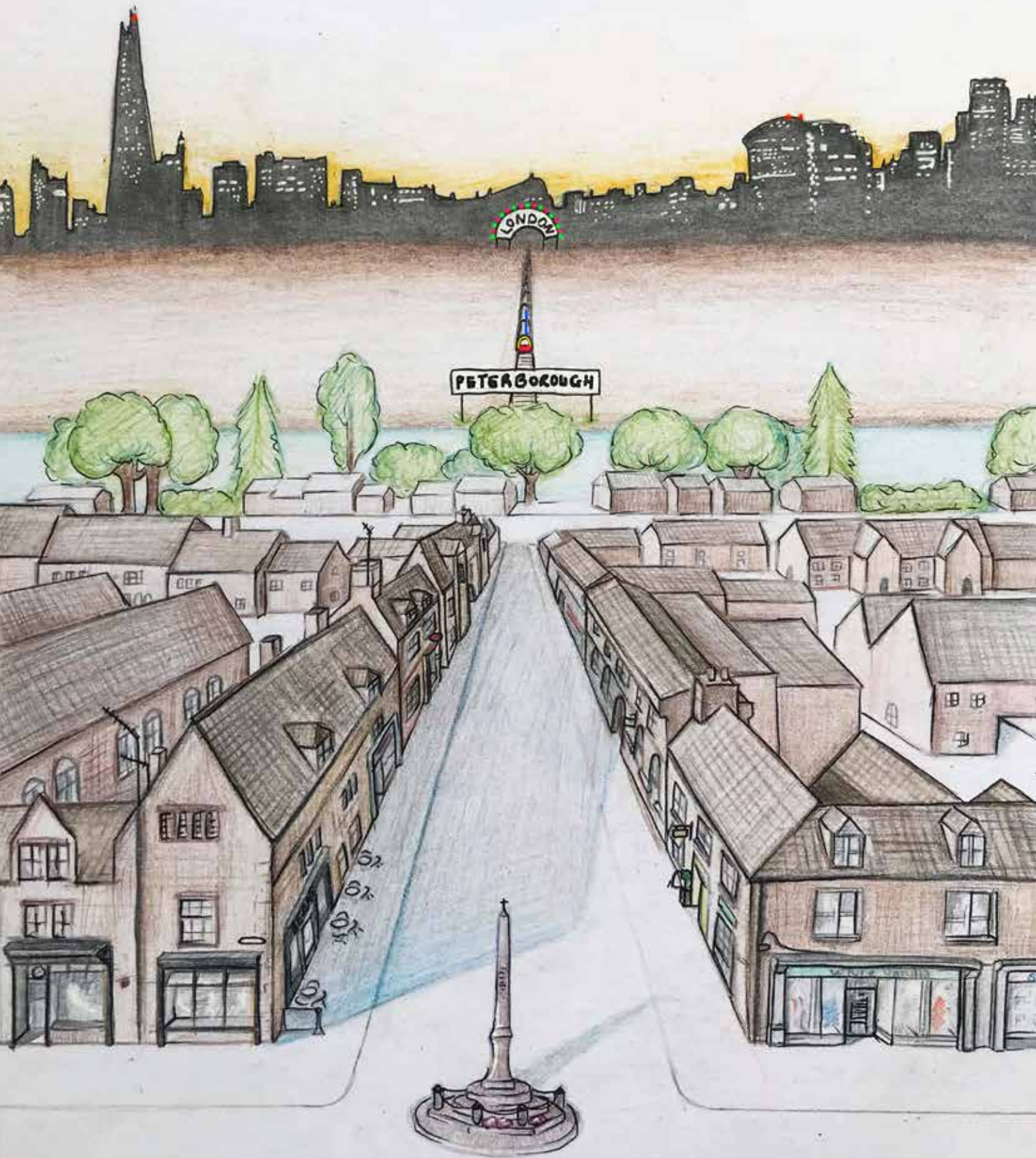


2018

THE OUNDELIAN



Cover image

Holly Telfer (U6) -The cover for this year's Oundelian is based on Saul Steinberger's famous 1976 cover for The New Yorker.

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Welcome

Our aim in producing this magazine is to reflect the endeavours, experiences and opinions of the Oundle School pupil community over the course of this past academic year. It is written almost entirely by Oundle pupils, past and present, and it is edited by a team of pupils. In a school where so much is going on, it is impossible to offer in a single magazine an exhaustive record of everything that has happened this year, and it is not our intention to do so. We do hope, nonetheless, that this edition of *The Oundelian* provides a fair and enjoyable snapshot of the wide range of activities undertaken by Oundle School pupils, as well as reflecting some of their views and opinions. Although it was not deliberate, we have ended up with quite a few articles this year about social justice and mental health. I am personally very proud of the magazine this year, and these articles in particular - I hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed editing them.

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With thanks to

Nic Aubury, Mary James, Rob Cunniffe



Learning To Breathe

I'm not very sporty, and my thespian achievements extend to a Third Form play in which I had a non-speaking part. In Fourth Form it turned out that CCF wasn't really my thing, and I abandoned the piano before I even took my Grade 1. Throughout my school career I've always prioritised my academic achievement, partly because I genuinely enjoy learning, partly because it's just what I've always been good at and therefore has become part of my identity. On the surface, this is a good thing: I spend most of my time at School doing what I'm there to do, which is learning. Through having a natural propensity for schoolwork and also working pretty hard, I've gradually come to rely on consistently achieving relatively good grades. While hopefully this academic focus should come in handy when revising for my A Levels, it has the worrying side effect of my placing a lot of my self worth in how well I do at school. Often I joke to my friends about being completely useless apart from when it comes to my academic subjects; while I try to laugh it off like everyone does with their personality quirks, getting a bad mark in a prep or test can cause me to write off a whole day, and even make me start questioning my value as a person. While in my head I know that my academic ability isn't what makes my parents love me and my friends want to spend time with me, it can be very hard to separate my personal worth and the quality of my schoolwork, given that it's what I value most highly in myself and have done for a long time.

Since getting a bad mark often makes me (disproportionately) unhappy, you'd think that getting a good one would do the opposite. Unfortunately, the feeling I get when I do well academically - whether on a vocabulary test or an external exam - is less one of happiness and fulfilment than one of relief. I imagine that if I do less-than-perfectly in any form of academic assessment, I'll be a disappointment. When I stop to unpack this thought, it makes no sense and has no evidence whatsoever: my parents and friends won't care about me any less, and it has very little bearing on my teachers' lives. However, I spend so long telling myself this that it no longer matters whether it's true or not, and any possible pride or happiness that I might have enjoyed as a result of my achievements is overwhelmed by deliverance from my fear of inadequacy.

School is supposed to prepare us for adult life, both by teaching us life skills and helping us to achieve exam grades that will give us good opportunities when we leave. The fact of the matter is that getting good exam results and getting into university is likely to lead to a higher-paying job. Having a higher-paying job lessens the chance of not being able to pay your bills, which removes a significant amount of stress from life. Adults are fond of telling



me that I should enjoy school while it lasts, because the real world is much harder, and my youth will be the happiest time of my life. This to me is a paradox: if I'm spending the best time of my life preparing to be an adult, and adult life isn't as fun as being a teenager, when do I actually get to have fun?

Sometimes school can seem like an endless parade of hoops I have to jump through in order to allow myself to enjoy my life. But the act itself of getting through the hoops brings me little joy, so I console myself with the fact that once I've completed all my work, I'll be able to play. The problem with this mentality is that the work will never be entirely finished; there will always be extra reading to do to get ahead in class, there will always be notes I could be looking over to consolidate what I've learned in lessons earlier that day. It's as if my life is an extended to-do list, and the very last thing on that list is to enjoy life, which I can only do if I first achieve my maximum academic potential.

While Oundle's ability to help people push themselves both academically and otherwise is overall a positive thing, it can mean that those who already have very high standards for themselves place far too much emphasis on achievement rather than enjoyment. While good exam results will

be helpful later in life, high achievers can sometimes find themselves spending so much time preparing for the future that they miss out on their present. If you're constantly working to achieve the next and more difficult thing, it can take all the joy out of the process of achieving. For me, this happens with my education: sometimes I'm so focused on getting university offers, getting good marks in tests and getting my A Level predictions that I forget how much I love learning and why it is that I want to go to university and continue to study my subjects. Even though I'm in my last year at Oundle, I've yet to find this balance of achievement and enjoyment. What I'd like to say to anyone who is struggling with a similar situation is that, honestly and truly, it's okay to take a break. Your housemistress tells you, your parents tell you, your friends tell you, but until you allow yourself to take time off, it's not a real break. Sitting in bed feeling guilty about not doing work is not the same thing. I hope that I'll be able to take my own advice one day, and that after reading this someone else like me will be a little kinder to themselves.

Flora Smith (U6)



We Need To Talk About Mental Health

Despite the best efforts of the staff and pupils of Oundle School, and of course society as a whole, there remains a stigma around mental health. It isn't treated the same way as physical health is, and people are often reluctant to talk about it in a frank and honest way. Often, we are given PSHE talks in which we are encouraged not to be embarrassed about our mental health problems; however, rarely do people take action and actually speak up about their experiences. At the Oundelian, we sent out a request to all boarding houses, asking for submissions from people who have suffered from poor mental health in any way. We hope that these named submissions will make clear to everyone that reads them that anyone can experience mental health problems, regardless of age, gender or circumstance. Our aim with these pieces is not to attempt to convince people that 'everything will get better' - although it is true, this message can become hackneyed and exhausting to hear, especially when you yourself are unwell and cynical about the future. It is simply to begin the discussion about mental health in a specific and targeted way.

[Note: some submissions have been edited for brevity and / or clarity.]

Two years ago after starting to take the contraceptive pill I noticed a rapid deterioration in my mood. I began to isolate myself, had no energy, took no pleasure in the things which I used to enjoy, felt constantly tearful and had a very low self-image. I even self harmed and had suicidal thoughts. Persuaded by a friend, I went to the San to try and find out what was going on, and was diagnosed with moderate clinical depression. After I had picked up the courage to tell my parents, over the summer they helped me to organise a strategy to combat my depression, including a course of antidepressants and regular cognitive behavioural therapy sessions. Over the course of Lower Sixth, through a combination of the coping mechanisms I learned and the essential boost that my medicine gave me, I managed to get myself out of the horrible dark place I'd been living in for over a year. I still take my medication, and sometimes have dips in my mental health. My residual anxiety still causes me problems, and I can feel myself slipping into harmful thinking patterns occasionally. However, now I know how to deal with it, and am able to stop myself from spiralling out of control again. Now that I'm stable, I want to use my experience to try and destigmatize mental health, and encourage others to share their experiences too.

Flora Smith (U6)

I have been to the Clayton Rooms a couple of times. I first went when I started taking medicine for ADHD, as the doctor who prescribed them to

me noticed that I have serious problems sleeping and suffer from a concerning level of anxiety. I was inclined to ignore him - I didn't want to be someone disappearing for secret visits to the doctor. In reality, anxiety was not some made up feeling in my head - it has huge implications on my sleep, and physical health as a result. I was mostly ready to ignore him because I was embarrassed. It's a lot easier to kid yourself that everyone feels the same, than to take steps to fixing a problem - especially if you're embarrassed. That is never the right default position to take. More often than not, if you're having to convince yourself that how you feel is normal, it's worth at least talking through your thoughts with someone - It was talking to people in house that eventually persuaded me to visit the Clayton Rooms, and I was surprised just how much other people were ready to talk about these things and their own experiences. It will never be worthwhile assuming that no one wants to talk.

Harry Angel (U6)

I was always a quietly content person; I was well educated on the matters of mental health, and so when I became affected by this completely foreign and wretched mind-set it changed me greatly. The transformation stripped me of my previous character and attitude, which was the most devastating part of the process. I didn't know how to re-wind and regain that sense of composure. I mourned for the person who I was and lost all sense of meaning and direction.

It was really, really destructive period of time, it took me a long, long while to realise that it is always and always will be possible to overcome and move past these experiences. The hardest part is just believing it.

Eve Hasler (U6)

Mental illness can be misunderstood by anyone across the board, which puts those most in need of support at risk of being left behind. While I myself have received help from the Mental Health Team at the Clayton Rooms, my main focus with regards to mental health at Oundle has always been more about getting to know the subject better, with the aim of helping not only myself but also my peers. With this article, I hope to clear the air on what I consider to be the most crucial aspects of mental health.

The first step towards the destigmatisation of mental health is to learn about it, whether through the Internet or via appropriate conversations with more experienced peers. Gaining a solid foothold in

how to broach sensitive issues is very useful. Vitaly, when communicating with someone going through a rough patch, try to empathise with and take a genuine interest in them. Sometimes even a simple 'are you okay?' can mean a lot to a person, whether they want to discuss their feelings or not. You do not always have to be there; the important thing is that they know that they will have your support when they need it.

In addition to this, learning how to manage your own mental health is a useful skill to have early on, especially with stress and sleep management. Trust me, this skill will be invaluable in the long run and getting a good grip on it while you still have ample free time is crucial. Even if you feel it is too late to do this, relax: Oundle provides support structures that can help alleviate some of the pressures. Initially, it can be difficult to reach out, especially if you feel lonely and secluded. This is why I firmly believe in peer-to-peer aid. Often, talking to a friend is easier than directly confronting a system that may appear foreign and unfamiliar. Even without formal training, this form of support acts as a catalyst to link affected pupils to the help that they need.

Some things do not stay with us forever- for some of us, algebra or the ability to play an instrument will become less and less important- but mental health will remain with you for your lifetime; it is and will

always form a fundamental pillar of your wellbeing. Much like swimming or riding a bicycle, once the processes involved are understood, they are not easily forgotten. And one day, that knowledge may even save a life.

Nick Wong (U6)

Anorexia is a mental and physical disorder that has taken over my brother's life for the past 6 years. It's an issue that has affected the lives of everyone in my family, and it is made much more difficult by the fact that it is an issue that isn't very well understood. We've tried everything to help and are now seeking help from people in different countries. He is doing much better after having several relapses, and we all stay hopeful for better futures where we can function properly and together as a family again.

Luke Risman (U6)

People often think I'm an overachiever, a perfectionist, a type-A personality who wants things to be done a certain way. Well, I don't blame them because I look just like every other Oundelian who has high academic pursuits, deep activity involvement and seemingly everything together. But what people don't often see is the worrying and fears, the self-doubt and self-criticism, the rituals



and obsessions underneath all that. For years my battle with anxiety, depression and OCD had been masked in the deep shadows of a bubbly, cheerful persona - I became so used to the constant panic attacks and endless breakdowns that I simply thought there would be no end to this struggle.

One day, I hit rock bottom and decided that it was time I asked for help. I referred myself to the Clayton Rooms and the next thing I knew I was having weekly appointments with Natalie, to whom I felt safe talking. Together we came up with coping strategies that made the hectic schedule in Oundle more manageable; she also challenged my irrational thought patterns and the way I looked at myself. I'm so glad I reached out to Natalie despite not knowing what to expect - I've learnt a lot from her and feel profoundly grateful for the help she's given me in the past year.

To those living with a mental illness, don't suffer in silence - tell a friend, a family member or a teacher. I know it's scary but you don't need to hide - remember that you're not alone and there will always be people around to support you. And to those who know someone with a mental illness, be kind and lend them your ears, even if you don't really understand what is going on, because chances are they don't really know either.

Sammie Kwong (U6)

Any one of us can recognise that finding a niche is difficult. Oundle sees its students through the definitive teenage years, during which the majority forge personalities of their own. But the distinctive duality between truth and perception - how you view yourself versus how others see you - introduces difficulty for students under personal and domestic pressures. As one of these students, I came to consider what individuality meant to me. Pithy attempts to push a positive parody of myself into the world - so as to force an internal change - merely masked my conflict. I needed resolution.

At Oundle, I underwent tectonic and holistic changes in psyche for various private reasons. The ensuing sensation of polarity meant that, despite efforts to the contrary, I never managed to feel part of any one social group. I became nomadic and needy; overwhelmingly shy, yet desperate for attention. This wasn't lost on me: I had to surmount sickening episodes of self-hate, which themselves rendered me socially crippled and at times stripped me of dignity. I was left feeling passive, naked of personality and empty of any and all value.

But I am lucky. At Oundle, I have supportive peers and an environment that remains flexible despite my inward tensions. Good friends recommended that I visit the Clayton Rooms. I arrived at my

first session doubting my decision to come; I left amazed. By helping me systematically to define and further question my worries, the Clayton Rooms had found an approach that brought me to understand them better without trivialising them.

Chris Dunn (U6)



In Praise Of The Library

The Cripps Library is seriously underrated. Before Sixth form, I never appreciated the Library for anything more than being occasionally convenient for a last minute prep printing panic in the break before the lesson, or at the very least to collect a book you were supposed to bring for the next teacher. Now, however, I can confidently say that the Library is my favourite place in the school. In fact, I imagine my results at the end of the year will be largely dependent on how much time I spend in the Library.

The Library is the best solution to the so-far-insoluble problem of my productivity (or rather, lack thereof) in house. Working in my dorm has always been a serious challenge. The bed sits temptingly near the desk, and the multiple distractions both within the room and around the house all serve as easy pastimes and nice alternatives to working. All in all, it is the perfect environment for procrastination. Free period after free period flies by, in which I generally achieve little more than tiring out my thumb from flitting across my phone screen. As a result of this increasingly serious issue, the library is a perfect alternate option in which I can actually be reasonably productive during a PR. The calm, quiet work environment in the Library is enough to lull anyone into submission, in order to tackle the essay that's been at the top of your prep diary from the start of the week. Not only are you surrounded by a collection of over 22,000 volumes, but there's always some unfortunate friend nearby to whom you can pose a question. Even the surfaces of the desks are geared towards maximising your work potential, with handy non-slip leather coverings.

But it is not just work benefits that the Library provides. One thing that I think is often overlooked

is the leather chairs that sit on the top floor by the window. While their primary function is to serve as comfy alternatives to working at a desk, or a nice place to read a book in quiet, they also act as useful vantage points over the unaware passers-by. The seats are placed next to the large windows overlooking the graveyard, and allow you a convenient birds eye view over the general goings on of Oundelians at break time; even if you don't fancy people watching, it's still a nice place to sit for a chat.

