the gods on Greek coinage, and studied objects that showed depictions of the myths of Hercules and the Trojan War. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day.





Caring for the planet

The 19 June saw Abingdon's second sustainability day of the term with all Third Year students taking part in a range of activities designed to educate them about the school's, and their own, environmental responsibilities. Students were treated to informative talks by a Reading University lecturer, Professor Mike Goodman, and a graduate student, Molly McGoldrick, working at the Harwell Energy Tech Cluster. The activities included experiments around solar and wind power, calculating carbon content in trees, and a variety of other decision making activities. Overall, the day was a success with students developing a deeper understanding and commitment to environmental stewardship. One student said: "I enjoyed the tour around the school to see what is being done to be more sustainable."



Fun and games

The Lower School assistants have been busy keeping our First and Second Year pupils amused during Tuesday lunchtimes this term. They've set up some fun outdoor activities, helping to take advantage of the good weather and our amazing facilities, as well as encouraging engagement between the pupils.

Oxford Climate Awards

Abingdon School is thrilled to have been shortlisted as a finalist in the prestigious Oxford Climate Awards. Our nomination recognises the work we have done so far to embed sustainability into every day school life through our holistic use of the One Planet Living framework.

Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do - from our academic curriculum to our co-curricular programme, the maintenance and extension of our buildings, the partners we choose to work with, and the food we put on our plates. Our aim is, and continues to be, normalising sustainability so it becomes a naturally intrinsic way of life for our community.

We know that there is more to do but we also know that the actions we take now will help ensure a bright future for our children and our children's children.



Historic musings

Fourth Year academic scholars visited London in June. At the National Archives, they were taught a session on the Cold War, and were able to handle original documents, including a telegram sent by Churchill to Truman in 1945 that contained the first ever mention of the term "Iron Curtain". They then walked to Kew Gardens where the theme 'evolutionary biology' was exemplified by the amazing collection of exotic and indigenous plants.



In the field

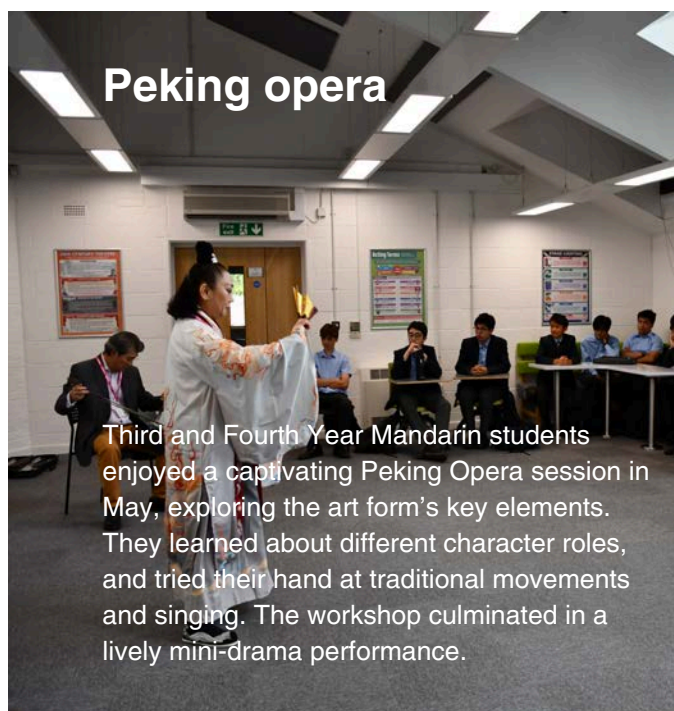
In June, our Lower Sixth Geography students took part in a field trip to collect the data required for their A Level projects. The human geographers visited Birmingham and Wrexham, while the physical geographers conducted fieldwork at the Llangollen scree slopes, Criccieth beach, and Harlech sand dunes. We were fortunate with the weather for our hike up the Nant Ffrancon Valley, where we were treated to a spectacular view from the Devil's Kitchen, looking down over Cwm Idwal.

Mother tongue, other tongue

Second Year pupil, Danny has reached the final in Warwick University's *Mother Tongue, Other Tongue* language competition. This year's theme was 'learning to live with difference, celebrating diversity and peace and reconciliation'.

Danny wrote an excellent poem, in French, entitled "De Conquête à Coexistence" which explores his multilingual identity and Lebanese heritage. Danny's poem focuses on how different languages and linguistic identities can coexist, becoming strengthened in their diversity.

Danny's poem was recently exhibited in Coventry Cathedral, alongside those of other finalists. Well done.



Peking opera

Third and Fourth Year Mandarin students enjoyed a captivating Peking Opera session in May, exploring the art form's key elements. They learned about different character roles, and tried their hand at traditional movements and singing. The workshop culminated in a lively mini-drama performance.



Getting quizzzy

The House Challenge quiz competition culminated in a nail biting final between Pygott's and O'Doherty's. Congratulations to all participants who displayed superb general knowledge.

Shine Media Awards

Congratulations to *The Martlet* editorial team who have had extraordinary success at the Shine School Media Awards. This national competition rewards UK secondary schools who produce an outstanding newspaper, magazine or multimedia project. *The Martlet* won Best Newspaper, Best Newspaper Front Cover and Best Cartoon. It was Highly Commended for Best Overall Printed Content, Scoop of the Year and the Terry Mansfield CBE Prize for Talent.

Physics at Oxford



A group of Lower Sixth physics students attended a lecture at the University of Oxford physics department in June. The lecture, given by Professor James Dunlop from the University of Edinburgh, was titled *First Light: The Dawn of Stars and Galaxies* and explored the scientific advancements of the James Webb Space Telescope. The students recognised many of the ideas from their lessons on astrophysics!



Thank you

Lower School pupils are extremely grateful to the second hand uniform shop (SUS) for their generous donation. The money has been put towards acquiring new equipment for the House including a basketball arcade machine, new wooden chess boards, a shove ha'penny game, and a selection of piano music, headphones and a piano stool - all of which is of mutual benefit to our pupils. Thank you SUS!

French games



In June, a group of Lower Sixth French students visited Abingdon Prep to introduce Year 4 pupils to a range of traditional French playground games. L'épervier – a fast-paced, tactical game of tag quickly became a firm favourite!

A French peak

In June, Lower School linguists enjoyed a screening of the 2022 César winning animation *Le Sommet Des Dieux* - which follows a gripping plot about climbers who attempt to conquer Everest.



Learning about Abingdon

In June, First Year pupils enjoyed a talk from Mrs Wearne, the School archivist in which they found out more about the history of Abingdon School. This was followed by a walk around the town and a visit to St Helen's Church where they saw the tomb of benefactor, John Royse, the old schoolroom that was built in 1563 following his endowment, and St Nicolas' Church. They also took in the excellent view of the town from the roof of Abingdon Museum.



Celebrating culture and heritage

On 3 July, students and staff celebrated Culture and Heritage Day. Many students came dressed in traditional garments and some prepared displays on the country of their heritage. Individuals enjoyed a variety of activities including quizzes, Chinese character drawing, Lebanese drumming and Chilean pottery!

Very many thanks to the student diversity, equity and inclusion committee for organising this amazing event.



Making a difference in Moldova

For their annual Moldova Project trip, seven Abingdon School students and two staff members travelled to Eastern Europe to work with partner charity, Agape. The 25 year partnership sees students organise summer camps and English lessons for children in Ialoveni and Lacu Rosu. The trip, described as a life-changing experience, helps participants develop confidence, leadership, and team-building skills while fostering a greater understanding of different cultures.

The students universally recommend the project for its profound personal impact and the important connections it creates with the children they help.



Be More Griffen

Lower School pupils ended the term in style as returning guest speaker, former BMX halfpipe world champion, Mike Mullen, gave a thought-provoking talk and a demonstration of tricks including jumping over Mr Jenkins! Congratulations go to all pupils and this year's prize winners.

Cadets for charity

Two Abingdon cadets - Charlie and Alfie - have used funds from the Tony Edward's Travel Award to complete an ultra marathon in order to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity and Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis.

They ran 175km over the course of seven days, from Fort William through the Western Scottish Highlands - terrain chosen to commemorate the 1842 Commonwealth retreat from Kabul.

Conditions were testing with rough ground and sharp inclines. Both had to utilise their skills and resilience to complete the challenge and said that the experience had made them "learn a lot about long distance running".

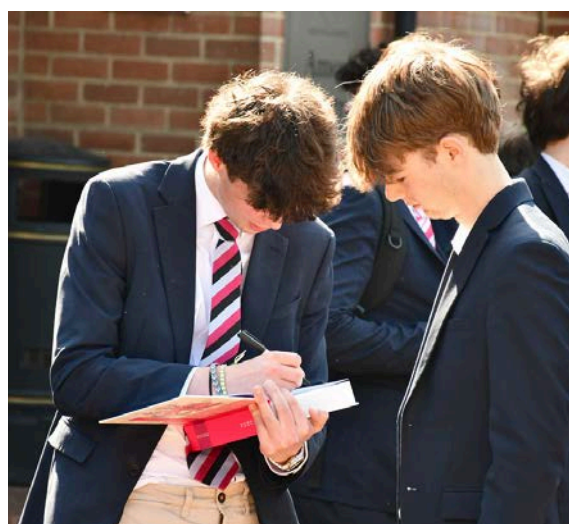
To date, they have raised an impressive £5,463 for their chosen charities. Congratulations to them both.

Abingdon 2025 Leavers



Leavers' Day

On 9 May, we bid farewell to our Upper Sixth students, wishing them all the best for their forthcoming exams. To mark the milestone, yearbooks were handed out and a special graduation ceremony was held in the Amey theatre, in which they were inaugurated into the Old Abingdonian Club. The morning was rounded off with a service of reflection with rousing hymns in the Chapel, a delicious lunch and an ice-cream, before all then departed.



Abingdon Results



A Levels

Grade	A Level passes
A* and A	69.2%
A* to B	88.9%
A* to C	97.8%

EPQ	
A* to B	100%

GCSEs

Grade	GCSE passes
9	43.7%
9 and 8	71.2%
9 to 7	87.1%
9 to 4	99.6%

Leavers' ceremony and Griffen Ball



On Saturday 21 June, we welcomed our Upper Sixth leavers back to School for the Leavers' Ceremony and Prize Giving. The morning began with a service in the Church of St Michael and All Angels' Church and was followed by a Prize Giving ceremony in the Amey theatre. Parents and students then made their way to Lacies Court Garden for refreshments.

On 28 June, they returned to School for a glittering evening of food and fun at the Griffen Ball. Amidst the dancing and the dodgems, students and their families had the opportunity to celebrate the end of exams and their time together at Abingdon.