And then it all changes. In exam season, the Library transforms. Granted, it is still an incredibly useful work space, but the calm and relaxed environment is replaced with an atmosphere of panic. Tensions are high as the frantic rush to start revising begins, and the mass movement of last-minute-crammers floods into the Library. Although it is never voiced (silence is insisted), there is definitely an air of unease hovering over the full desks, meaning any minor issue that would ordinarily be overlooked causes high levels of resentment. One example of this is the printing crisis. Considering the Library probably holds the most central printer, the mass of paper that passes through that printer is inevitably very high during the summer term (due to the high demand for past papers). Despite its practicality, the over-active printer causes great outrage amongst the frequenters of the Library. The continuous whir and buzz as it churns out endless pages is distracting, to say the least. The result of this is that anyone brave enough to retrieve their sheets from the printer receives the steady glares of the whole building as they make the walk of shame up to the front. Those that are unaware of this taboo, and unfortunate enough to make the mistake of using the hole punch or stapler, receive a similar treatment.

Emma Thompson (U6)



Calm In A Stressful Environment

There are such things as 'Type A' and 'Type B' personalities into which everyone can, apparently, be categorised. The former is defined as individuals who are outgoing, ambitious, rigidly organised, highly status-conscious, impatient, anxious, proactive, and concerned with time management. They are often high-achieving 'workaholics' who push themselves with deadlines, and hate both delays and ambivalence. The latter, contrastingly, are defined as individuals who live at lower stress levels, who typically work steadily and may enjoy achievement, although they have a greater tendency to disregard physical or mental stress when they do not achieve. When faced with competition, they may focus less on winning or losing than their Type A counterparts, and more on enjoying the game regardless of winning or losing.

From my experience of Oundle, I would say most Oundelians fit into the 'Type A' personality category, at least when it comes to stress, although, it could be said that I have a skewed view of stress at Oundle. I happen to be in a particularly high-achieving and, coincidentally, high-stress boarding house - to put things into context, ten of the fifteen girls in our year had Oxbridge interviews this year - so perhaps my categorisation of Oundelians isn't entirely representative.

Despite the high-stress environment of my boarding house, I am what can only be described as 'Type B personified' (or at least so I've been told). I practically never get stressed, so much so that I don't really know what it means to be properly 'stressed'. From doing prep at 4:30am, to having an AS level exam the next morning, I remain as chilled as I am every other day: all of this is nothing more than an inconvenience. Despite the obvious benefits

of being a Type B and living a low-stress life, the internet also tells me that I am at a lower risk of heart attacks, catching a cold and having a stroke (in case you weren't already convinced of the benefits).

However, it is not all good, sadly. Being in a constant state of Zen means that I am seriously lacking in the organisation department, as well as in the 'sense of urgency' department, and the time management department. This manifests itself into being late to all period one, four and six lessons (a perfect recipe for a pink card, I might add) along with a mountain of work on a Sunday night thanks to my inability to do anything more than ten hours before the deadline. Whether there is a correlation between extreme disorganisation and chillness I do not know, but I would certainly be a great source of evidence for showing there is. Although I should not do myself an injustice. The work does eventually get done. It just takes a little longer than it does for other, fellow B-type Oundelians. Writing this very article in fact, has taken me ten weeks (and counting) to complete, so droughts of productivity is clearly another characteristic to be added to the type B definition. I would normally blame my unproductiveness on my professionally diagnosed 'slow handwriting speed' but sadly I don't think that extends to the keyboard.

To round up this analysis of what it means to be a type B, or more specifically, to live in a constant state of chill, I would say that, all in all, the benefits outweigh the negatives as it certainly makes life more enjoyable being free of angst. The only real downside is that I am too chilled to let any of the bad characteristics stress me out, so sadly it's looking like I am very much stuck in my disorganised and tardy ways. The only thing that does bring me close to stress, however, is the idea of any future employer reading this article.

Rosie Bradstock (U6)



Social Suicide

'...despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.' (Isaiah 53:3)

It was with a heavy heart that I woke up on an otherwise average Wednesday morning. My consistent inactivity during *Oundelian* sessions had prompted the editors to task me with something they referred to as 'half commission, half punishment'. I was to stand up against the social norms that govern Oundle, unwritten but more relevant to Oundle pupils than even the most important parts of the official Oundle Code. Much as I like to think that I am above caring about social conventions, the prospect of deliberately flouting them filled me with dread. In fact, an unnamed *Oundelian* colleague, stated that he would rather quit the *Oundelian* than do this. My task was sixfold:

1. Wear a backpack (garish) to all lessons
2. Walk between lessons alone
3. Go to break alone
4. Sit in the 'incorrect'* part of Cloisters
5. Having eaten alone, go and talk to an upper year that I don't know

When I had been given the details of my ordeal, I began to regret deeply telling the editors that I would take on their challenge. Like a condemned man contemplating his fate. I got up and got dressed, before searching for the necessary items - the torture instruments if you will. At this point I was trying to remain in denial about the day ahead. Do I even have to do this? Surely I can just pretend I forgot...Then the thought of the intense wrath of the *Oundelian* editorial team, should I fail them, entered my mind, and I realised that my fate was more or less sealed.

So I chose my poison, and placed the metaphorical target on my back: a bright red backpack, impossible to miss. Had I seen someone else wearing this, I am unashamed to admit that I would've struggled not to laugh out loud. Walking between lessons was not enjoyable. Those who I knew reacted mainly with humour (however it was clear that it was laughter at rather than with me), and I dread to think of the reactions of those who had no idea what I was doing. However, I made the interesting observation that a lot of my embarrassment was self-inflicted; it's not as if I was surrounded by people overtly staring, pointing and making comments, but the thought of the abomination on my back was burden enough.

Buying break was definitely a challenge. Oundle News is cramped by most people's standards, and trying to navigate the racks of sweets and postcards with what was probably the size of a small leatherback turtle on my back was hairy to say

the least. Nevertheless I succeeded in making my purchase, beset by my gargantuan red companion. I timidly walked back towards Cloisters, in a manner which I tried to convince myself looked confident. The tree in the centre of Cloisters was my final destination. I sat under the tree and opened my shameful purchase, chewing on the bittersweet taste of isolation (and Haribos). What particularly stung were the looks from lower years, who seemed to relish in my pain. .

My final task was probably the least difficult; to talk to an unknown member of an upper year. I approached the break time prefects, and explained my predicament. They looked at me in confusion, and asked if they were going to be filmed. I tried to explain that all I wanted was a five minute conversation (no cameras involved), and eventually they relented. Conversation ensued, and all was well.

Having completed my final two lessons of the day, I rushed back to house and threw off the backpack. I was scarred, but not utterly deflated. The experience, though less than enjoyable, was actually not as traumatising than I thought it would be.

Despite my efforts, I doubt the social norms of Oundle changed at all because of that day. People will still shun bags, solitude will still be embarrassing, and year groups will still stand in their respective herds. Most importantly however, my punishment was completed, and I felt pretty elated. I had gone to hell, and come back victorious.

** Each year group has their own unofficial area in Cloisters in which to stand for thirty-five minutes in the rain.*

Jacob Jones (5th)



Chloe Leong(U6)

Number Crunching

You are reading this on one of the 2,800 copies of the Oundelian produced every year.

Go on the Oundle website or Twitter, and you'll find a number of statistics about the School's achievements, including the percentage of GCSE grades for the relevant year of which were A*s, and how many sports fixtures have been won that term. However, something that Oundle rarely thinks to display to the outside world is the fact that there are 544 separate panes of glass in the new Sci-Tec building. Or that there are 11.2 (Gale) miles of fibre optic cable in the school WiFi system. Shockingly, it is barely ever mentioned to prospective parents that there are 7,000 lines in one 'Super Economy' pad of block which is issued to every pupil at the start of the school year.

Although Trendall's doughnuts are widely regarded as the backbone of our Oundle community, few people are aware that the revered butcher's prepares over 200 of them every break time, ready to feed to our hungry pupils. As for the culottes, another iconic symbol of Oundle culture, the number of their stripes (148) often goes tragically unnoticed. Few Oundelians make it very far through their School career without losing their docket at least once - luckily, each year we order 1,000 of them to save the poor souls stranded outside buildings after a music lesson.

Next time you send your teacher your (probably late) essay attached to an apologetic email, remember that that Word document is one of 373,000 sent over the School system every year - and that email is one of 123,446 received in the School system over the last forty-eight hours. If you tuned into OSCAR over the November broadcast at any point, you were one of 2,065 different people. If you did listen to OSCAR, it was probably over the internet, on which we each spend an average of 5.25 hours a day - no wonder we've been having a digital detox every Friday.

Ed Hodgson (L6) and Flora Smith (U6)

The Secret Lives Of Teachers

It's sometimes difficult to imagine any teacher actually having a life away from School, but apparently some of them do. Eleanor Bines went to talk to some of them about what they get up to in their free time...

DJ Pivot

Though he now resides in the Maths department, during the 80s Mr Meisner was DJ-ing once a term for student discos at Oxford University following a five-minute tutorial on the equipment in Wadham College from a friend. However, aside from his nickname 'the quiet DJ' (due to his placid nature), he did not have a stage name until Ms Francis christened him 'DJ Pivot' (an inside joke to do with pivot tables on excel spreadsheets). He now performs at weddings and the odd Common Room party. At a New Years Eve Party a few years ago his son, Joseph, took over and everyone said he was better as Joseph is 'much more up-to-date', and with Dr Meisner's go-to anthem being Stevie Wonder's 1972 song *Superstition*, this is arguably unsurprising..!

The Instrument Maker

Mr Wells may not be a qualified D.T. teacher, but he is practised in the art of making instruments, including violins, violas and cellos. It takes around eighty hours to create a violin, and over the years he has made about 130 instruments using hand tools in his workshop. After leaving university he traded in cabinet making, which is where it all began. The physics fanatic came out of him when he explained he enjoyed making furniture because it meant using renewable materials to make things which would last and could be repaired. Once at Oundle, on Wednesday afternoons he set up a group making musical instruments such as harps and mandolins. He then came across Paul Bickle, a violin maker, who taught him the skill. Many of his creations have been instruments for his children. He finds hearing people play his instruments very rewarding and he likes that each one is different and it is possible to make a better one. He is currently working on a cello that he hopes to learn to play in his retirement.

The Soap Star

For the last three years, Miss Dorman has been using her Chemistry knowledge (and some of the Dryden beeswax) to make soaps. One batch produces about twenty soaps, which she does 'every six months or so'. She prefers making soaps to bath bombs because they are more of a challenge. A batch takes around two hours to make, is cured for twenty-four hours and then left for a month before

being used. The idea (and recipes) came from her Auntie who lives on a farm in France and makes soaps using goats' milk. However, when Miss Dorman used goats' milk herself, it was a 'really bad smell', when the sodium hydroxide was added, that she says 'still stays with me'. Her favourite scents are tea tree and vanilla. She would like to be able to use the soaps for charity ventures, however it requires certification.

The Quirky Quilt Maker

'I don't really know much about it' are Mrs Hopper's first words on the interview recording from when I spoke to her about her quilt making, but for someone who claims to know so little, her quilts are incredibly impressive. She enjoys 'choosing fabrics and cutting stuff up and sewing it together' and before making quilts, which she learned from a book, she created fabric baskets and toys such as bunny rabbits out of old trousers for her nieces and nephews. Her first quilt contains buttons given to her by her friends and is her favourite creation. A quilt, if done continuously, takes about two weeks. The six quilts she has made include ones made out of her old t-shirts and ones with photos to commemorate milestones. Each quilt, for which the fabric comes from 'the room of doom' (a room in her house that has been entirely consumed by her materials), has a bee on the back and the date embroidered. When I asked if she had any final things to tell me about her hobby, she replied 'I think it makes me sound like a seventy year old woman'.

The Music Maestro

Mr Raudnitz first became interested in music by listening to his parents' records. Soon after he started playing a guitar, which was bought for a lady staying at their house and left on top of his wardrobe, at around the age of 7. His interest grew as he listened to the Beatles and found a desire to write and record songs. The 'idea of a group of people being together and doing something creative' captivated him. His brother's band's rehearsals, which he would often watch, used to take place in the living room. Then, at 13, he started his own band for a house music competition at school, before converting his parents' cellar into a recording studio. Mr Raudnitz's favourite concert was at the age of 15 in Hemel Hempstead Arts Centre with this band. His friend promoted it for three months and became 'kinda possessed', causing the tickets to sell out and people were lined up around the block. He described it as 'surreal' and 'very personal' as they were surrounded by people they knew. However he admitted 'If I heard a recording of it now, I bet we were atrocious'.

He is still with the drummer of this band today and together they produced music as 'Speedvark'. The band name has since been changed to 'Semtex Mouse', which 'came from a very weird conversation about mice and explosives' (don't worry, no animals have been hurt in the creation of their music). Currently, they are working with singer Zena Kit in London as they wanted to 'get away from writing on guitars' and move to keyboard and electronic drum based music, which requires a voice like Zena's that 'cuts a bit more'. Had Mrs Hopper not played Re.Up by Rationale, which features Zena's backing vocals, in the English Department, this partnership probably wouldn't have happened. Mr Raudnitz concluded 'It might be that in a year's time we look back on it all and say that it was rubbish but it doesn't really matter' as he has always enjoyed exploring areas of music he previously didn't fully understand.

Eleanor Bines (U6)



Henry Watson (5th)

Minority Report

Three times a week, the pupils of Oundle School put on their finest suits, sharpen their singing voices and head to a building in a field to pray. Chapel is one of the few rituals Oundle has to offer in which the entire school participates no matter what, and the huge crowds it draws make it one of the most simultaneously despised and beloved moments of the School week. While many relish in the rare calm it provides, others proclaim Chapel as a waste of time and a breach of their right to a lie-in on Sunday. I, for one, love Chapel: the time it gives you to contemplate your week, the tranquility that lets you forget a busy day, and the fun that comes from singing the same song, together, as a whole school - regardless of age or faith or house. It may be strange to hear this from me in particular, because I am a Jew.

Being Jewish at a Christian school may, to many, seem like a daunting prospect. Forced to pray for a religion I'm not part of, made to say a foreign grace before meals, and open to the (presumed) terrifying consequences associated with being a member of a minority. In truth, the reality of being Jewish at Oundle is far less interesting. Besides hearing the words 'I can't believe you've never had bacon!' every time I explain my dietary requirements (usually followed by 'you should try it, it's the best' or 'like, never?'), or having people remark literally every time I go to Chapel about how unfair and immoral it is that a Jew should be forced to attend a religious ceremony for a sect they are not part of (these arguments tend to ignore the large number of atheists and agnostics who also have to 'endure' this 'religious brainwashing'), there really is not very much to being Jewish at Oundle. True, there have been moments on a tired, rainy Sunday where I have considered pulling the Jew-card to gain an extra forty minutes of beauty sleep: of course, this temptation is inevitable, but once one has come to terms with considering Chapel as a community event, rather than a religious one, it is easy to avoid.

Therefore, I like to think about the positives of being Jewish at Oundle. For example, I have found that being a member of a minority religion can be an amazingly convenient way of getting out of doing a homework: Just say you have to be at home for rosh hanukkah (or some other made up holiday) and 99% of the time the teacher won't question it. Equally enjoyable are the rare moments in a Religious Studies lesson where one gets the opportunity to correct a teacher, or when you can command anyone to do your bidding by tricking them into thinking that the words they just said, 'Hello Edward', are the most offensive words you can say to a Jewish person. My favourite benefit I have come across was coined by my aunt when she was at school. Without being noticed for years upon

years, my Aunt's plot was only discovered when her father received a letter from the school enquiring whether it really was forbidden for Jews to eat broccoli.

And so, I go to Chapel three times a week, the School thinks I am forbidden to eat fish, and I have to withstand some interesting commentary on a relatively regular basis; and yet, I struggle to see how my school life would be drastically different if I were not Jewish. This is, of course, a good thing. The fact that my being Jewish is almost a boring feature of my personality, and that I can easily miss a few lessons for a made-up holiday are great signs of Oundle's inclusivity. Oundle meets three times a week at a place many disagree with, and this may to many seem like a dividing force in the School; yet the fact that we meet once a week and sing together reminds me of the the School's tolerance and acceptance. If only Christians went to Chapel, it would be a great hindrance to the School's unity. So what can I say about being Jewish at Oundle? Not a lot really, and this is probably a good thing.

Ed Hodgson (L6)



Learning To Drive In Oundle

When taking the wheel of the Oundle Driving School car and facing the seemingly quiet streets of Oundle for the first time, having driving lessons in Oundle did seem like the sensible thing to do. How wrong I was. 'What can possibly be difficult about driving around in the quiet market town of Oundle?' I hear you ask. Well, despite the modest size and apparent calm of the town, braving the roads during term time is a traumatic experience. The general consensus of both the School and the town is that Oundelians are inexplicably incompetent when it comes to crossing roads. You'd think that a five-year-long education at a school that prides itself on the academic performance of its students would provide us with the mental capacity to cross roads without risking the life of both driver and pupil. Unfortunately this is not the case. Despite the multiple lunchtime announcements and numerous concerns from teachers, somehow Oundelians just can't grasp the concept of road safety. This can be a bit of an issue if you're taking on the main street through town centre for the first time.

It is general knowledge amongst locals that going on an excursion through town centre at eleven o'clock is a grave mistake: the brake pedal must be continuously hovered over in order to avoid the surge of teenagers crossing the road, all heading purposefully towards the food-packed shops during break time. It is not an unusual sight to see people dive from one side to another, only just making it to the other side in time as some poor vehicle is forced to brake harshly. Although I'm yet

to experience the trauma of the break time rush, coming round the corner by Beans at any time of the day when Oundelians are about is stressful enough for a learner. Sweaty palms on the steering wheel, jittering foot over the brake, it's certainly never a confidence booster when your driving instructor poises his foot over his dual-control brake in wait for whatever's to come.