Abingdon Music



Leavers' concert

In May, the musical talents of our Upper Sixth were celebrated in a leavers' concert. The Amey theatre came alive with wonderfully collaborative music making from these remarkable young people.

The right key

Our second annual Piano extravaganza on 18 June was a huge success. Pianists from all years showcased incredible skill and collaboration. Highlights included five-piano James Bond and 24 pianists performing "Thunderbirds." It was an unforgettable night celebrating musical unity!



Musicality

Lower School gathered in the Amey theatre on the last day of the first half of term for the annual inter-tutor group music competition. A high standard of music making was on display from both instrumentalists and singers. Mr Dawswell provided each group with some useful advice in his judge's feedback and then presented the winner's trophy to 2V for their rendition of *Riptide* by Vance Joy.



Sax masterclass

We welcomed OA, Tom Richards back to School on 13 May to give a saxophone masterclass. Students heard Tom perform and learned about his varied and interesting career, as well as picking up tips from him on improvisatory techniques.



Open mic night

On 14 May, we held our second *Open Mic* night in the pavilion. Students across all year groups treated the audience to a wide range of music including debut performances from musicians in the Lower School and culminating with acts from our more experienced Sixth Form musicians. Well done to all involved.

Inspirational notes

Fourth Year and Lower Sixth composers were inspired by a workshop and masterclass led by David John Roche on 21 May. Drawing from orchestral, heavy metal, and brass band styles, the session boosted confidence and encouraged creative risks with diverse compositions.



Anything but classical

On a warm June evening, staff and students gathered outside Big School for a lively musical celebration of all things non-classical. The event featured a fantastic line up of soloists and bands from our own students as well as those from Fitzharrys, and St Helen and St Katharine. The diverse range of performances were outstanding with something for everyone. The concert continued well into the evening, with plenty of food and drink to keep the audience going through a thoroughly entertaining night. Congratulations to all who took part.

Music maestros

Our inaugural Advanced Young Musician of the Year final in April was a spectacular evening, adjudicated by Julian Hellaby. We heard 14 diverse performances, from Bach to improvised jazz. Well done all.



Musical talents

On 10 June, we held a solo platform and award holder concert at St Michael's Church. Featuring students from across all ages, and a wide range of instruments, the concert was a true celebration of musical talent. The variety in the programme was matched only by the high standard of performance and enjoyed by the audience of parents and members of the public alike.



Czechia Music tour

At the end of the summer term, the Symphony Orchestra and Big Band spent seven days touring Prague, Pizen and several spa towns in Czechia. Undertaking six concerts in seven days, the students did Abingdon proud both with the quality and consistency of their playing. This was, without doubt, an extraordinary experience. Congratulations to all involved for an incredibly successful tour.

Abingdon School in Partnership



Partnerships prioritise wellbeing

Year 9 students from across the OX14 Learning Partnership attended SupportedED in May. This wellbeing event featured five interactive workshops rooted in the NHS' *5 Ways to Wellbeing*, alongside an inspiring keynote address from youth wellbeing expert Jamie Denyer, the Grief Preacher. Sixth Form Peer Support Leads also shared their insights. The collaborative initiative aimed to equip the 125 attendees with practical mental and emotional health strategies. The event was received very positively.

We've won Gold!



We're incredibly proud to announce that Abingdon School has been awarded the Oppidan Mentoring Gold Award. This highest recognition celebrates how deeply mentoring is embedded in our school culture, from leadership to student voice. Our approach, described as "pioneering," ensures every student feels seen, supported, and ready to thrive. This award truly reflects our dedication to a mentoring mindset.

Mandarin business challenge

At the end of June, students from Abingdon and John Mason came together for an exciting and immersive Mandarin business challenge. Designed to develop creativity, teamwork, and language skills through a real-world business simulation, they heard from OA, Mark Lintott, speaking from Taipei. Mark offered fascinating insight into life and work in Taiwan, sharing his experiences of international business and cultural exchange. Teams were then challenged to design and pitch a robot dog-themed product entirely in Mandarin. The brief required students to develop a compelling product idea, prepare a Dragon's Den-style pitch, and create a social media campaign—all within a tight timeframe.

Support squad ready



Over 90 Sixth Formers from across the OX14 Learning Partnership schools are now trained Peer Support Leads (PSLs). An inspiring session on 20 May equipped them with vital skills like empathetic listening and rapport building. They also gained a clear understanding of their role, including vital safeguarding guidance. These students are now set to foster a culture of understanding and wellbeing, making a positive impact in each school.



Full pelt ahead

In partnership with Fitzharry's School, our Greenpower F24 team, enjoyed two exciting races in June. They entered two karts in the highly anticipated Bedford Aerodrome event in which they showed great determination and teamwork, completing several laps of the circuit, despite some technical issues. On 21 June, they delivered an impressive performance at Ford's Dunton Technical Centre, coping with adverse hot weather and with the Abingdon team finishing first.

Abingdon School in Partnership

In June, a local pack of Cubs explored the 'rill' outside the Science Centre. They found pond snails, water boatmen, beetle larvae, leeches, pond skaters, and baby newts! They looked at some of the wriggling specimens under a microscope, before returning them to the pond.



Pond dipping



Padel Español

This summer, Lower Sixth Spanish students enjoyed weekly Padel sessions at Smash Oxford Padel Club, alongside John Mason School. Coached by club professionals, including a former athlete, students practiced Spanish while mastering Padel. They developed new skills and confidence in both the sport and the language.

Abingdon's student filmmakers made their mark on the international stage in June at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris. This marked the second year an Abingdon Film Unit (AFU) production has featured in the prestigious Le cinéma, cent ans de jeunesse program. The film, *Out of Play*, produced by Fifth Year's Sasha and Beany, offers a view of the often-unseen heroes of an Oxford United football match, from the club mascot to the stewards. Congratulations to Sasha and Beany for showcasing Abingdon's talent internationally.



Filmmakers shine in Paris



Today Larkmead, tomorrow Hollywood!

Production of the final film made this academic year by the dedicated students of the Larkmead film club took place in June. Having explored documentary and drama in their first three films, the group opted to have fun with the idea of genre in their last project. This includes a series of imagined scenes parodying well-known films such as *Jurassic Park*, *Star Wars* and *Mean Girls*, in time for the screening in July. In the photo AFU tutor Duncan Pickstock mans the camera for a shot of the students acting busily "thinking"...or falling asleep.

Community tea

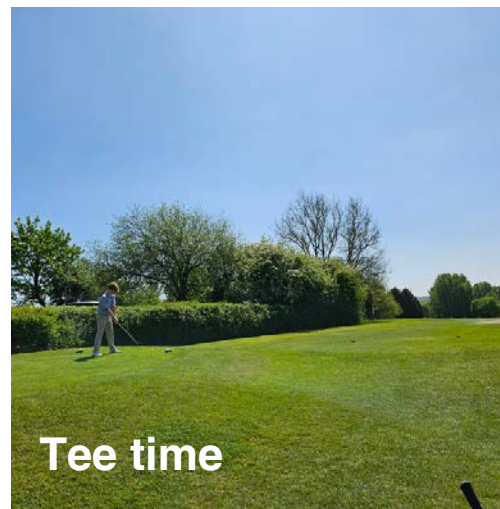
There's nothing quite like afternoon tea and local residents were delighted to attend our summer tea party in June. Guests enjoyed sandwiches, cake and scones and took part in a summer themed quiz, eager to find out whether they had won a prize in the highly anticipated raffle. In the background, Abingdon pianists and a clarinetist played uplifting music. It was a perfect summer afternoon.

Abingdon Sport



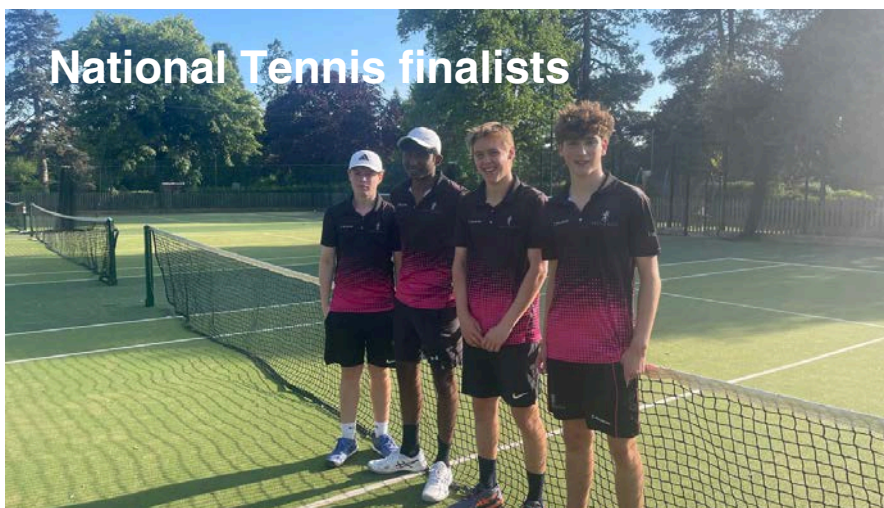
All love in tennis tour

During the Easter break, students attended an unforgettable tennis tour in Portugal, where they honed their skills through expert coaching and daily practice sessions. A highlight of the tour was a friendly doubles competition involving several schools, where Sam and Dan emerged victorious - huge congratulations to them. Alongside tennis, students enjoyed beach trips and had the exciting opportunity to try Padel.



Tee time

In May, the Abingdon team beat Bristol Grammar at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club to progress to the ISGA Plate area final. Taking place in June, it was not to be their round but we are very proud of them for getting as far as they did.



National Tennis finalists

Many congratulations to the senior tennis team who have won a coveted spot in the National Tennis Finals. Having progressed to round three of the National Cup in May, they faced Sir William Borlase in the regional final in June. This was a thrilling encounter where they clinched both doubles matches and sealed a 4-2 victory. We wish them best of luck for the final in which they will compete against the top 16 schools in the country.



Rugby tour dinner

In May, a successful fundraising dinner was held in the pavilion with guest speaker John Bentley - former British and Irish Lion. The monies raised were in aid of the senior rugby tour to South Africa this summer, as well as The Pebbles Project - a charity working to provide education and healthcare to children in South Africa's farming communities.