It's not just the worry caused by the whole crossing-roads issue that makes driving in Oundle so stressful. There is a significant risk that the person you wait for at the zebra crossing or the one who you accidentally lock eyes with on the pavement is in fact someone you know. In this situation, the potential for embarrassment means simple manoeuvres such as taking your foot off the clutch somehow become a whole lot more difficult. This is when booking driving lessons in Oundle becomes a big regret.

However, I don't think I'm giving driving lessons at school enough credit, so, for the sake of the Oundle Driving School, I won't dwell any longer on the negatives. The opportunity to be able to drive is not a negative thing at all. I am just imagining those who have lessons in somewhere like London scoffing at my melodramatic depiction of my experience of them in a small place like Oundle; I have no doubt that learning to drive in a big city is a completely different story. Of course, you actually only spend a small proportion of your lesson time circling the small town centre, so for the rest of the lesson you are free from the student-provoked stress. Furthermore, I really can't complain about being picked up directly outside my boarding house, or having the sense of freedom, however fleeting, of getting away from school for a couple of hours.

Emma Thompson (U6)





Selina Liu (5th)

The New F Word

The Oxford Dictionary defines feminism as 'the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.' It defines a feminist as 'A person who supports feminism'. This means that a feminist is trying to achieve gender equality. Not superiority, but equality. Sadly, I have heard very many people claim that they are not feminists or that they hate feminists, and this may be their honest well-informed view. However, I certainly hope that perhaps they have been misinformed, because as I hope the dictionary has clarified, if you are not a feminist, you are sexist. You may fully accept that you are sexist, and therefore you are 100% telling the truth when you say 'I am not a feminist.' In which case, that's your opinion and that's fine.

However, when I have asked those who claim that they are not feminists or that they hate feminists for clarification, I am sometimes informed that they mean 'feminazis'. Somehow, it seems, that the word 'feminazi' has become almost synonymous with 'feminist'. This is shocking and wrong for so many reasons. The Nazis, killed around 17 million people. Feminists are not perpetrators of genocide, at least, not that I have been able to discover. So to equate extreme supporters of feminism to the Nazis, is just wrong. The Oxford Dictionary describes 'feminazi' as a derogatory term for 'a radical feminist.' Radical means 'advocating or based on thorough or complete political or social change; representing or supporting an extreme or progressive section of a political party.' I don't know about you, but somehow I don't see a radical feminist as anywhere near deserving of a title like 'feminazi.'

This year is the centenary of some women being granted the vote in the UK. The Suffragettes, who fought for women's right to vote, were certainly radical. They went to extreme measures to advocate their rights, such as hunger strikes, burning down churches, and famously Emily Wilding Davison threw herself under the king's horse. Whilst their actions may not have been the single reason for some women being given the vote, they doubtlessly had an influence.

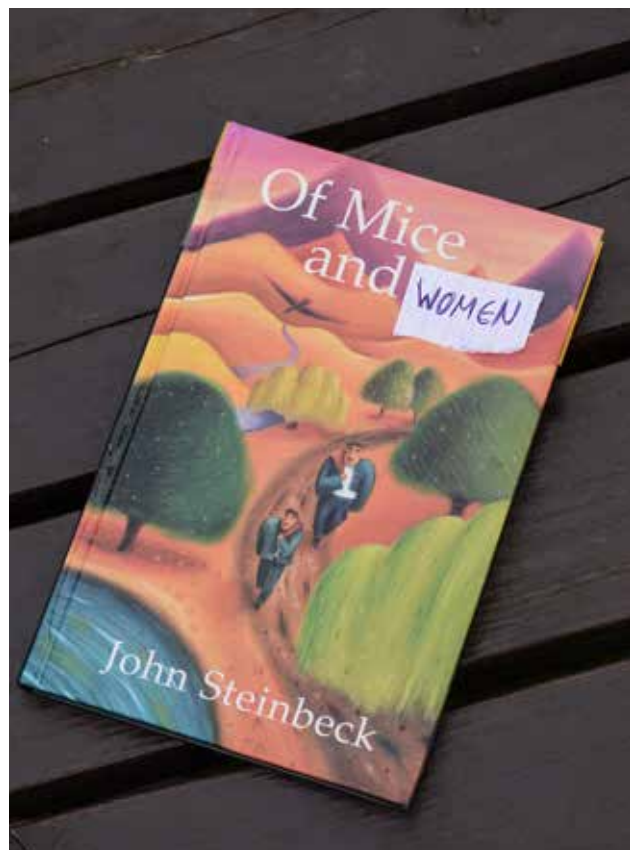
As if to make matters worse, it seems that being a feminist is grounds for judging someone. A while ago I heard someone claiming they hated a teacher, not because they had unfairly been given an undeserved detention, nor because they had been set masses of prep, but because that teacher was a feminist. This, I believe, proves just how deep our misunderstanding of the word 'feminist' runs. Do we hate the UN? Probably not. But they are feminists. In 1948 they reaffirmed in the landmark Declaration that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.'

Women today have a lot more rights than they used to, in fact, girls being allowed to go to school anywhere, and the allowance of girls to attend boys schools (so girls being allowed to go to Oundle) is proof of the distance feminism has come. So, the girls at this school who say they are not feminists, are only here because of feminism. Today women have more opportunities, but that doesn't mean we have reached a place of equality just yet. Proof of this is the gender pay gap; there is currently a median hourly rate pay gap that on average means women are paid 9.7% less than men. So, if you are female, next time you say you aren't feminist, just remember that you are saying you are perfectly happy to have a significantly lower paid job.

There is an anxiety and sensitivity about the word 'feminist' that is perfectly ridiculed by comedian Aziz Ansari, 'if you believe that men and women have equal rights, if someone asks if you're feminist, you have to say yes because that is how words work. You can't be like, 'Oh yeah, I'm a doctor that primarily does diseases of the skin.' 'Oh, so you're a dermatologist?' 'Oh no, that's way too aggressive of a word! No no, not at all.'

I'm not trying to force anyone to change their opinions, but I'm hoping that anyone who reads this will be slightly better informed, and will realise that a 'feminist' is just another word for someone who wants gender equality.

Alice Broadbent (5th)



Respecting One's Youngers

Boarding House life for Oundle's youngest pupils has changed significantly since I joined in the Third Form. The Names Test* has now been outlawed, and all forms of hazing*, if discovered, result in serious trouble for the ringleaders. These welcome reforms have been brought about by a change of Head, and changes of attitudes. As the school and society as a whole progresses, young boys in particular are being increasingly encouraged not to repress their emotions and not to maintain a 'stiff upper lip', especially if they are being bullied.

For the past few years, I have heard a small but vocal core of pupils grumbling about the loss of aged-based hierarchy in boarding houses. Some older pupils seemingly see it as their right to have superiority over those younger than them, and treat Third formers as they themselves were treated. While I think that things like the Names Test - done properly - could be enjoyable experiences for all members of the house, I welcome the clamp-down on age-based hierarchy. Frankly, it serves no purpose other than to be a slightly sadistic ego boost for the Upper Sixth. If you actually stop to think about it, the whole phenomenon of age-based hierarchy is bizarre. In the real world, nobody gets away with ordering other people around simply because they happen to be a few years older than them.

When I arrived in Third Form, I looked at the Upper Sixth girls in my house and saw mature, intelligent, slightly intimidating young women who seemed so sure of themselves and ready to move into the real world. They were everything I wanted to be, and everything that I could never see myself being. UCAS, university, A Levels - the topics that they discussed at the lunch table were so far removed from anything that was on my radar that they might as well have been speaking in a different language. I desperately wanted them to like me, and five years ago being 'janky' to an upper year was pretty much a cardinal sin, so over the course of that year I barely spoke to the people who were putting me to bed every night. It wasn't that I didn't want to talk to them, I was just so scared that I'd say something wrong and that one of them would take a disliking

to me. Much as I admired them, I was - I admit - a little afraid of them.

Having experienced it myself, I know how important it is for the younger members of the School to have a comfortable environment to live in. Having a bad experience in Third Form is not an excuse for being nasty when it's your turn at the top; if anything, it means you have an even greater duty to try and break the cycle of hierarchy and intimidation. I'm not talking about duties like taking out the recycling or fetching lunchtime announcements. I'm talking about the deliberate commanding of authority through fear. In some ways it's natural for older pupils to want

to be respected by the younger people in the house, but you only deserve that respect if it's mutual. The way I see it, there are two kinds of respect: the respect that comes from treating someone in an intimidating way, and the respect that comes from simply treating someone as an equal human being. In boarding houses, sometimes older pupils have been too interested in gaining the first kind of respect, and the second has been ignored or forgotten.

I don't particularly want to be best friends with any of my Third Form - our priorities are quite different, given the age gap - but I would really like for them to feel able to come to me with any kind of problem. Although I might not feel it myself, I know they probably look up to me and think I'm a lot wiser than I actually am. The role of an Upper Sixth with regards to Third formers should be to give them someone to talk to other than a housemistress, and to set the tone of the house by creating a warm environment. The abolition of hierarchy and hazing is a good start on the road to improved inter-year group relations, but I think that attitudes need to change as well as institutions.

*Glossary

Names Test - testing new Third Form pupils on the names of older pupils

Hazing - coercing people into carrying out dares or initiation ceremonies

Flora Smith (U6)



Autism And The Language Of Disability

This is a topic that is particularly close to my heart because my youngest brother, Fred, is autistic. He was diagnosed when he was three and I was seven. It has certainly made life harder, for Fred most particularly, but also for my parents and for me and my middle brother. Even so, I am all too aware that there are those for whom things are far, far worse. I am also aware that living with Fred has opened my mind in a way that little else could have, and I believe absolutely that it has made me a more tolerant person. Getting to know my brother over the last ten years – insofar as you can ever get to know anyone with his sort of autism – has definitely increased my own empathy, and yet he has no idea of it. I have to admit that I find that a little sad.

Autism is what is known as a spectrum disorder. It is a term used to refer to a range of impairments which can be relatively mild or extremely severe. When people ask me where Fred is on the autistic spectrum, I always answer: 'somewhere in the middle.' Autism isn't a cognitive impairment; being autistic doesn't mean you are less clever. It is a sensory and communicative impairment, which affects how you interact with the world. It can mean that you are over-sensitive or under-sensitive to external stimuli, such as noise or touch, and you can also have impairments with communication and language.

The truth is that, as a society, we don't understand autism very well. Most people, quite reasonably, seem to base their views on the representations of autism they see in the media or in popular culture. As a result the stereotype of the autistic person seems to be someone who is very good at Maths but doesn't like hugs and gets annoyed if anyone rearranges his coloured pencils. Whilst there is possibly a grain of truth in this stereotype, only very few of the most mildly autistic people conform to it. For instance, my brother, although verbal, only ever really speaks unprompted to quote from his favourite TV programmes, or to make simple requests like 'more food' or 'drink of water' or 'can I have my iPad?' He is ten years old, and I have never had what you could reasonably describe as a conversation with him. He is over-sensitive to noise and light and he hates eye-contact, but he is under-sensitive to heat, and to pain; if he cries, we know he must have really hurt himself. This makes him act rather differently from most people, and certainly differently from the stereotype of the autistic person. He spends a lot of his time 'stimming'. A stim is a repetitive behaviour, and it is a common way for autistic people to block out overbearing sensory input. My brother's usual stim is to waggle a piece of string in front of his face to

deal with visual and auditory over-stimulation. This stim is quite often accompanied by skips and loud shrieks. This makes his disability rather obvious to the world at large, and, on seeing him, you might be struck in passing by the peculiar child in the supermarket, but then think no more of it. However, this is something that ought not to be brushed away so lightly. Whether they are aware of it or not, I'm quite certain that everyone knows someone who is disabled, or who is affected in some way by disability. I can think of three just in my set at Oundle, and I'm sure not even half the set knows it.

Autism, and mental disability in general, will always be dogged by misconceptions, since it is precisely the sort of sensitive and difficult issue that our society struggles to deal with. Although the good work of charities and other organisations has brought mental disability far more into the public consciousness, most people tend to go through their lives without thinking much about it. It is an issue people find hard to make sense of, and it is no surprise that people are often unable or unwilling to understand it fully on their own. I don't want to give the impression that this is an attack on those who don't understand, or that I think it is their fault, because it isn't. If the majority of people are unable to form an understanding of mental disability independently, surely it is up to those who do understand to try to help them? However, people should never use their own lack of understanding to excuse judgmental or abusive behaviour or language. The belittling and casual negative-referencing of mental disability has become commonplace; every day in school I hear the language of disability being used in a disparaging way. People use the terms 'retard' and 'spastic' as casual insults. I have heard both pupils and teachers describing other pupils as 'special', apparently as a joke. For some reason, people seemingly never tire of the similarity between the words 'artistic' and 'autistic'. These terms are almost never used maliciously, and my friends are horrified if I point out to them the true implications of their language. But, although these comments might not be meant to offend, they are offensive.

People have always discriminated against that which they perceive as different or which they don't understand. Fear of the unknown always causes people to belittle or denigrate. When this belittling behaviour and language becomes commonplace, we become desensitized to it. But remarks made in passing and in good humour can have far greater effects than ever intended. All it would take to stop it would be a little more thought and a little more understanding. So, my simple plea is this: next time you are tempted to call someone 'special' or a 'retard', don't. You will be helping to create a more understanding and tolerant society.

Tom Aubury (4th)

A Change Of State

Although Oundle is a school diverse in culture, ethnicity and thought, it is not, however, quite so diverse when it comes to students' schooling backgrounds. Talking to my peers at Oundle, I was shocked to hear that some of them had never even set foot in a state school, nor had they any real knowledge of school life outside of the boarding school bubble. This can be said for the majority of Oundle students, who have spent most of their school career sitting quite happily in the 6% of young people educated privately in the UK. I am considered something of a rarity to have been educated in the state system for the whole of my school career up until sixth form, when I moved to Oundle, and where chatting about politics over afternoon tea certainly was not the norm.

Day school involved catching a bus to and from school every day, seeing my parents every evening and having sleepovers and gatherings with friends at the weekend. None of this, of course, is applicable to my life at boarding school - unless, perhaps, you view it as a chronic, five-year sleepover with those in your house. Then there are the huge differences in facilities. The one sports field and two netball courts of my old grammar school do not come into close competition with Oundle's four astros, twelve netball courts, four squash courts, nine cricket squares, eight rugby pitches and 400 metre athletics track, not forgetting the olympic-size swimming pool. I was told to expect a big change in sport facilities, but really, the independent sector is in a different league.

Then, there is the whole business of exam performance. Before even looking at the statistics, I had anticipated that there would be a considerable gap between the exam results of Oundle and of my old school, based on my exam-prep experiences in both schools. At my old school, there was what one could describe as a lack of organisation when

it came to teaching, and in some cases, a lack of teachers all together. In certain subjects, I was still being taught the course up until a few weeks before the GCSE exam, and in others we had not even managed to finish the course. I had heard of Physics classes that were being taught by a teacher who had Physics up to GCSE, and to top it all off, there were very few opportunities for students to get help outside of the classroom. If you wanted good grades, you had to work for them. This is not to say, of course, that at Oundle you can put your feet up and watch the A*s roll in, nor is it to discredit the hard work that I am sure many students put into achieving their good grades. It just seems that, with Oundle's high quality teaching, countless opportunities to get help, and various revision sessions both in and out of class, it is arguably easier to find yourself with a string of As and A*s in your subjects. This is reflected in Oundle's glowing GCSE results of 2016, where 89% of all grades were A/A*s, compared to a mere 40% at my old grammar school. Although I have no doubt that there are reasons aside from teaching and exam-preparation that account for this difference, I am sure that the environment students are in plays a considerable role in determining their success. And credit is owed to Oundle for getting the absolute best out of their pupils. Sadly, the same cannot be said for all state schools.

What I have tried to make clear in this comparison between state and independent schools, is that we, as pupils of Oundle school, are incredibly fortunate. We have arguably been given the best start at life (from a schooling perspective), certainly when compared to the many other students around Britain who may struggle to achieve their potential, whether that be in exam results, in sport, in music or in getting into the best universities of the country. We should be aware of the great privileges that being at this School gives us, and in turn we should ensure that we profit from them the best we can.

Rosie Bradstock (U6)



Iman Folami-Sanus (U6)

The Transition: Day To Boarding

After going to LJS for seven years, I spent my first two years at Oundle as a day pupil.

Third Form arrived with an influx of pupils from all manner of backgrounds. My year of fifty pupils, most of whom I'd been with for the past nine years, suddenly expanded to 210 pupils, the vast majority of whom boarded. How exciting! Long-time Laxtonians soon merged with the rest of the year, helping them to feel welcome and bagging friends along the way.

When I announced that it was my intention to become a boarder, it is fair to say that there was not an entirely positive reaction. For the majority of the Michaelmas half term holiday, all I was asked was: 'Why do you want to start boarding?' The first seed - the beginning of my desire to board - was sown by a new friend who happened to be in New House. We were in the same set and hockey team. She took me back to house for various meals after hockey and showed me the Third Form dorms. My interest was already piqued, and then I noticed a spare bed! The girls in the dorm were hugely friendly and obviously keen to fill the gap! When I broke the news to my parents they said they'd support me either way, provided I was objective in my decision making. Mum subsequently called the School to see if there was any space in Third Form; the only house with a gap was New House.

What were the real factors behind my decision? First, I felt I could make the most of the amazing School facilities. Practically, this meant that I'd be able to make quick decisions (not calling mum to check I could move pick up times). Also, I could get more help from teachers and tap into the knowledge that exists in the house without having to go to vols. Furthermore, I can be with my friends and in a town. Where I live there aren't many other people around, so it's just my sister and I at home. It's not very busy; my dad and I joke that compared to one of my good friends who lives in Shanghai, at least I only have to worry about tractors disrupting my journey home at the end of term.

After looking around New House, I was given a week to make my decision. My gut was telling me with each passing day it was the right thing to do. However, to make sure I made the correct decision, I used a 'Pros and Cons' table. It is still on the kitchen wall! In the 'Pros' column: being with everyone else, making new friends, becoming more independent, not having to be driven everywhere and appreciating the holidays more. In the 'Cons' column was: missing home, family, pets, less privacy, no Sunday roast, and that it would be hard

for my sister. The pros outweighed the cons easily. So I started in New House after the half term.