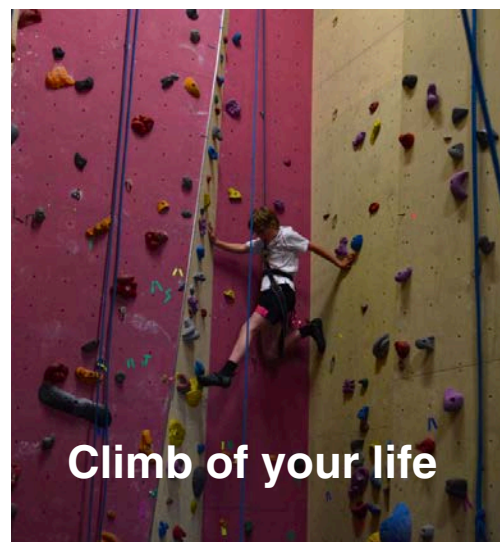
Bedford Regatta

The Bedford Regatta provided intense, one-on-one racing on the narrow Great Ouse on a sunny day in early May. Seven Abingdon crews reached finals in 35 races. Ultimately, three Abingdon crews secured wins: J16A and B eights, and J18 coxed fours.

Touch Rugby squad shines at Nationals



Our U12 and U13 touch rugby squad proudly represented the School at the National Schools Touch Championships Final, held at Oxford Harlequins RFC in June. This vibrant event hosted over 250 teams from across the UK, showcasing inspiring young athletes and the exciting future of school Touch Rugby. Our 12 committed Lower School pupils, building on earlier successes, embraced the challenge with great spirit. Despite mixed results, their progress and enjoyment were undeniable. In a thrilling playoff, the team secured a well-earned win, finishing fifth overall. The tournament reignited their passion, leaving them eager for more training and fixtures next season. We returned to school incredibly proud of their achievements.



Climb of your life

On 22 May, Abingdon's junior climbing squad enjoyed their first chance to represent the School with a friendly against Cothill. Six First and Second Years worked with Cothill pupils to win the most points as a pair by climbing six lines set in the Abingdon School wall. All of the competitors interacted brilliantly with one another, improving their communication skills and making new friends, whilst climbing some really tricky routes.



In camp with England

In June, we welcomed 80 staff from 50 schools to the RFU's U18 Development Days (Southern Region), hosted at School. It was a fantastic opportunity for coaches, and our own rugby players, to come together for a thought provoking and engaging day which included focusing on attack and defence principles, player characteristics, contact and unit skills. We are very proud of our players who demonstrated great skill and resilience in record heat.



Champions

Congratulations to the J14 A quad who became national champions at the National Schools Regatta.

Finn, Ethan, Rafiq, Joe and James (coached by Jonny) led the quad racing all year and won gold in this prestigious event. Three out of four J14 (Third Year) crews won their finals on a successful day for FASBC.

House quads

The annual House quads regatta on 2 July featured thrilling 500m races. Three quads, crewed by Third and Fourth Year students, battled it out with a strong tailwind. Crescent House secured a decisive victory in the A final, followed by Border's in second and Stockdale's in third.

Rowers shine at Marlow

Abingdon's younger rowing crews competed at the Marlow Regatta in June, navigating a challenging river course, cheered on by enthusiastic spectators. The School entered 18 crews, with an impressive 12 reaching the finals. Five Abingdon crews clinched victories and medals, including the J14 octuple, J15 eight, J15 single, J16 single, and J18 coxed four. A special commendation went to Xav and Laurie for showcasing exceptional boatmanship.



Athletics afternoon

Lower School pupils enjoyed a very competitive afternoon of sport at Tilsley Park at the annual inter-tutor group athletics tournament. All pupils took part in a track and field event, cheered on by their peers and parents. Congratulations go to Jonah on breaking the Second Year high jump record with a clearance on 1.55m, and to 2H who raised money for Cancer Research UK through their cake sale.



Cricket



Overall, it's been a cracking season for cricket. Our final block against Warwick School saw some fantastic individual performances. Jack in the 1st XI and Will in the 2nd XI both smashed half-centuries, while Billy, Hamish, Luke, Norwyn, and Joe each snagged impressive three-wicket hauls. The summer's grand finale took the 1st XI to the Adrian Gale Festival at St John's, Leatherhead. They kicked things off with a convincing win against Oundle, thanks to Henry's stellar 62 and Benedict's solid 42, setting a total of 204. While subsequent matches against St John's and Brentwood proved tougher, Henry was deservedly named *Player of the Festival*. We've seen a host of outstanding individual achievements, as well as our U14s being crowned County Cup Champions – they're off to the regional rounds next year. A special shout-out goes to Jack, our 1st XI captain, who topped the batting averages (average of 52.71). And let's not forget Benedict's magnificent 117 not out against the MCC, which means he'll be a guest at the Lords Test next summer – how exciting!

Abingdon Sport

Charlie Atkinson selected for England - an historic first for Abingdon

by Matthew Gold, Director of Rugby at Abingdon



Abingdon School is proud to celebrate a landmark moment in its sporting history, as Charlie Atkinson (OA 2020) became the first Abingdonian to be selected for a full senior England rugby cap.

Charlie was named in the match day 23 for England's Test against the USA in Washington DC, on Saturday 20 July. His selection is a moment of immense pride for the school and a powerful testament to his talent, humility, and determination.

Charlie joined Abingdon in 2013 and quickly made his mark on the rugby pitch, becoming a standout performer in the 1st XV. His journey from school rugby to England international has seen him represent England U18 and U20, win a Six Nations Grand Slam, and play Premiership rugby with Wasps, Leicester Tigers, and now Gloucester.

This summer, he was named in England's 36-man tour squad by Head Coach Steve Borthwick, and earned his place in the match day squad to face the USA - a huge achievement and richly deserved. Charlie helped the team complete a 40-5 victory in a performance that rounded off an undefeated tour for England.

This is an historic and inspirational moment. Charlie embodies the very best of Abingdon Rugby - dedication, humility, and a relentless desire to improve. We are incredibly proud of him, and his selection shows our students what is possible when hard work meets talent.

Eddie Bayfield wins Gold

by Phil Gray, Head Rowing Coach and Assistant Director of Rowing

In August, outgoing Upper Sixth, Eddie qualified for the final of the U19 World Rowing Championships in Trakai, Lithuania.

Eddie won a Gold medal last year in the men's eight but this year was selected in the higher ranked coxless four boat. Having won their heat and then the semi-final, he and his crew went on to win Gold making the first ever Abingdon student to become a double World Junior Champion. We are incredibly proud of Eddie and this achievement which is a testament to his dedication, determination and skill.

South Africa Rugby Tour

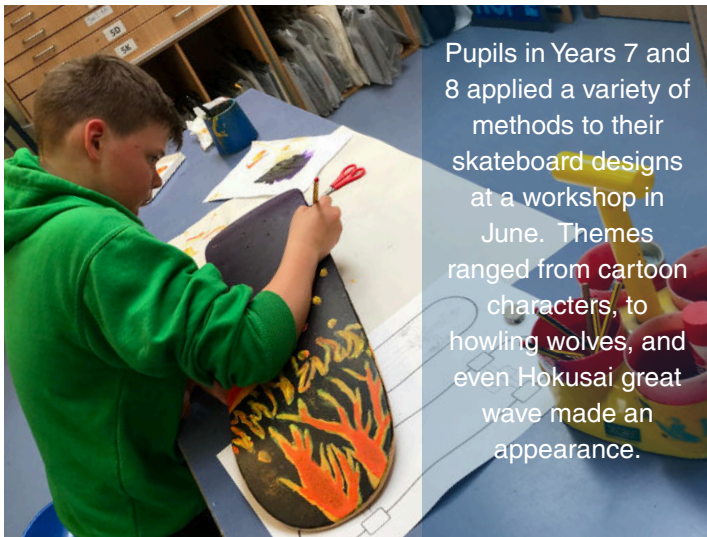
In July, 56 Abingdon students and seven staff embarked on a senior rugby tour to South Africa. The team played three fixtures, including a physical and fast-paced introduction to South African rugby, a spirited contest against a proud community club, and a final match against the prestigious Paarl Boys' High School.

The group also contributed to the Pebbles Project Charity and immersed themselves in South Africa's culture and heritage, making the trip far more than just a rugby tour.

The Lion King Junior



Our Year 7 and 8 pupils delivered a vibrant performance of *The Lion King Junior* on the Amey theatre stage in June. Showcasing some fantastic singing and acting, they successfully brought this well-known story to life with energy and aplomb. It certainly was a 'roaring' success.



Pupils in Years 7 and 8 applied a variety of methods to their skateboard designs at a workshop in June. Themes ranged from cartoon characters, to howling wolves, and even Hokusai great wave made an appearance.

A power house of poetry

Pupils from Years 3 to 6 showcased an exceptional level of talent and a diverse range of performances in this year's poetry recital competition. Demonstrating remarkable skill, a testament to their hard work and dedication, pupils also gained invaluable experience honing essential public speaking and performance skills. A particularly memorable moment was a poem recited in Mandarin, a reminder of poetry's universal appeal. It was a difficult task for guest adjudicator, Mr Coolin, to select the winners.

Hands up!

Pupils in Years 1 and 3 enjoyed a fantastic educational experience with PCSO Susan Haynes in May.

Activities with Year 1 focused on understanding the role of a police officer and thinking about helping others. In Year 3, pupils discussed kindness and how to respond to unkind behaviour by exploring their similarities and differences using Venn diagrams. This was a particularly useful exercise for appreciating diversity, understanding individuality, and helping to build social awareness and resilience. It was a very informative and engaging morning for the children.



Just like riding a bike



In June, girls and boys in Reception and Year 1 had *Wheels Day* - where they brought in bicycles or scooters to practise their skills and develop their all round knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe on roads. They had great fun and have certainly developed their confidence, whether on two wheels or three.



Our Year 6 adventurers had an fantastic time "in the bush" this May. Over two action packed days they continued to develop life skills and strengthen friendships. Imagine this: predator games, roaring campfires, mastering first aid, and even a daring rescue mission. They whipped up delicious pizzas, prepared a massive salmon, and devoured gooey s'mores. All that fun topped off with a hilarious *Tribes Got Talent* competition! An unforgettable experience and memories made to last.

Ready, steady, GO!



Our Pre-Prep and Prep School Sports Days were held in June - the former at Cox's Fields and the latter at our Tilsley Park facilities. Despite the challenging heat, the energy and enthusiasm of our young competitors never wavered. Across a full schedule of sprints, relays, long jumps, throwing events and more, children gave everything for their House teams, cheered on by a crowd of parents, friends, and staff. Well done everyone.