My first school night at New House (Halloween) was incredible. There were party games, including smashing eggs against our heads, an Upper Sixth telling us a creepy ghost story, a fashion show and lots of laughter: just what I needed to feel welcome. The first term was quite hard. I was so used to the same school routine which I'd kept since Reception that it was difficult to manage my time to begin with. Although we had a designated prep slot, it was challenging to get my prep done on time; even the thought of sharing a study with 5 other people was distracting. The house was always so cold; all I wanted was to be snuggled up at home watching a Bond film with my family in front of the fireplace, and of course there was singing practice, on top of Chapel on a Sunday.

Now I'm in Fourth Form I feel comfortable and confident. I'm not at the bottom of the house, and I have my routine sorted. I'm now finding it easier to work with noise, and I think it's a benefit that the rest of the house is working as well, whereas at home my sister doesn't usually have any work. Summer at New House is fabulous: nothing is better than a day with your friends sun-bathing down by the river at the bottom of the garden, while our housemistress prepares a barbecue. I've also found that I have grown much closer to certain people that I wasn't good friends with beforehand. Another of my favourite things about boarding has to be the breakfasts. At home I used to just stick my hand in the cereal box and go, but this is totally different: full English breakfasts, American breakfasts, pastries, yoghurts, fruit: New House has it all.

Writing this has made me notice how much I love boarding. At New House here is no hierarchy, and everybody is accepted as an equal. I feel proud to represent a boarding house in activities like the Gale Mile or House Shout. I've always wanted to have an older sister to help me with the typical teenage troubles, and now it feels as if my wish has been granted and more: it's as if I have 50 older sisters!

Katie Todd (4th)



Holly Read (4th)



Yasmine Ayoub Sanisi (U6)

Will Computers Ever Replace Teachers?

From dusty blackboards and chalk to smart boards, from lengthy guest-speaker lectures to brief and informative YouTube videos, teaching has undergone a remarkable change over the past few years, accelerated by the locomotive force of technology. However, until recently, no invention of humankind was able directly to challenge its creators, until computers were invented: these devices have already proven themselves just as capable of marking tests and accommodating for a learning space online as our human classroom pedagogues. What is even more exciting is that as computers become all the more affordable, the digital world continues to acquire even greater information as well as new users from all across the globe, meaning that more and more of our questions will be able to be easily answered with the press of a button. Thus, the duties of a school teacher will inevitably be reduced. But does this mean that one day machines will be able to render our teachers entirely obsolete?

Computers first entered the world of education back in the 1960s, when Donald Bitzer of the University of Illinois developed a pioneering piece of software, known as the Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO). This program enabled contemporary American students to attempt multiple-choice tests on a computer, receiving immediate feedback upon completing them. Today, similar algorithms are used in marking and evaluating countless Challenge and Olympiad papers that many of us sit during our time at Oundle School, not to mention university entrance examinations. It might therefore seem that computers are somewhat ferociously usurping the process of education, but fifty years on, the greatest minds of humanity are still yet to design any successful essay-grading software. It remains a largely impossible task because of the way computer applications function. When marking chunks of text, they tend to neglect the actual semantic meaning of the words and phrases, instead focusing on comparing and matching the syntax of the submitted answer to that of the correct one. Even then, humans are truly indispensable to the whole process: they have to write and grade a small set of essays for such a program to use as reference.

Nonetheless, machines have evidently succeeded in replacing their human counterparts as chief test markers, and with significant investment in education-technology startups, which reached half a billion US dollars in 2014, intelligent digital tutors are bound to become increasingly more prevalent. Just imagine how from the comfort of your room, you are able to watch lectures from world-famous

professors recorded and uploaded by universities from around the world, or join hundreds of thousands of people enrolled in a MOOC (Massive Online Open Course). A whole kaleidoscope of ideas is available to you with a single click of a mouse. Some, if not most, courses are free of charge, though you often have to pay a nominal fee to receive appropriate accreditation. Regardless, the appeal of internet learning is obvious: you can pay a teacher once to deliver a lecture, which can then be viewed by an infinite number of students, – a far superior approach to education than employing hundreds of instructors to teach people in separate classrooms. Students can also approach an online course with far greater flexibility, choosing exactly when and where to learn. Therefore, should such a system be fully implemented, you would no longer have to stress yourself about doing soon-to-be-overdue prep on a day when you are not feeling well, for there are no strict deadlines. However, such educational freedom requires a lot of (and in some cases perhaps, too much) responsibility – something not every student can cope with, and so many choose to drop out from the aforementioned courses. Schools also provide a more formal environment, where it is more difficult to be distracted than at home. Evidently, students, including myself, still prefer the ‘good old’ classroom and therefore MOOCs present no real threat to contemporary education.

Investigating the prospect of self-learning, Professor of educational technology at Newcastle University, Dr Sugata Mitra, has conducted a research project in the rural areas of India where there is minimal access to modern technology. He left computers in random communal locations for the local children to experiment with and explore the digital world without any supplementary guidance. This did not impede their curiosity as the children proceeded to learn how to operate a computer, answer factual questions and split themselves into learning groups. However, the study failed to show whether the so-called ‘students’ have come to comprehend the information in necessary detail. In my view, there is quite some difference between understanding and knowing: it is one thing to be able to name the bones and muscles of the body, for example, but quite another to understand the principles of physiotherapy. However, as the children enlisted the support of their parents, openly sharing their experiences and asking for help, he concluded that exchanging knowledge about a particular subject could contribute to its enhanced understanding. Thus, the adults adopted traditional mentoring roles, similar to those of school teachers, inspiring their children to reflect on what they had hitherto learnt.

It should come as no surprise that some schools in Europe and the United States have already discovered what the results of this study show, and

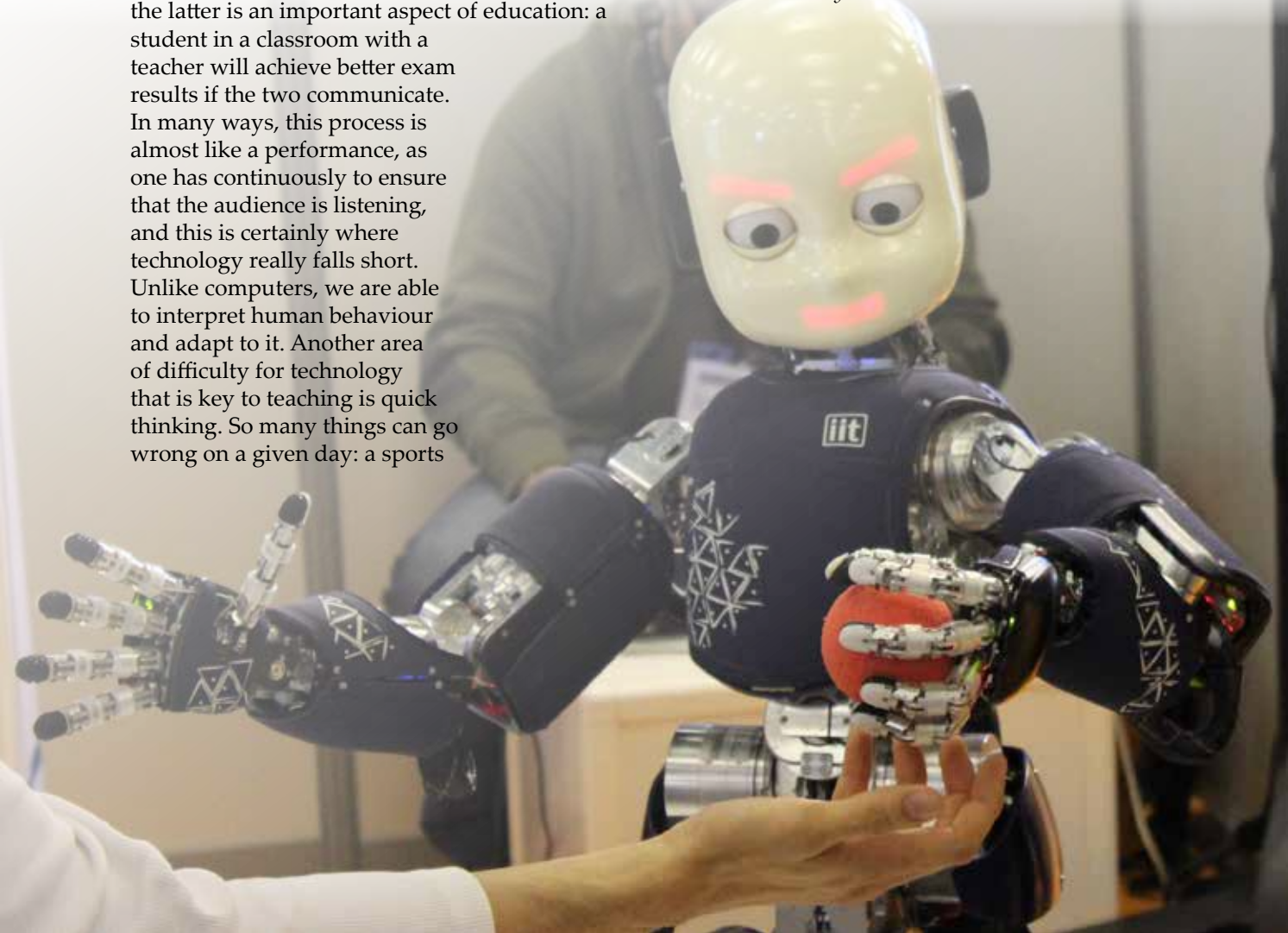
have tried to blend virtual learning with the kind of supervision you normally receive from a teacher in a classroom. One UK example of such schools that exploit this new style of teaching is the Ark Pioneer Academy, where students learn online from materials provided by professional teachers whilst being supervised by non-qualified members of staff. Many of us may look at this peculiar novelty with certain degree of skepticism, interpreting the whole concept of virtual learning as something straight from science fiction books. However, the statistics tell a rather different story. According to the school website, over 70% of Ark Pioneer Academy students gained places at university in the last two years (22% higher than the national average). Moreover, 20% of all Free School Meals students enrolled in the courses gained a place at a Russell Group university in 2016, compared to the national average of 5%, largely assisting social mobility. This clearly demonstrates that merging classroom and virtual learning techniques can be and indeed is, a viable alternative to schooling.

However, at the same time, we must admit that being a teacher does not only tether one to the classroom environment. Teaching is certainly not an easy profession, as many members of staff provide pastoral care, coach sports, cover break-time duties, organise school trips, run extra-curricular activities and, most importantly, speak with both students and their parents. I certainly feel that social interaction between the former and the latter is an important aspect of education: a student in a classroom with a teacher will achieve better exam results if the two communicate. In many ways, this process is almost like a performance, as one has continuously to ensure that the audience is listening, and this is certainly where technology really falls short. Unlike computers, we are able to interpret human behaviour and adapt to it. Another area of difficulty for technology that is key to teaching is quick thinking. So many things can go wrong on a given day: a sports

fixture is cancelled, the whiteboard freezes, or the photocopier breaks, yet human beings are able to think on their feet and change their plans to adapt to new circumstances.

Regardless of whether you are an aficionado of self-learning or a faithful classroom note-taker, you must admit that computers can be, and frequently are, a significant aid in teaching. They facilitate doing routine and dull everyday tasks, for example setting homework and sharing learning materials, and I feel that in the foreseeable future we will observe a substantial increase in demand for teachers who are able to use technology in the classroom. Forever gone are the days of hysterically trying to print a piece of work at 8:20am or looking for people in your set around the boarding house, asking what they did in the lesson in your absence. Though we now welcome the coming of a new era of Google Drive and E-mail, I still find it rather pointless to speculate much further as to what the future will hold for us and for our teachers in 20 or 30 years. The two ideas that might however be worth considering are that the profession of a pedagogue will likely become more challenging, and as a result, potentially more respectable than it is now and that we, as the students of today and the spectators of tomorrow, will continue to wonder at the sophistication of technology and praise the excellence of human mind.

Danila Mikhaylov (L6)



English as a second language at Oundle

I believe most of you can recall some painful experiences of learning a new language. Like everything else, the start, despite difficult, is always filled with passion. Gradually, that passion may fade away, taken over by mental fatigues resulting from memorizing double-digit vocabulary or trying to justify grammatical rules that just don't make sense. However, the ones who managed to maintain the learning momentum, can be surprised by how much they've improved when look back. Gaining that confidence then motivates one to take up the challenge of actually immersing oneself in a foreign environment and then you realise that you were taught a 'fake' language.

In my case, improving English of course was a minor reason for coming to Oundle. Oundle is not the ideal place to lie in the sun with a drink in your hand, chat to the locals and experience an 'exotic' culture. The challenge I had when I first joined was in a different dimension to those who are on language holidays. I found my 'fake' English not only confused others but also did not help when learn four academic subjects. To my surprise, I suffered in Maths and Physics as much as I did in Economics. In Maths, even dealing just with numbers, I still needed a little bit of translation because I was used to doing calculations in Chinese, this was a useful excuse for the careless calculation mistakes I made!) The little translation needed may be the reason why, algebra and calculus have always been my best friends. Unlike my friends in the mild core modules of mechanics and statistic modules if found some much more fearsome difficulties. It might be my lack of vocabulary, but I literally can't think of any words to describe those lengthy and wordy maths questions, other than evil.

What empowered me to combat this evil was actually, finally cracking some Physics prep. Though physics is hugely maths based and in most of the questions one can expect to encounter a similar standard of difficulty as maths but these are even more wordy. I even found that in Physics, occasionally, there are questions asking for description of terms or phenomena and in brackets it often says USE WORDS! What's wrong with using equations? I really didn't like that mind-set. As you can see how much extra effort I had to put into translation in Maths and Physics, I don't need to explain how much I suffered and complained when I started learning economics for the first time.

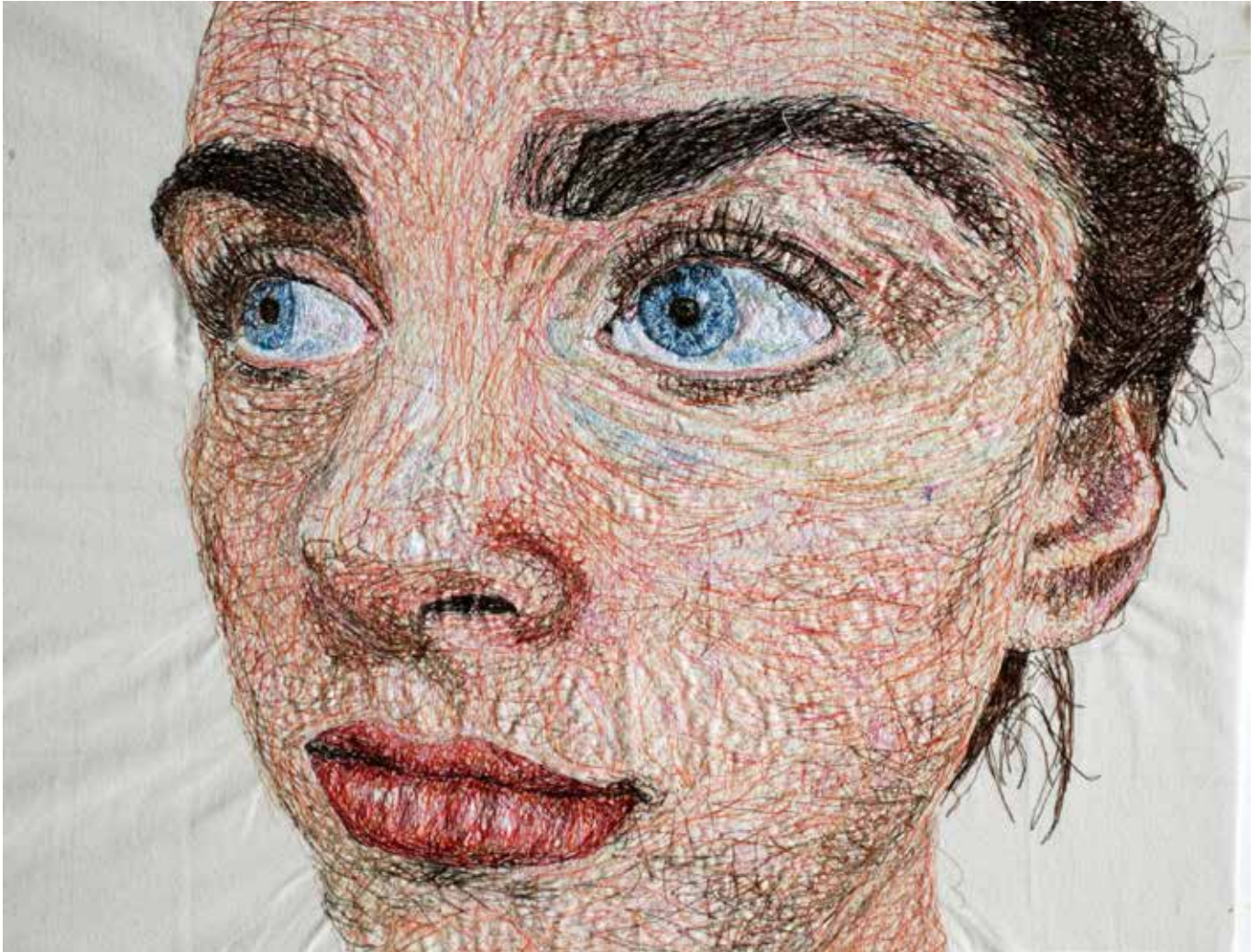
Academics is only a fraction of my life at Oundle and much more time is spent outside classrooms. Believe it or not, the very first challenge I had was

remembering full names. There were numerous surnames that I hadn't even heard of and surnames that sounded a lot like first names. As a result I found that I sometimes incorrectly swapped them around and that, of course, really confused people. Apart from remembering names, the category of words and phrases which I would describe as very 'Oundle', took me some time to get used to. Why is a fob called 'docket'? Why are lined writing pads called blocks? What exactly does 'PR' stand for? With regards to abbreviations, it didn't take me long to realise people's obsession with them. Buildings are shortened to SC, CH, A and GH etc. Moreover, rooms and other locations are shortened accordingly. Some of them are easily recognized but some others like SHCP, Sports Hall Car Park or LLR, Laxton Long Room are absolutely implausible to get unless told by someone.