Hydroponics could be the future of food production by Elon, Fourth Year

Over the past 12 months, Abingdon School's Hydroponics Club has been attempting to cultivate plants using nutrient-rich water, rather than soil. The students have been growing tomatoes, lettuces, peppers, spring onions, and strawberries. Each week, they have checked the equipment and taken tests to establish the pH level and electrical conductivity of the water ensuring optimised conditions for plant growth. In our latest blog, Fourth Year student Elon, shares his observations and findings in the cultivation of lettuce.

Hydroponics is centered around the idea of growing plants in water, however, different plants require different levels of nutrition and prefer different levels of electrical conductivity and light intensity. This varies significantly across flora, with some, including lettuce, flourishing whereas others including corn being unsuitable for hydroponic systems.

Instead of cultivating plants in soil (often nutrient deprived), hydroponics uses nutrient-rich water to maximise the nutrient and water supply, allowing a plant to take what it needs when needed. This results in more growth, as often the limiting factor to plant growth is principally the amount of resources it has access to. In this case, plants have an ample supply of nutrients, and the environment can also be strictly controlled to benefit the plant, including the nutrient content, pH, temperature, and light intensities. This ensures that the environment is tailored to a specific species which thereby maximises its growing potential instead of a 'one size fits all' approach with the content in soil.

This is a more sustainable approach to growing plants, because it doesn't deplete the soil of nutrients as often occurs on farmland. Additionally, hydroponics also ensures the cleanliness of plants and the elimination of any potential soil-borne pathogens which can contribute to better consumer health as well as improved plant health. Additionally, less water is lost using hydroponics. This may sound ironic given that the main intention of hydroponics is to grow plants in water, however, traditional farming practices consume 70% of the world's freshwater, with a further 40% being wasted on inadequate irrigation systems. This is a result of evaporation and potentially runoffs which reduce infiltration thereby wasting water. Hydroponics, on the other hand, contains the water content with minor

amounts lost through evapotranspiration. The setup can also contribute to higher yields because its design ensures it can be stacked, reducing land consumption.

Lettuces: Lettuce is particularly well adapted for hydroponic environments. One of its defining traits is its rich antioxidant content, which can prevent eye diseases amongst other chronic conditions. It is well known for its easy to grow nature, its need of water and its ability to grow all year round. This makes it the perfect plant for a hydroponic environment. Growing plants through hydroponics has many benefits including faster growth, more sustainable food production, and higher yields.

A hydroponic environment provides constant access to nutrient-rich water and light; which can be controlled to conform to a Lettuce's optimum growing conditions.

Furthermore, the nutrient-rich water also adds to lettuce's preferential nature for nutrient-rich soil, which can offer constant access to the nutrients it needs for growth. Lettuce prefers a pH condition from 6 to 6.8 to assist with plant nutrient absorption, which can also be monitored through the use of a pH meter, and changed using buffer solutions. It also prefers moist soil which perfectly conforms to the conditions provided by a hydroponics setup. Additionally, the isolation of disease through sanitation and the lack of biological pests - including slugs - provides the optimal environment for lettuce growth, allowing it to grow to its full potential, while ensuring protection from disease.

Nutrient Film Technique (NFT): The NFT method is often used to cultivate lettuce because of its effective and efficient delivery of oxygen and nutrients. By passing a shallow, nutrient-rich solution through the roots of a plant, water and nutrient supply is ensured. The water can be recirculated through the entire setup. An advantage of this is that no pots are needed as the plants are directly grown in channels reducing the need for nutrient-rich growing media. Additionally, the ability to stack plants vertically can further increase the growing potential in space-restricted environments. Moreover, less water is lost because direct evaporation of the water is prevented by a plastic casing, and water is predominantly lost through transpiration, which is negligible and results in a high water efficiency.

In conclusion, compared to soil-grown plants in the greenhouse, the growing conditions of hydroponics, has significantly boosted plant - particularly lettuce - growth.

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Abingdon Development

Thanking our legators

On Saturday 7 June, we welcomed members of our 1563 Society to Abingdon for their annual gathering. Following a delicious three course lunch, Archivist, Sarah Wearne, shared fascinating insights about some of the treasures of Abingdon School including our historic connection to Pembroke College, Oxford. The day concluded with a packed Chapel service and rousing hymn-singing, centred around the theme of *friendships*.



Thanking our supporters

The sun was shining and the drinks were flowing at our annual summer garden party hosted by Head, Mike Windsor. Abingdon's community of donors and volunteers underpin the success of our school and we are forever grateful for their support. Guests went on to enjoy the end of year summer concert in the Amey Theatre, which showcased many of our strongest musicians and the joint efforts of our music teachers and ensemble members.



Head visits China



What a fantastic experience it was to spend time with so many members of our Abingdon community during the Head's recent visit to Hong Kong and Shanghai. We met with OAs, current and former parents and future students from across the generations, and were once again overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome we received.

ABINGDON
GIVING DAY
5-6 NOV

We invite the entire Abingdon community to take part in our Giving Day. This is an opportunity for OAs, parents, staff, and friends to come together in support of The Abingdon Foundation. Your contributions will help enhance educational experiences and provide bursaries for our pupils. Every gift, regardless of size, makes an impact. Keep an eye out for more details on how to participate - whether through donations, spreading the word, or engaging with us on social media.

Abingdon OA Club



OAs win the Gerald Smithson Memorial Cricket Trophy against Abingdon's 1st XI



OA 50s, 60s Lunch at Phyllis Court



Professional Networking Reception at the Chartered Accountants' Hall



Abingdonian Community Golf Day

Summertime in pictures



OAs at the Touch Rugby Festival Fundraiser



OA Reunions for Class Of 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020



Nick Winton's talk *The Power of One: The Story of Sir Nicholas Winton and the Kindertransport*. Left to right: Sarah Wearne, School Archivist, Nick Winton, and Nicholas Knowland, Head of History

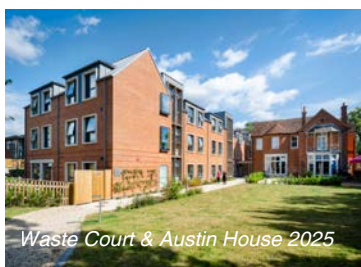


Over 150 members of the Abingdonian community enjoyed strawberries and Pimm's at Henley Royal Regatta.

Abingdon Out of the Past



Waste Court from the west c1910



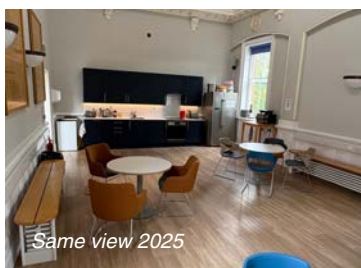
Waste Court & Austin House 2025



Park Lodge c1897



Waste Court billiard room c1910



Same view 2025

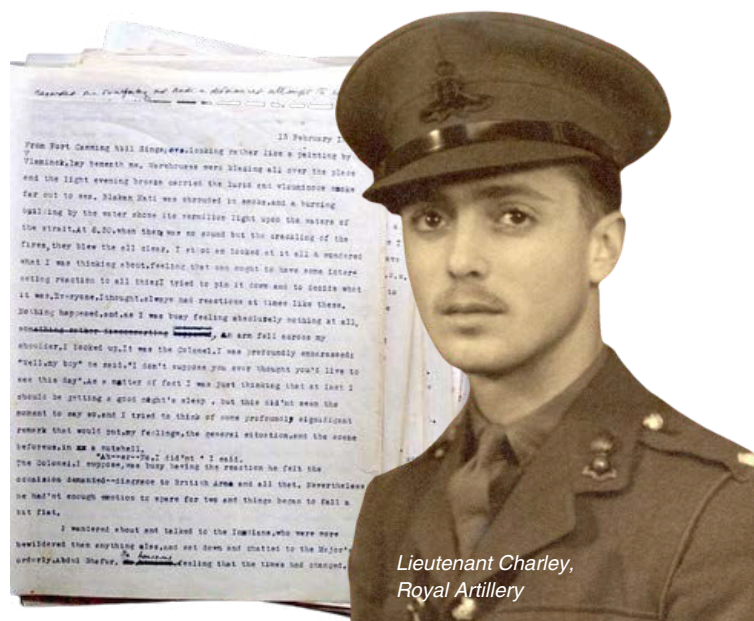
Then and now

Occasionally the archives receive photographs from strangers. Last term, Dr Anthony Parr, the great-great-grandson of John Creemer Clark, one-time Governor of Abingdon School and owner of Waste Court in the early twentieth-century, brought in some photographs of the house when his family lived there. On another occasion, we were sent a lovely postcard showing Park Lodge soon after it was built in 1897. Designed by the Arts and Crafts architect Harry Redfern OA (1871-1950), a caretaker and his family lived on the two floors to the right of the front door, and two masters in separate sets, one upstairs and one downstairs, to the left of the door.

A memoir of captivity

For all the razzmatazz surrounding VE Day, 8 May 1945, the Second World War was not over. The British Army was still actively engaged in the Far East where a number of OAs were Japanese prisoners-of-war. These included Terence Charley, OA 1933 (pictured), taken prisoner at the fall of Singapore in February 1942. Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. Fifty-nine years later, Charley presented the archives with a typescript of his captivity. The 140-page manuscript charts the brutality, humanity, dignity and squalor of his experience and is by turns savage, lyrical, erudite and wry as it charts the fragile friendships that grew up among the prisoners, the brutality of their daily existence and the exotic beauty of the tropical landscape.

Visit: archives.abingdon.org.uk - Object 52 History of Abingdon School in 63 Objects



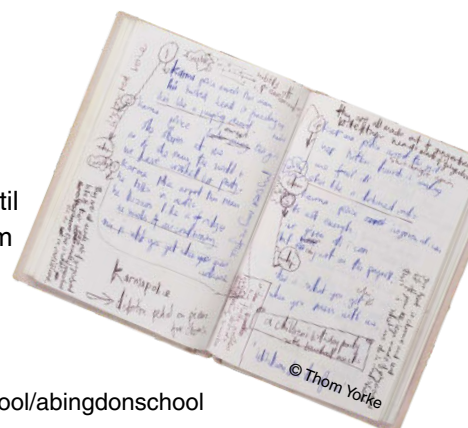
Lieutenant Charley,
Royal Artillery



Thom York and Stanley
Donwood (photo by Julian Broad,
courtesy of TIN MAN HAT)

This is what you get

Radiohead's Thom Yorke OA 1982, together with the artist Stanley Donwood, have collaborated on the band's artwork for over thirty years. The exhibition, This Is What You Get, currently at the Ashmolean (until 11 January 2026), features original paintings for album covers, digital compositions, etchings, unpublished drawings and notebooks with lyrics.



© Thom Yorke