One thing I would always get asked by people back in China is if I had difficulties in daily communications. Every single time, I answer proudly that I don't. However, deep down in my heart, I know I was not being completely honest. In spite of adequate knowledge of frequently used vocabulary, phrases and grammar, the range of variations of them coupled with slangs and idioms that can appear in conversations never fail to surprise me. I find that people mumble a lot in casual conversations, especially when you speak okay English: most of the time and people tend to forget that English isn't your first language. In fact I am incredibly grateful to these challenges because they propel my English ability so much. Another reason why my English has improved so quickly is that although there are many other students at Oundle whose mother tongue is Chinese, we tend to communicate in English anyway. I tried to figure out why this is the case because this isn't necessarily true in any other schools that I know. I still haven't come to any sort of conclusions yet but this, I speculate, can be the result of Oundle's many unique, even magic, qualities. It's not propaganda I promise, but if you want to really engage in an English speaking environment, come to Oundle.

My experience at Oundle so far has proved that one can never truly learn a language until immersing oneself in an environment where one has to use it on a daily basis. The English that I've learnt from teachers and standard text books is worlds apart from the English that is actually used by English people. And the English used on a Saturday night after two glasses of wine can be enormously different from the English used in an Economics lesson. There is still so much more for me to learn and I reckon it isn't a shame to use, 'Sorry, English isn't my first language' as an excuse for as long as I can, until I don't need to any more.

Emily Wang (U6)



Gemma Harrison (U6)

Writer's Block

Block - or, as the uninitiated call it, 'lined paper' - is one of the fundamental commodities of Oundle, and says a lot about its users. To give an example, it is not uncommon for an Oundelian to spend a significant amount of time in a prep session trying to haggle a piece of Cambridge Everyday from someone who resourcefully stocked up before the term, because supplies of the prescription Super Economy Pad have dried out for those who were less foresighted. Block serves many purposes as well: we use these seemingly unimportant slabs of processed wood for handing in work, for doodling on while pretending to concentrate in a boring lesson, or for scribbling down ideas before they're forgotten. An Oundelian probably spends more time looking at block than they do at their phones, and their block of choice can say a lot about their personality. And thus, after careful deliberation and expert judgement, it is time to give Oundle what it deserves. Having performed extensive social and physical experimentation in some of the school's most popular pads of lined paper, I present below a definitive ranking of these vital life machines that keep Oundle running.



4th Place: Pukka Pad

No exam season is complete without someone rushing to Colemans to buy six sets of fineliners in 30 different colours, two thousand flashcards, a dozen differently-coloured folders, and to finish it

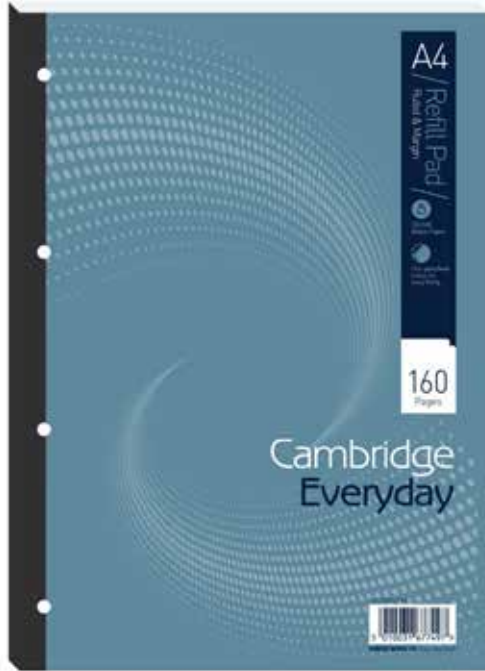
of; a smorgasbord of Pukka Pads in every colour and size imaginable. Years of ruthless marketing and social engineering have brainwashed our generation into feeling that they need to invest in one of these pads of over-hyped, badly-valued trophy-paper to have any chance of not failing their exams. This is most certainly not the case. There are three fundamental flaws in the common Pukka Pad: The design is unappealing, the paper is thin and - most devastatingly - the thick plastic binder on the side not only gets in the way when writing, but can completely besmirch a piece of paper when ripped off badly. All this on a product that costs up to twice as much as any of the other pads mentioned seems frankly fraudulent; forcing unknowing Third-Formers into buying an expensive, sub-quality item by imprinting on them the idea that they need it in order to have any chance of success is hugely immoral, and it is for this reason that I feel no shame at all in declaring Pukka Pad the worst lined paper on the block. (Pun very much intended).



3rd Place: Summit

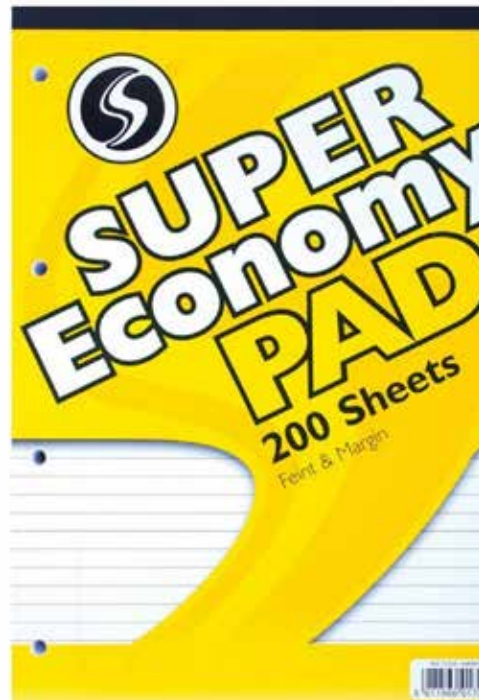
Deciding this third place was a considerable challenge. Oundelians have a special place in their hearts for Summit Pad, so I fear that my judgement of it may come across slightly blasphemous. To understand Summit Pad, we have to understand its historical context. Summit Pad was the School's conscription block of choice up until around three years ago, and I have seen photographs of it being used as far back as 1982. Thus, when it was replaced by the more efficient and modern-looking Super Economy Pad, the reaction was predictably resistant. Many people look back longingly on the glory days of Summit Pad at Oundle, yearning for a return to the days when they could sink themselves into the relaxing mountain landscape and the calming blue margin that lined the side of the page

before getting stuck into a long Philosophy essay. Besides its nostalgic merit, Summit Pad suffers all the same issues as the Pukka: its paper is too thin, doesn't look as nice as it could, and its spine is infuriatingly located in a position that makes the paper near-unusable for left-hander. As Oundelians often need to accept, sometimes because something is old, it does not make it good.



2nd Place: Cambridge Everyday

There is not too much to say about Cambridge Everyday, and not many people are lucky enough to have it, so I shall be brief. Cambridge Everyday is the block of the informed consumer: an Oundelian with this paper is organised and efficient. Not available through Colemans, the sort of person who buys Cambridge Everyday is one with the foresight to buy block before returning to School, the sort of person who underlines the date and title on their work without fail, and the sort of person who is never late with a prep. It is their judgement that should be trusted.



The Winner: Super Economy Pad

Like Summit, I fear that this choice is perhaps a controversial move. There are abundant people within the School who have a genuine burning hate for Super Economy Pad and refuse even to accept the School's offering of it every half-year, bitter that the School would move on from the beloved block of the past. Such people are deluded, as Super Economy Pad - despite lacking the brand image of the Pukka or the nostalgic value of the Summit - is easy to tear, absorbs ink well and (unlike all the other pads mentioned) has a spine located in a way that is equally accessible to left and right handed people.

When we ask why it is that the traditional blocks of the past are so popular, we get closer to abstracting some sort of a message from this seemingly ridiculous foray into stationary choices at Oundle. Simply put, too many things at Oundle are valued solely of how familiar they are. The old, the traditional, the 'cool' all seem to play a bigger role in the runnings of Oundle than the new, the different, the 'weird'. Yet it is the latter that overwhelmingly make the School a better place, people showing interest in things that no one else cares about, hosting an OSCAR show about some obscure Scandinavian pop music, or dedicating their free time to reading (!). When people try something new, and approach new material with open eyes rather than just suckling onto tradition as if blind to any faults held by it, then genuinely exciting things happen and the School moves in a new direction.

Ed Hodgson (L6)

Florida

The first time I heard about the Florida Science trip, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. I had heard tales of SeaWorld Shows, NASA tours, alligators and aquariums, so when I found out they were running it for my year, I jumped like a shot to sign up. When the day of the trip finally arrived, everyone was excited despite it being four in the morning.

After a luxury bus ride to Gatwick (we had blue lights and USB connectors), we were finally off. We arrived in Orlando, and, as we walked outside, I think everyone was stunned by the heat, humidity

and sun waiting for us. After a meal and a quick slice of birthday cake everyone was shattered. When we woke up, we would be spending our first day with non-stop roller coasters and animal shows at SeaWorld. I'd always been told that American theme parks were epic, but I wasn't sure I had believed them until we got to SeaWorld.

Within five minutes one could walk from the Antarctic to Atlantis, and seeing the animals swimming in their huge and luxurious tanks was spellbinding. Rather frighteningly, a couple of rides had to be shut for about half an hour while a thunderstorm raged overhead, but fortunately for us we were on the bus by the time the rain started.





Our second day in Florida was just as amazing as the first and it was definitely a real highlight. When we arrived at NASA everyone was awestruck at the sheer size of some of the rockets in the Rocket Garden. They stood tall and proud, huge monuments which had left our atmosphere and returned. It was completely and utterly stunning.

We were lucky enough to chat to Tom Jones, an actual astronaut, who kindly answered all our questions. We then attempted to build rovers, some of which were a lot more stable than others, and, almost unsurprisingly, Mr Vincent's and Mr Baker's went the furthest!

During our trip we visited numerous aquariums, and took part in research workshops, as well as looking around at all the exhibits in each. At the Florida Aquarium we dissected squid and learnt about classification of species, and at Mote Marine Laboratories we took field samples, and rebuilt a dolphin's skeletal system!

Whilst we were staying on Anna Maria Island, a beautiful island off of Florida's west coast, we went on a kayaking excursion to see some wildlife in its natural habitat. For me, this definitely proved to be one of the trip's highlights; I don't think I'll ever forget kayaking past dolphins or swimming in the Gulf of Mexico whilst being able to see dolphins leaping out of the waves. Every night on Anna Maria Island

provided us with a dynamic display of lightning, and standing out on the breezy balcony watching the light flash across the sky as well as hearing the roaring of thunder was certainly impressive.

In our last couple of days we returned to Orlando, but on the way stopped off at Wild Florida. There, we all got to hold Fluffy, a baby alligator! Fortunately everyone managed to keep all their fingers, because his mouth was held shut. We also enjoyed an airboat ride, and our group managed to spot two alligators in the wild. Later, when we looked around the park, we saw an alligator feeding show. Seeing Bone Crusher, the aptly named 13 foot long alligator, jumping up in the air to snatch a chunk of raw chicken was astonishing, but also intimidating. Luckily we had some retail therapy lined up for us at Orlando Outlets to get over it!

On our final day we visited the Orlando Science Centre, which had some amazing exhibits and experiences, such as the very popular hurricane and earthquake generators.

I think it's certainly fair to say that the Florida trip won't be one that I'll forget soon, and whether we were at NASA, the beach or SeaWorld, everyone was completely captivated.

Alice Broadbent (5th)

Salamanca

In the first week of the Michaelmas half term, a group of eleven Spanish-studying Sixth-formers set off for Salamanca – a relatively small university town near Madrid – for a week of cultural and linguistic immersion. The trip provided a great opportunity for the pupils not only to boost their language skills in a more realistic setting, but also to allow them to explore the incredible heritage of the historic town.

Every day started with a few hours' worth of Spanish lessons in Salamanca's language school. These lessons soon turned out to be some of the most beneficial parts of the trip, as the younger pupils were launched head-first into some more complex grammatical structures that they would not encounter at School for another year, and the older pupils were given a good opportunity to help the younger ones and re-consolidate the basics. To top it off, the grammar lessons were always followed by more cultural lessons covering the

more traditional features of Spanish culture (such as famous painters Picasso and Goya, writers such as Cervantes, and classic books such as *Lazarillo de Tormes*), to more topical and recent issues such as Catalan Independence and the increase in CCTV surveillance in Spain. These issues encouraged rich discussion and, occasionally, fierce debate. Of course, we were only allowed to speak in Spanish, so this improved our ability to talk naturally and think on our feet in order to make our viewpoint clear in another language.

In the afternoons, we delved deeper into these cultural discussions by visiting some of the many sites that Salamanca has to offer. Some of the most spectacular of these visits included the Cathedral of Salamanca (and a trip onto the towers on the roof), the ancient university building, and the Stunning Casa Lis (now an Art-Deco museum). We also learned more about everyday Spanish culture through a visit to the cinema, a paella-cooking lesson, and the dinners at restaurants in which we tried the local cuisine.



Being the second oldest university town in Europe, we were also not short of literary sites to see, and our afternoons regularly ended in visits to significant places. Among these were the Garden of Calisto and Melibea (which inspired Fernando de Rojas to write his *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*), the statue of Fray Luis de León, and the famous Bull statue that was pivotal to the plot of the famous *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Seeing these sites first-

hand really helped with visualising what we were learning.

Overall, the trip was a great opportunity both to improve our Spanish, and to learn about their culture in a way we wouldn't get to do at School, providing a great insight into the heritage of this historic town.

Ed Hodgson (L6)

Thailand

The Thailand trip offered pupils an insight, up close and personal, into the lives of the people of Thailand from the most wealthy to the poorest. The focus of the week was working with Christian Care for the Disabled in Thailand (CCD) and the pupils worked with children in a variety of projects from orphanages to care in rural communities. One day we visited a home in the middle of the rice paddies in the morning and in the evening were dining at Vajiravudh College, a renowned Thai boarding school with Oundle connections. On another, we took a Thai cooking class in the Bangkok slums and visited an upmarket shopping mall. The stark differences of the surroundings in different places, and meeting face to face with people whose lives differed so dramatically allowed the Oundelians to experience Thailand in a way that few tourists can. Donations to CCD may be made through 4Life, a UK based charity dedicated to supporting their work in Thailand.

Gordon Montgomery

The Thailand trip was both incredibly culturally enriching and eye opening. We honestly couldn't have experienced a more well-rounded view of the Thai culture, thanks to Mr Montgomery who had lived there for many years previously. Going from living in a town like Oundle to experiencing Bangkok's slums and underfunded government orphanages was enormously shocking and sometimes upsetting. Due to the religion of Thailand being Buddhism, as funding for disabled orphans is very poor quality as reincarnation states that they've done something to deserve their form, which is why CCD's (the Christian organisation we volunteered with) work makes such an impact. Their main aim is giving a really good quality of life to a few children rather than trying to change the system, so their main focus is Rainbow House, where many children live. They receive all the care they require and they also try to make sure they can be integrated back into society instead of abandoning them in the world as soon as they turn eighteen. So, for example, while we were there we helped take the children on a trip to show them how to use trains in Bangkok, as to a lot of them, a concept such as railway systems are completely alien. They also have houses which the children in their care can live in once they turn 18, ensuring they're not alone; they have a level of independence but can also receive help and care from CCD. CCD also visit the government homes for disabled children weekly, which is where we went the first day of working with them. We would spend an hour singing songs and dancing and telling stories from the Bible, just simply for them to have fun, as they don't have a huge amount of things they can do throughout their days. CCD also work with

families with disabled children in the surrounding area; The idea is that they'll visit and help the parents to make sure they're not too overwhelmed, and avoid them reaching the point of abandoning their child. It's better they be with their family than the government homes. One day we visited a mother who ran her own corner shop. She had reached her nadir when she was living without an income or house, and caring for two disabled children and her husband who had recently become handicapped. She told us how she had lost hope, but CCD helped her set up her shop for her to earn a salary and assist with the care of her children. This charity, a lifetime's worth of work and dedication by V. G. Siddhartha, makes such a huge impact on so many people's lives and was an absolute pleasure working with it. I'd strongly recommend this trip to anyone considering joining Mr Montgomery in October 2018: it's an experience you'd never forget, allowing you to experience the culture of Thailand while also having an extremely fulfilling experience helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Sophie Hollyman (L6)



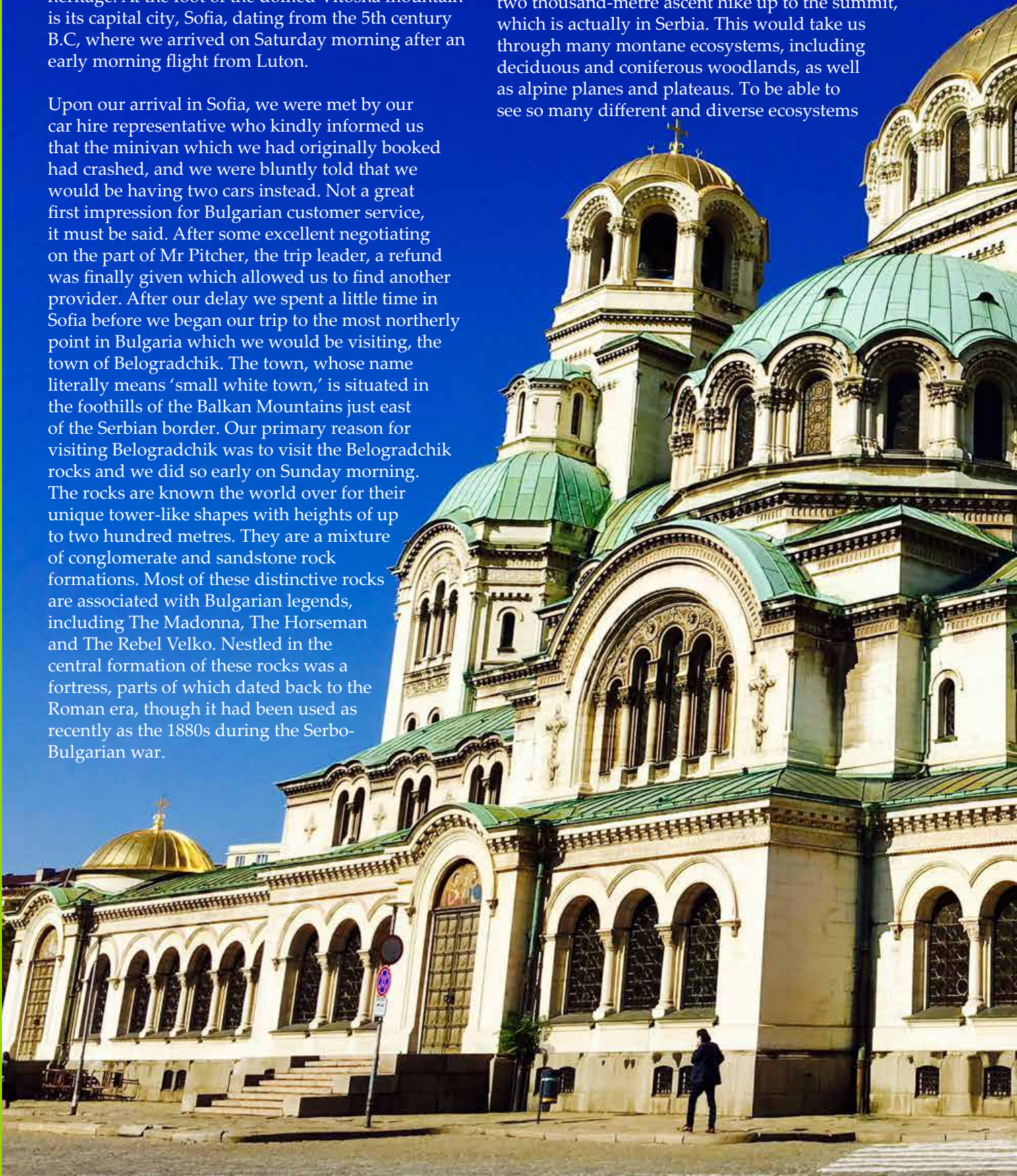
Bulgaria

During October half term, five pupils were lucky enough to visit the Eastern European country of Bulgaria for a Geography exploration trip. Bulgaria is a Balkan nation, with diverse terrain encompassing Black Sea coastline, a mountainous interior and multiple rivers, including the Danube. It's a cultural melting pot with Greek, Slavic, Ottoman, and Persian nationalities, each with a rich heritage. At the foot of the domed Vitosha mountain is its capital city, Sofia, dating from the 5th century B.C, where we arrived on Saturday morning after an early morning flight from Luton.

Upon our arrival in Sofia, we were met by our car hire representative who kindly informed us that the minivan which we had originally booked had crashed, and we were bluntly told that we would be having two cars instead. Not a great first impression for Bulgarian customer service, it must be said. After some excellent negotiating on the part of Mr Pitcher, the trip leader, a refund was finally given which allowed us to find another provider. After our delay we spent a little time in Sofia before we began our trip to the most northerly point in Bulgaria which we would be visiting, the town of Belogradchik. The town, whose name literally means 'small white town,' is situated in the foothills of the Balkan Mountains just east of the Serbian border. Our primary reason for visiting Belogradchik was to visit the Belogradchik rocks and we did so early on Sunday morning. The rocks are known the world over for their unique tower-like shapes with heights of up to two hundred metres. They are a mixture of conglomerate and sandstone rock formations. Most of these distinctive rocks are associated with Bulgarian legends, including The Madonna, The Horseman and The Rebel Velko. Nestled in the central formation of these rocks was a fortress, parts of which dated back to the Roman era, though it had been used as recently as the 1880s during the Serbo-Bulgarian war.

Following our visit to the rocks, we drove about thirty minutes to our next site, The Magura Cave. The cave is one of the largest in Bulgaria, with a length of over two and a half kilometres. Its best-known feature is its ancient cave paintings, some of which are as old as ten thousand years. In 1984 the cave was put on UNESCO's list of World Heritage due to its historical importance.

Monday involved an early start, as we had to get to the base of Midzhur Mountain ready for our two thousand-metre ascent hike up to the summit, which is actually in Serbia. This would take us through many montane ecosystems, including deciduous and coniferous woodlands, as well as alpine planes and plateaus. To be able to see so many different and diverse ecosystems



in a relatively short space of time is something which is rarely possible and was certainly a great experience. The hike itself was difficult with a mixture of woodland trekking, and at the higher altitudes we encountered some snow which was left from a recent storm. Reaching the summit gave us an excellent view across Eastern Serbia, as well as further into Bulgaria over the Danubian plains.

Our next destination was the town of Vratsa, which would act as our base for the next two days. The literal translation of Vratsa means 'little gate'; as it is one of the main transport hubs for the northwestern region of Bulgaria, it acts as a gateway for some rural communities which would otherwise be very isolated. From here we focused

more on Bulgaria's rich culture and history by visiting the local museum and a beautiful mountain monastery.

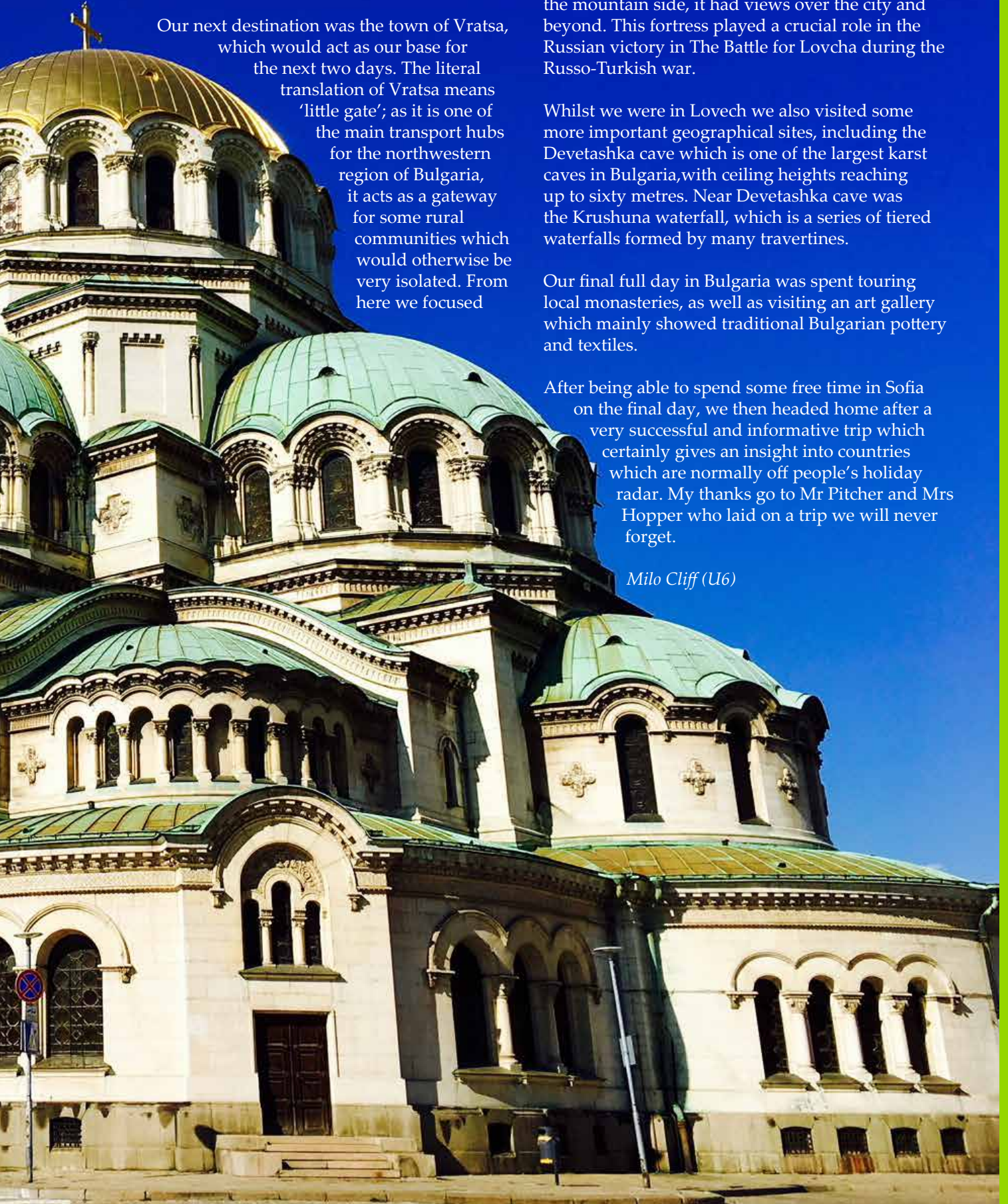
Next we visited the town of Lovech. The first sight we saw here is arguably the city's most important one: the Lovech fortress. This holds a strategic position in the town; placed high up on the mountain side, it had views over the city and beyond. This fortress played a crucial role in the Russian victory in The Battle for Lovcha during the Russo-Turkish war.

Whilst we were in Lovech we also visited some more important geographical sites, including the Devetashka cave which is one of the largest karst caves in Bulgaria, with ceiling heights reaching up to sixty metres. Near Devetashka cave was the Krushuna waterfall, which is a series of tiered waterfalls formed by many travertines.

Our final full day in Bulgaria was spent touring local monasteries, as well as visiting an art gallery which mainly showed traditional Bulgarian pottery and textiles.

After being able to spend some free time in Sofia on the final day, we then headed home after a very successful and informative trip which certainly gives an insight into countries which are normally off people's holiday radar. My thanks go to Mr Pitcher and Mrs Hopper who laid on a trip we will never forget.

Milo Cliff (U6)



Berlin

Transformation - this was the theme we were told to consider throughout our visit to the German capital. By the end of our first evening in Germany, we had already visited the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate and the Holocaust Memorial. At the Reichstag, we learned about the history of the parliament building, and so were able to see just how one building has gone through so much change throughout Germany's relatively short existence as a country. From the Reichstag glass dome, we could see night time Berlin, far and wide. An audio tour pointed out and gave a short history of major landmarks in the city. The Brandenburg Gate has represented the turbulent change that Germany has gone through in recent centuries, with both Napoleon and the Nazis using it for triumphal processions. We moved from this landmark, a hub of German celebration, to a memorial marking a horrific event in Germany's history - the Holocaust Memorial. The clash of these two very different structures really illustrated how Germany's history has not only been full of highs and lows, but how Germany admits the horrors they are responsible for and remembers those whom they have destroyed. The Holocaust Memorial is particularly eerie, especially at night: the towering concrete blocks, standing side-by-side, create a claustrophobic effect; there is an extremely haunting feel when walking on undulating ground, in the dead of night, on your own while these blocks tower over you.

Throughout the trip, we had days focused on specific parts of German history: The Nazi era, and the Cold War. However, on the second day, we visited the Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum) and explored people, events and objects from throughout Germany's history, ranging from Charlemagne to the Berlin Wall. This museum allowed us to understand Mr. Clark's point about Germany's history being one full of change and transformation; we merely had to walk from display to display to see this transformation in physical form.

In the classroom we read and write about the anti-Semitism that was ingrained in Nazi society, which eventually led to an attempt at wiping out an entire race. However, the facts really do hit home when you are standing in the middle of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, just north of Berlin. At the House of the Wannsee Conference, where the Holocaust was approved, we read even further into the anti-Semitism that has been prevalent in Europe for centuries and found out the details of how the mass genocide was decided upon. The House is a museum but also therefore acts as a memorial to the organised murder that was committed. We also visited the Holocaust Museum that is situated underground below the memorial; it is full of first-hand experiences from the Holocaust, including letters from young children to their parents whom they were never going to see again, and survivors of the 'Einsatzgruppen', who shot Russian Jews. The SS carried out the mass extermination, and the Topography of Terror museum was extremely informative about how the Holocaust was carried



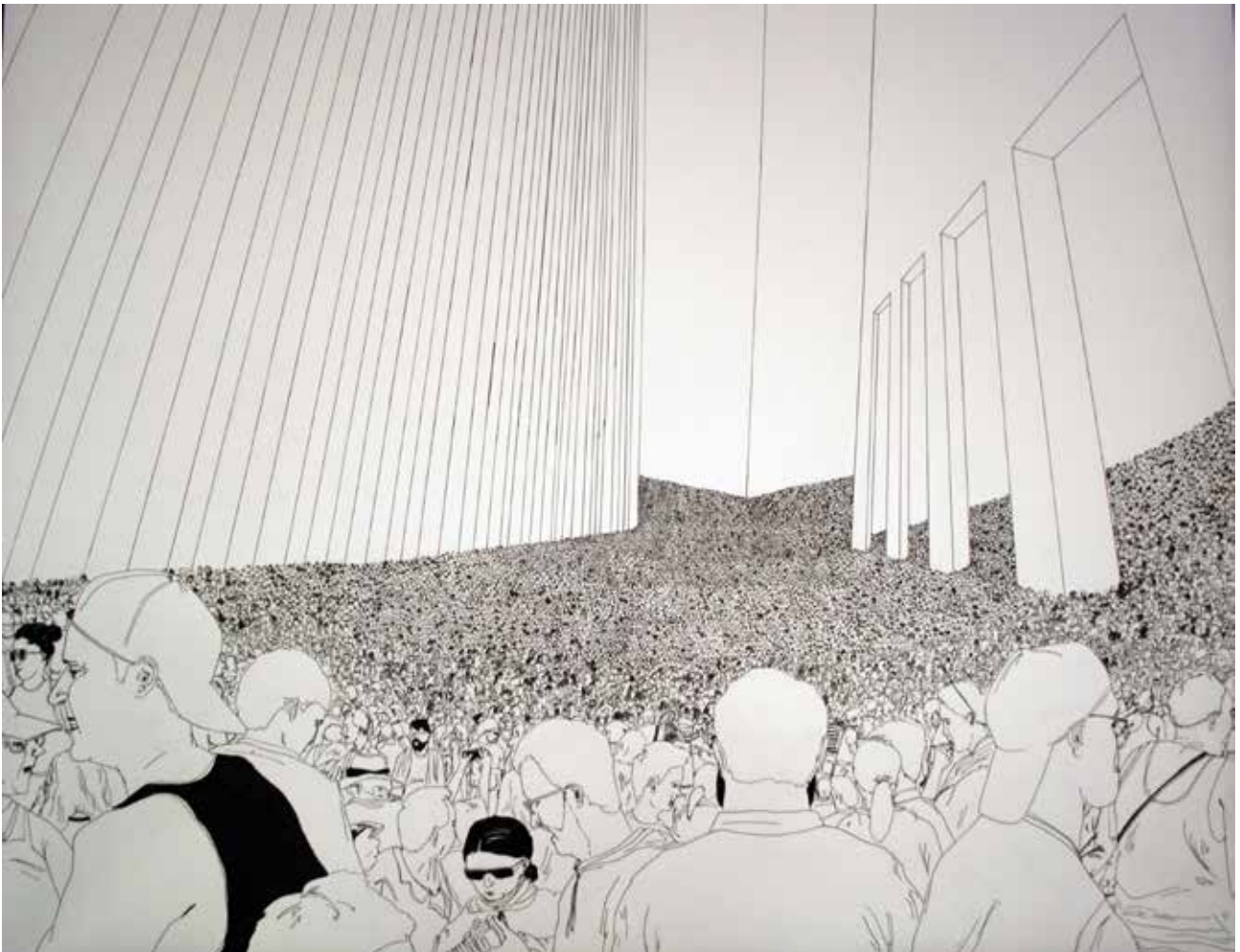
out, as well as about the police state which managed to control resistance within the Third Reich itself. However, we saw the hundreds of people who were involved with defying the Nazi regime at the Resistance museum. The memorialisation of the Holocaust is respectable and admirable; Germany is prepared to admit the horrific acts that they committed and have many memorials, not only to commemorate the victims but to remind everyone that such a thing can never happen again. It is also rather haunting at the same time; being in the places where numerous atrocities were decided upon or committed is rather chilling.

The Berlin Wall divided East and West. We saw some of the Wall which had been reconstructed at Friederichstraße, where there was also a museum with stories of escape attempts. The Checkpoint Charlie museum which marks one of the checkpoints on the boundary between the American Sector of Berlin and the Soviet Sector also contained stories of citizens caught in the crossfire of the battle between the USA and the USSR for power. It was here that American tanks and Soviet tanks faced off in 1961, which could have led to World War Three had a shot been fired. It was fascinating but rather chilling to learn about the mental torture that the Stasi, the East German Secret Police, perpetrated in their prison. This prison was subject to much transformation in a very short space of time – originally it was a special Soviet camp, before

being upgraded to a Soviet prison, where inmates were physically tortured underground, losing any sense of time due to lack of daylight, before finally becoming a Stasi prison, where mental torture was favoured over physical torture. What's interesting is the fact that the Soviets had defeated Nazi Reich, a totalitarian regime, only to set up another authoritarian state. The people of East Germany had been liberated, only to become subservient to their liberators. However, the DDR Museum (German Democratic Republic Museum) and the iconic TV tower illustrated to us the brighter side of East Germany.

This trip was extremely informative, allowing us to be immersed in the history that we learn in the classroom. However, there was still plenty of time to relax and absorb the culture. Germany is well-known for its Christmas markets, and there were many to visit throughout our five days in Berlin, where festive food and drink were on sale, along with many different Christmas present ideas, from jewellery to clothes to toys. For three evenings, we ate supper out, one night even at the Cabaret. Everyone also went to a 'Kultur' event, either listening to some Beethoven by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, watching Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, or experiencing some of Wagner's opera.

Will Parker-Jennings (5th)

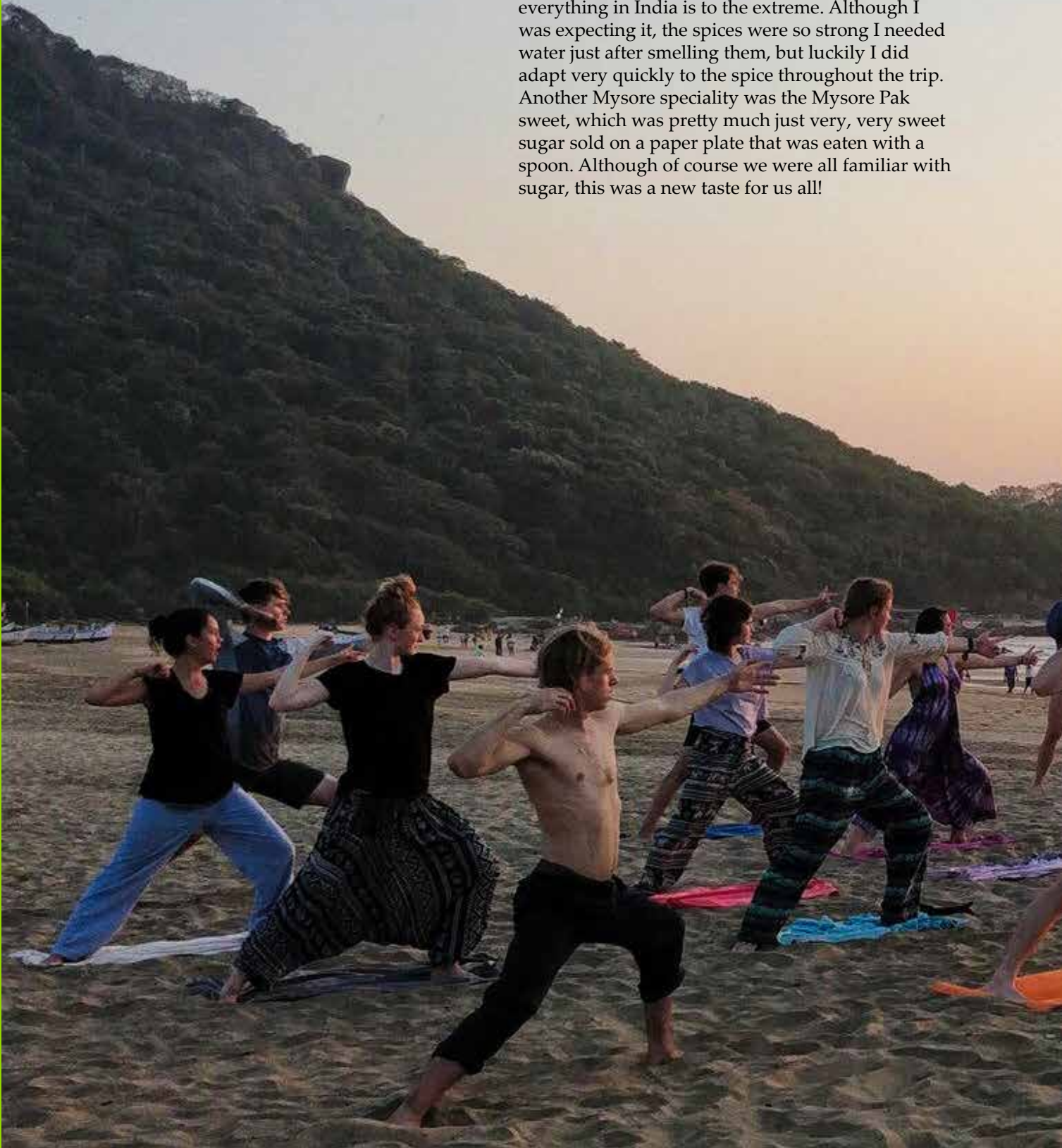


Davide Gibson (U6)

India

Arriving back in Heathrow Airport on 8 January meant huge disappointment for all - apart from maybe Mr Charters, who could finally relax knowing we were on British soil. When the plane hit the runway and we saw the rain, suddenly it became real. Somehow we had all managed to escape the post-Christmas chaos and swapped it for literally a whole new world - please excuse the Aladdin reference. Apart from the teachers, only one person on the trip had ever been to India before, so we were all jumping in with no idea of what to expect.

After arriving at Bangalore Airport and finally making it through customs, we boarded two small coaches and headed to the city of Mysore. At the time we thought we were jumping into the deep end, but by the end of the trip we realised the sights, smells and surrealness which we experienced in Mysore were all the norm in India. Mysore was proud to have a maze full of markets selling all sorts of things, from world famous sweets to amazing religious flower decorations. There were also stalls with incredible fruit on display. Although we have nearly all the fruits that they were selling in England too, it seemed as if there was a permanent filter on them because the colours were so much more vibrant. It was in Mysore where I realised everything in India is to the extreme. Although I was expecting it, the spices were so strong I needed water just after smelling them, but luckily I did adapt very quickly to the spice throughout the trip. Another Mysore speciality was the Mysore Pak sweet, which was pretty much just very, very sweet sugar sold on a paper plate that was eaten with a spoon. Although of course we were all familiar with sugar, this was a new taste for us all!



We left Mysore that evening and embarked on our first overnight train. Nearly all twelve hours were spent sleeping (or trying to) as we rolled through the countryside of India, as we comforted ourselves with the knowledge that that when we got off we would be welcomed at a very 'gap yah' restaurant serving banana and nutella pancakes. It soon became clear that Mr Charters had been trying to placate us with false promises: the restaurant in Hampi was another four hour bus journey away. However, Mr Charters had not exaggerated the beauty of our destination. Sitting on cushions and mattresses, eating pancakes and looking across mind blowing views, we all realised that this was the life. That day we explored Hampi some more and went to visit lots of temples along with what felt like half of India. It was busy, but it was also nice to see a touristy side to India that both Western and Indian tourists enjoyed rather than just Western. That evening, we checked into a hotel and had our first showers and stationary night's sleep since we arrived in India! The next day could not have been more British if we tried. It was a 'pool day' where we sat by the pool in the hotel writing our travel diaries and swimming - lazy, but greatly needed. We had lunch back at the 'gap yah' place, and then in late afternoon set about to climb the monkey temple. Although there were limited monkeys (much to Miss Dawes' dismay), the views were incredible. We were worlds away from England's green and pleasant lands, although the experience was just as sensational.

That evening we got on another overnight train, but this one was only six hours long, from 11pm to 5am. They weren't great timings as just as you fall asleep, it was time to wake up. With the journey behind us we had now arrived in Goa, which was to be our 'holiday' part of the experience. We stayed in a beautiful hotel on the beach and spent our days swimming in the sea, playing cricket against locals and doing yoga on the beach at sunrise. New Year's Eve was spent in Goa, and we had an amazing supper on the beach with freshly cooked fish. The rest of the evening was spent dancing (much to Mr Charters' dismay) in a beach restaurant turned club.

On the 2nd January we left the land of zen and took a 6 hour bus ride to Mundgod. This journey was much louder, because we had spent the last three days sleeping by the beach and energy levels were at a peak. When we arrived in Mundgod, we were shown to our rooms and started to unpack before having a late lunch. Our situation for meals over the next few days was very different to what we were used to. We all ate together, including the Jesuits who ran the mission where we were helping, and we ate on our knees all sitting around the edge of the kitchen with a small table in the middle. Here we ate some amazing but different things. Noodles for breakfast turns out to be very popular, and 'Indian style' french fries were also a much appreciated novelty.

In the late afternoon we headed to the school where we would be spending most of our time



volunteering. The school was unique because it had three separate schools on one campus: there was an English speaking school, where everything was taught in English, a more local school where there were primary school age children who spoke little English, and a senior school where girls and boys were taking the equivalent of A levels. Some of the children from the two local schools stayed in hostels that were on the campus; there were two girls hostels and two boys hostels.

When we got dropped off at the school it was going home time, and we were suddenly flooded with smiling faces of children all wanting to shake our hands and wish us a happy New Year. Although the five minutes of fame was fun, I think only Oli Salmon could endure it for any more than that. Once lots of the children had gone home, we were left to play with the girls and boys living in the hostels. Even though there was a slight language barrier, they were able to show us some of their favourite playground games. These included a much harder version of hopscotch, but with five different ways of hopping and ten times more ways of getting out. I got out a lot! So although my hopscotch skills didn't impress, I tried to impress them with some British dance moves. It turned out apart from Classical ballet, I couldn't think of any other British dancing so I tried the Macarena which was actually a big hit; by the end of our stay, I think nearly all of the girls were doing it.

Each day we would head out of the hostel where we were staying and go and meet lots of different people. We were welcomed into homes and given lots of sugary tea, and also watched lessons in tiny village schools which had about twenty

students in the school. Another one of our aims was to help build a playground in the hostel for the children that live there. Mr Thomas took the most responsibility for this, and although when we left it was far from complete, the small progress we did make hopefully helped. Finally we painted some beautiful murals in the hostels: a tree of life covered in fruit and flowers for the boys and a copy of the solar system for the boys. I mean, I say 'we', but Clara, Max and Izzy were really the ones to thank. Everyone else was just colouring in.

I could go on and on talking about this trip, and there are so many things I haven't mentioned, like buying saris, or spending a whole evening with some of the girls in their hostel without the teachers or Jesuits. There were four of us and loads of them, so it made for a huge sleepover (although we weren't allowed to stay the night). We did each other's hair and took lots of pictures of each other. I also got given an Indian name, unique to one girl's tribe: Sahanna. This one night I will never forget.

When I got back to England, I realised that although we tried to help them, without realising it, they helped us. To the children, I was a white girl who was funny because I couldn't dance. They probably wouldn't have seen a funny side to me if they knew how much I was taking for granted in my life. So now I try everyday to think about how lucky I am to have been able to spend some time in India, but also how lucky I am to have the family and friends that I do, and to have access to the education I need.

Kitty Northcote (U6)



Iceland

On the 22 March, eighteen pupils from Fourth Form to U6th went to Iceland accompanied by Major Mansergh and Miss Dorman. We met our guide, Guy Leaf, at Heathrow who stayed with us throughout the trip. As soon as we arrived in Keflavik we drove in our minibus to the Bridge between the Continents, Stampar Craters and Gunnuhver Hot Springs, all of which were amazing tasters of what was to come for the rest of the trip. We concluded the day with a trip to watch the sunset from the Blue Lagoon. The first two nights were spent in a Viking themed hotel where we slept in six-bedded cabins.

Throughout Day 2 we experienced the full range of Icelandic weather from blazing sunshine to hail and sleet within minutes. Regardless of the weather, we kitted up to walk on the Sólheimajökull glacier and with two excellent guides we managed to walk on the ice which was over 2km deep. We experienced a slight technical issue as our minibus had a puncture and consequently we were thrown slightly off schedule, but we managed to regain time enough to walk behind a sixty-five metre high waterfall at Seljalandsfoss. The evening involved listening to traditional Icelandic music played during our supper at the Hotel Viking and we learnt about the Icelandic elves from an Icelandic storyteller.

Day 3 took us walking through the fissures created as the North American plate pulls away from the Eurasian plate. We listened to a talk given by a family whose farm was covered in ash during the 2010 eruption of the volcano Eyjafjallajökull (and learnt how to pronounce the name of the volcano!) After this, we visited Gullfoss which is a spectacular waterfall and the Geysir Geothermal Area. Arriving in Reykjavik for the night, we went to a show called How to become an Icelandic in sixty minutes *which* was a very entertaining way to spend the evening.



During the final morning we managed to look around Reyjavik and visit the Krýsuvík Mud Puddles before heading back to Keflavik airport. Driving through Iceland, it was fascinating to see how quickly the landscape could change from grass to snow to volcanoes and icecaps. The smell of sulphur everywhere we went and the taste of it in the water was something reasonably difficult to adapt to in Iceland but by the end we were pretty used to it!

Freya Wilson (L6)



Machu Picchu

Over the summer of 2017, the then Upper and Lower Sixth forms, accompanied by Mr Butterworth, Miss Blacknell and Mr Ireson flew out to Cusco, Peru to trek the historic Inca trail to Machu Picchu. With Cusco being 3500 metres above sea level, we had to spend a few days in Cusco City itself to acclimatise to the altitude. Despite not really understanding, at first, why we had to spend those days taking it easy, it soon became apparent when we became short of breath after walking up a flight of stairs.

Whilst in Cusco we spent our time exploring, looking at the local sights and tasting the local cuisine (which included alpaca and guinea pig — a local delicacy). We spent half a day walking up to the massive statue of Christ, similar to the one in Rio. This gave us an incredible view over the whole city and the surrounding smaller settlements on the side of the hills. We followed this with a guided bus tour of the whole area. We also had time to explore the local markets and street vendors. A particular favourite of ours were the alpaca wool trousers and the various other alpaca related products. Many of the vendors sold very similar items so, after overcoming a somewhat challenging language barrier for some of us, we were able to get these

items remarkably cheaply (after perfecting the art of haggling). A favourite for most of us was the visit to the chocolate museum, showing the history of the cocoa bean and how they develop each of their wide variety of products. At the end of the tour we were able to taste some of the amazing cocoa based samples.

After our brief stay in Cusco, we left early in the morning on the bus towards the start of our trek to Machu Picchu itself. This was the first time that we got to meet our guides and our porters (the people who would carry our tents, food, and other items that we did not require for our trekking through the day.) Over the course of the trip we gained so much respect for these guys. Some of them had been doing this same trek for upwards of thirty years, carrying up to twenty-five kilograms and always maintaining a much faster pace than we ourselves were able to.

Our trek was five days long, along the slightly shorter route. At first it was relatively easy, with flat ground and nicely cut paths along the route; however, as we slowly started to climb, the terrain grew tougher and more precarious under foot. At lunch time on the first day none of us knew exactly what to expect in the way of food, so it was with slight trepidation that we entered the food tent. We were not disappointed. We were served amazing meals throughout the duration of the trek, with fresh salmon, salads, fruits, and Peruvian speciality dishes all freshly prepared only minutes before our



eating them. What we were particularly impressed with was that the chef was able to prepare a fresh sponge cake for us with only his rudimentary equipment.

As the trek progressed, we became even more glad that the food was so good. The walking only got increasingly harder after the first day, and on the morning of the third day we started climbing the infamous dead woman's pass (named due to its likeness in shape to a lying down woman, not because of a particular affinity to causing the deaths of women). This was the hardest climb that we had to attempt on the whole trek, as it had seemingly endless false summits and misleading peaks. It took the whole morning for us finally to reach the top and we all took a long break to rehydrate and re-energise. Although this was the longest and hardest climb we all accomplished it, and this achievement was able to motivate us up some of the subsequent ascents.

It was this motivation that got us, moments after the break of dawn on our final day, into view of the ancient Inca holiday city of Machu Pichu. This was where the Inca king used to go every so often with family, friends or esteemed guests. The city is immaculately preserved, even though it is the centre of tourist activities. There is a train station at the bottom of the city so one can skip the walking part of the trail and visit Machu Pichu. This is a popular option with tourists; however, after completing the trek to get there we did not think that those on

the train would have the same enormous sense of accomplishment and appreciation that we had.

After touring the city and viewing the incredible architectural achievements made by those who lived several hundred years ago (including a method of building that would withstand the shock of an earthquake) we got on a bus to the train station. It was to our immense displeasure that the train services were heavily delayed due to the Peruvian teachers participating in riots and protests over their pay. As such it took us six hours longer to return back to the hotel than we originally thought.

These same strikes made our attempt at going white water rafting impossible, even though we tried as hard as we could to get this experience in. The roads were being barricaded to the extent that they were impassable. As such, after a day of trying to get to the centre, we aborted and returned back to the hotel. The strikes also made our last few days in Cusco immensely interesting. We saw, and understood to some extent, the strike action and the response to this by the police force. Luckily, it didn't get violent. On our day of return however, we found the roads blocked so badly that we arrived at the airport only 10 minutes before our plane was due to depart. It was after the quickest dash through security ever that we eventually got onto the plane and started our return journey back to England.

James Duckitt (U6)



Sicily

When a Classicist or Historian hears the word: 'Sicily', that Classicist then has a thousand different thoughts rushing through his head. For Classicists, Sicily is the home of the Cyclopes, the Laestrygonians, Scylla and Charybdis, the temples of Segesta and Agrigento to name but a few. This is why over October half term twenty-six very fortunate Oundelians of all ages went to Sicily with one common interest: learning about the Classical world.

There was so much that we saw on the trip and it is impossible to do it justice in just one article. Therefore I hope to shed a little light on some of the things that I found interesting. The trip essentially showed us why classics is such an amazing subject and academic field whether it be Riace Warriors which show us perfection, the temples of Selinunte or the site of Morgantina which gives one a holistic view of an ancient settlement.

Having touched down in Catania, we were immediately thrown into the action. We headed off to the Riace Warriors in Reggio di Calabria, two super-human sized warriors rescued from the sea in the 1972. The two statues have been described by Nigel Spivey as 'the best Greek bronzes in the world.' The Riace bronzes are kouroi which are ancient Greek statues of young men and normally naked. These kouroi first came to existence in the 7th and 6th centuries BC in the Archaic period. The Riace bronzes were made in the 5th century BC and most likely between 460 and 430BC. The warriors epitomise the set of rules that Polykleitos, a 5th century sculptor, used which analysed the way a standing statue could be made in such a way he would seem to have absolute fluidity and seem to be alive – perhaps even ready to walk off the pedestal! What the Riace warriors show is something that we have only just started really caring about: the air brushing of models for the sake of perfection. For example the central channel of the spine is deeper than one would normally see on a real human and this is to improve the line of the back. Perhaps, like Nigel Spivey's thesis suggests, the Greek sculptors wanted in order to impress upon the average Greek the sheer beauty of a body whatever the cost of 'realism'. For the average Greek is not going to see the every subtlety of exaggeration (the impossible back for example) but only the sheer beauty of the human form.

The temple of Concord at Agrigento deserves a paragraph of its own. This temple is arguably one

of the best preserved temples of the Classical world. It has classic style: hexastyle and peripteral set on a stylobate of four steps. The reason why, for me, this temple stands out is for the refinement that the architect in circa 430BC has done. For he has made sure that the gap in between the columns is less at the corners so that the metopes and triglyphs work more evenly with the triglyph having to be at the end of the frieze rather than other the middle of the column. An interesting question is always raised about this temple and that is the name. It is called 'Concordia' because a Latin inscription says so but perhaps there is more to that reference than meets the eye. For this temple was built after the Battle of Himera in 480BC, which resulted in a decisive Syracusan victory, and it is perhaps it is called Concordia because there was Concordia amongst the Sicilians. Indeed Concordia means hearts together and Sicilian newlyweds frequently visit it. Although this might be completely wrong it is still very interesting to conjecture about why temples are called what they are.

Finally, another of the highlights was a visit to the ancient site of Morgantina. This is a site that has excavations very much ongoing: they only really started in earnest in 1955, and here we were expertly guided around by Rosella Nicoletti who is currently excavating on the site. She gave us a fascinating insight to the daily life of the citizens and showed all sides of a town: the shrines to Demeter or the oddly shaped ἐκκλησιασθηριον (assembly place). The most interesting part was the 4th century BC temple to Demeter and Kore (Persephone) which also has round sacrificial altars sacred to the chthonic (underworld) gods. Here Ms Nicoletti revealed to us that the archaeologists had found a vast amount of token oil lamps. This was because the lamps were to help Persephone out from the underworld (she was not very clever with some of the Pomegranate seeds...). The reason why this is so fascinating is because of the link between myths that one learns about at school in lessons and then with real life in an ancient site!

Exploring Sicily in one week we saw so many amazing things: from the 'Riace Warriors' to the Norman Cathedral at Monreale and from the Taormina theater to a boat trip around Syracuse. It really enabled us, as classicists, to reaffirm our beliefs about why we love Classics. I would love to thank Mrs James for organizing such an amazing trip.

George Brettle (L6)



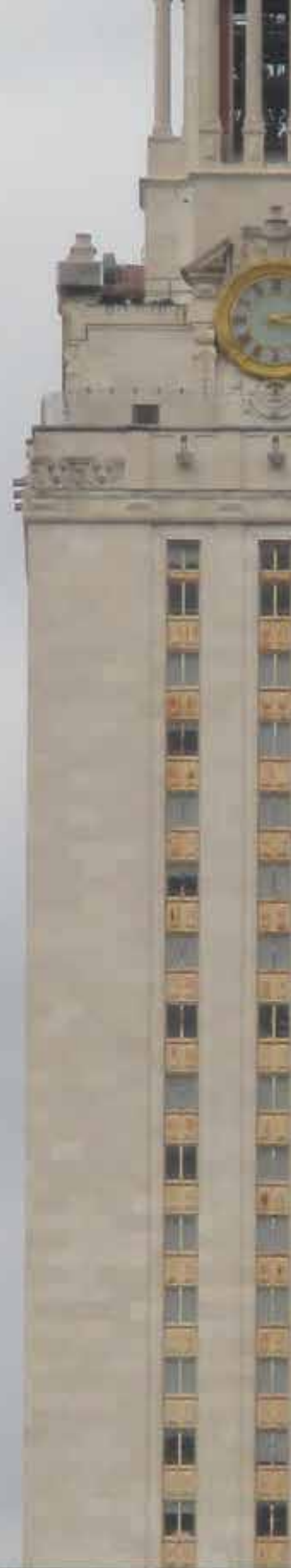


AAAS Austin, Texas

Whether willing to avoid the hardships inevitably brought upon the Oundelian community by precipitous snow and acute Nordic winds (A.K.A. The Beast from the East), or simply to cover some more science during the holidays, a cohort of fifteen students accompanied by Mr Peverley and Ms Brown travelled to Austin, Texas last February. The so-called AAAS is held annually by American Association for Advancements in Science – the world's largest science-related non-profit organization that brings together leading scientists from all around the world to share their forefront research in via lectures or exhibitions. In addition, we were also to experience some Texan culture through gastronomic adventures, museum tours and interactions with the locals.

On our first day our journey was incredibly long. Obligated to be awake for an early 6am departure, we were to endure a three-hour long drive to London Heathrow, prolonged by bad traffic, as well as a ten-hour flight. This was made all the more exhausting as uncomfortable seats prevented almost everyone from catching up on unarguably valuable sleep. Thus, compelled to stay awake, we made extensive use of the onboard film collection, of James Bond movies and Paddington, before arriving at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport slightly jet-lagged. However, a nice and comparatively warm breeze of Texan air blowing in our faces quickly made any depressing feelings wither. After all, Oundelians, for once during winter, were able to take off their jackets or jumpers without considering the consequences. Unlike Oundle, wintertime Austin seemed kaleidoscopically vibrant and exhilarating, and so, enjoying the pleasant American sunlight, we soon headed to our motel located near the interstate highway, a short car journey away from the conference centre. The next two days were predominantly spent on acclimatisation and errands around the downtown area of Austin in order to immerse ourselves in the local culture as much as we could. We walked down and up the Congress Street, the name of the city's main road, admiring statues of Texan revolutionary and Confederate heroes, not to mention our visits to the state Capitol building and a boat journey of the Lady Bird and the Travis lakes.

Then came the actual conference. For us, a typical day at the conference entailed listening to three to four topical lectures, ranging from talks on exoplanets' discovery and futuristically sounding asteroid mining to something much more pertinent to today's world, such as, efficiently developing cures for epidemics in third world countries and use of drones in photography. I also wish to single out talks on the mathematics of planet Earth and on driverless vehicles, which I personally found very useful: the former for my enhanced knowledge of mathematics and the latter for equipping me with concrete pieces of newest information on both their development and the policies already proposed by several members of the European Parliament. Each day culminated with a plenary lecture



in a huge auditorium designed to fit at least a thousand people. Themes included the International Space Station, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and global warming, but it was the ex-vice president of the United States, Joe Biden himself, who delivered by far the best talk of the whole conference. Albeit rather abrupt, his impassioned speech on why we ought to invest more in science and research at this critical moment in time scored at least two rounds of ovation.

In between lectures, we were able to visit the large exhibition on the ground floor of the conference centre, where some of us attended a number of exciting NASA flash talks, whilst others purchased bulks of scientific books from Harvard, Princeton, MIT and Chicago universities' stands. We also had the chance to see some local museums, including the Museum of the Weird, where the guides claim to possess a real corpse of a 'bigfoot', and the State Capitol building, home to the chief in-state legislative authority for more than one hundred years. In fact, the scope of history inside dates even further back to the days of Texan independence, with portraits of her two founding fathers, Sam Houston and Stephen Fuller Austin, after whom the city is actually named. Our group also managed to acquire tickets to see an all-American basketball fixture, in which the local University of Texas Austin women's team narrowly lost to one of its rivals, Barley University. Much to our surprise, the actual match was only about a third of everything that happened that evening: the rest of the time was filled with a whole myriad of cheerleader dances and performances. In short, this aspect of Texan culture in fact bore more resemblance to a concert or some sort of a show than a sporting event, as we perceive it across the Atlantic. However, this was far from the only local idiosyncrasy we came to experience over our nine-day stay: Texan culinary traditions that produced such edible wonders as chicken and waffles, gargantuan tacos and two-dollar cheeseburgers, amazed us, accustomed as we are to quite a different repertoire of food back in School. Although we originally thought that we had ended up in some sort of gastronomic paradise, the burger Shambhala was supplanted towards the end of the trip with a nostalgic desire for something European.

Overall, the voyage to Texas was a remarkable success. Not only did we benefit from hearing a cascade of academic lectures by the 'Landaus' and 'Einsteins' of to-day, which will almost certainly benefit our future UCAS applications in a variety of different ways, but we were also able to appreciate the warm weather, monstrous but delicious American food and the fascinating history and culture of the Lone Star State. Whether a scientist or simply someone interested in visiting and seeing the US as it really is, I recommend that you seize the opportunity to go on this champion of all School trips during your time at Oundle.

Danila Mikhaylov (L6)

Chocolate, Cheese, And Chafing – Three Girls In Three Countries Trail-Running the CCC

The flat, gentle terrain of Oundle riverside runs definitely does not prepare you for the ascents on offer in the Alps, and, upon reflection, I should have known better before coming up with the insane idea of running one hundred miles across three countries in the span of a week. Luckily, Jimmy and Izzy were just as crazy as I was, and so we headed off to Courmayeur with absolutely no idea what we had got ourselves into.

Shattered from our 6am flight the day before, we started off with a lung-busting climb up to the Tête de la Tronche. Not even halfway up, the sun decided to hit our backs with a fury; water-, food- and sleep-deprived, along with 1400m of ascent to go, having 'one foot in the grave' was precisely how we felt. We kept on climbing for what felt like an eternity – there were moments when we thought the top was in sight, but were immediately hit with disappointment once realising that it was just another ridge. We kept our heads down and pushed on, and finally reached the mountain hut after dragging our aching bodies up for a very long time.

After several attempts at communication with a combination of our non-existent Italian and hand signals, we were welcomed into the refuge, only to find out that a token two minutes' worth of freezing water was what they called a 'shower', and a run-down shed with narrow mattresses side by side was what they called a 'room'. It was a new level of coziness, so they say.

We made another discovery the next morning – drinking coffee in a cereal bowl, the French way. Buzzing with caffeine and adrenaline, we handled the (relatively) flat section of the course with ease, until another monstrous mountain stood before our eyes. We plodded on trying to maintain a semblance of poise and focus, determined not to be passed by a group of elderly yet sprightly Europeans in their professional Salomon kit. The ascent up Grand col Ferret was brutal, but every turn revealed a stunning new vista, which diverted my mind from thinking about my horrible blisters and made the pain a bit more tolerable.

Our arrival at La Fouly signalled our official entrance to Switzerland: of course, we had to treat ourselves to a well-deserved rösti, and I managed to surprise myself with the amount of food I was able to devour. Still feeling depleted from all these epic climbs, a rest day in Champex Lac came at the right time.

Champex is famous for its skiing, but it was just as picturesque in the summer with its turquoise

lake and green forests. After spending a day carb-loading and stuffing our faces with an insurmountable amount of Emmental and Milka, we regained our energy and were ready to say goodbye to Switzerland. Those fresh and happy legs only lasted until a stretch of boulders stood in between us and the French border. We scrambled our way up to the summit of Catogne – the wind was fierce and forceful; none of us spoke, as we were all too concentrated on trying not to get our legs trapped in the cracks between the rocks.

We spent a night in Trient and met some fellow English hikers who thought we were out of our minds. We then made our way to Vallorcine, an empty village with only a single open restaurant, in which we were introduced us to an alternative way of doing take-away – with proper plates and silver cutlery. I suppose the French really do take their customer service seriously.

Our final day was a mixture of rain, slipping, swearing, some running, lots of hiking and major mood changes. The unrelenting ascents and descents reaped more than their fair share of destruction upon my quads and it really didn't help seeing crazy French runners flying past us. Yet the moment the sky began to clear, the magnificent image of the Mont-Blanc massif appeared before our eyes. The sheer beauty this mountain took our breaths away and assuaged our souls as we began our final descent towards Chamonix.

The mind plays nasty tricks on you when you're high up on a mountain. One minute you are sprinting and loving running and everything that goes with it; you feel like a pro and consider giving everything up and just running for the rest of your life. Then the demons of self-doubt kick in, slowly at first, then creep up on you and begin to nag on you. You are not experienced enough, not good enough, not tough enough. You try to chase the thoughts away and sometimes they go but other times they come back even worse. This is why I am forever grateful for the endless support and encouragement provided by my fellow companions – I don't think I would have made it without the constant supply of Izzy's glorious hymn singing and Jimmy's awful jokes. These two never ceased to amaze me with their drive and resilience. On that note, I would also like to thank the School for believing in us and for funding our trip with the Dudgeon Adventure Award. This made our dream come true and truly gave us an experience of a lifetime.

Sammie Kwong (U6)



Independent Schools Like Oundle Should Never Have Charitable Status.

This statement, for obvious reasons, is very relevant to the readers of the *Oundelian*, but is also a widely debated national issue. So when the Law Society announced that two top notch barristers, Athel Hodge and Hugo Walford from the firms Boodle Hatfield and Withers, opposing and proposing respectively, were going to debate this motion at Oundle, there was a huge amount of interest. I know I had a long list of questions. What surprised me the most was the fact that Oundle, as well as other independent schools, is actually considered a charity. This confused me, due to the widely held opinion that charities help the needy, not the élite. Throughout history private schools have been branded by some as elitist institutions breeding the next generation of snobs. So why are these institutions entitled by law to a 'charitable status'?

What was clarified by both the proposition and the opposition at the beginning of the debate was what exact benefits a 'charitable status' entails. Amongst other tax benefits, an independent school is not charged business rates by the local councils. These in turn save each school around £200 per pupil and costs the exchequer about £100 million in tax breaks each year. These figures are on the surface quite shocking. Why should the taxpayer fork out this amount of money to fund rich people going to exclusive schools? It sounds a like a completely ridiculous notion that the rest of the country loses out because attendees of these elusive schools don't have to pay tax on their school fees. As I have just done, appealing to the obvious irony of classifying an institution for the wealthy as a charity is what you would expect the proposition's argument to have been. Even though this ethical issue was addressed, Walford, the speaker for the proposition, favored a more legal angle. Without going into too much detail, he explained the criteria which an institution must meet in order to be classified a charity according to the Charities Act 2011. The institution must fall within sections 3 and 4: 'description of purposes' and 'the public benefit requirement.' Independent schools can easily justify section 3, under the 'advancement of education'; however, the real crux of the argument was whether independent schools act in the public benefit or not.

Athel Hodge produced more of an emotionally fuelled argument, concentrating less on the technical details of the case and focusing instead on appealing to the audience's consciences and,

I suspect, interests - the majority of the audience was made up of pupils who attend an independent school, or teachers who are employed by one. As expected, he mentioned the life changing bursaries and scholarships that are offered to children of limited means every year. He asked the question, what would happen to many of these schools if they did not have their charitable status? Many would have to close down, or change their fundamental structures to cope with the inflation of fees, meaning the independent education system would become even more elitist. However, even though both sides had made valid points relevant to their arguments, these became more obscure as the debate developed. The key disagreement was over the 'public benefits requirement.' What do independent schools do to fulfil this requirement? The proposition as ever concentrated almost exclusively on the legal jargon, shedding light on the fine print of the matter, going into statistical detail about the flawed system of regulation. However the opposition's argument was much more generalised; I believe Athel said that 'if it smells like a charity, if it looks like a charity and if acts like a charity, then it is safe to assume that it is a charity.'

Although the Debate was not specifically about Oundle, it was repeatedly referenced by both the opposition and the points from the floor. The extensive work done by Oundle pupils and teachers to organise and take part in the Community Action programme is one of the many examples which demonstrate how much Oundle School does to help the community we live in. From working in a school for the disabled to baking cupcakes in the Hub, the list of activities which Oundelians help out with goes on and on. An argument that the proposition used to address Community Action at Oundle and similar programmes at other independent schools was that they are simply used to fulfil the criteria in order for a school to be recognised as a charity. This suspected element of self interest directly contradicts the fundamental ideology associated with the concept of charity. However, even after putting this point to the floor, I think the proposition had a lot of trouble arguing the fact that visiting an old age home was not in the public benefit. However, what he attempted to outline was that Oundle as a school had to aid the community through 'the advancement of education.' He was arguing that lending our swimming pool to the local primary school was simply not enough, and did not fall in line with the purpose of independent schools. Again he returned to the exact legal terms which lay at the foundation of his argument.

When both sides had concluded their arguments after some stimulating points from the floor, a vote was put to the audience. Those who wanted to vote for proposition moved to the left of the room and those wanting to vote for the opposition moved to the right. The result was surprising,

considering the audience consisted of pupils, teachers and parents of current pupils, who would all be affected negatively if the charitable status of independent schools was removed. However the proposition carried the majority, so the verdict was decided: in the end the audience agreed that the charitable status of independent schools should be revoked. Both the proposition and opposition had debated fantastically; both were clear, humorous and persuasive. After most of the crowd had left, I stayed behind to ask both Athel and Hugo what their actual opinions on this controversial subject were. Ironically, both were debating contrary to their own beliefs. Athel explained that at first he did not actually have an opinion on this subject, but as he started researching he began to find it completely ridiculous that independent schools were recognised as charities. However Hugo already knew a substantial amount about this motion, as he works in charity law. His view was more circumstantial, explaining to me that the problem with the charitable status of independent schools is that it is a grey area. By using Oundle as an example, he demonstrated that some schools are



incredibly deserving of their charitable status, however others are just simply not. In the end my initial reaction to the fact that Oundle and other independent schools were actually considered charities was one of shock. However after listening to the debate and discussing the matter with both Athel Hodge and Hugo Walford, the complicated nature of the issue was revealed.

Tatiana North (L6)

Big Law



The Law Society's first big event of the year was a talk from Nick Angel, a partner at Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy. Milbank is an American law firm with an office in every corner of the world, and it appeared that Mr Angel had worked in most of them, from Madagascar to Japan and Kazakhstan to South Africa. There was thus no doubting his experience in the field. The title of the talk was 'Big Law', and it certainly lived up to its name. Whether it be the eye-watering number of offices, colossal revenue or gargantuan amount of time spent on one project, the figures were staggering, and nobody was left pondering why it is called 'big law'. Mr Angel was able to provide us with an insight into

what it is that he and his colleagues get up to in the big city.

Mr Angel specialises in an area of law that I was not aware existed prior to the talk: restructuring companies that are in financial difficulty, if not already bankrupt. Moreover, he elaborated on what exactly he does, which is more than just a little complicated, in a rather more accessible manner using none of the jargon that is common in the profession, and he did not just spew out the names of various types of deals and transactions.

But it was not just his insight into the day-to-day life of a lawyer that was of interest. Mr Angel talked in great detail about what employers, such as he, look for in a job applicant. He spoke about the importance of where one goes to university and what they get there, over what subject they do on the whole. Furthermore, what was intriguing was the slight preference that lawyers, such as he, show towards people from state education rather than schools such as Oundle. At first this seemed a little odd. However, with explanation, it made perfect sense: if two applicants both get good grades at A Level, and applicant A is from a state school and applicant B is from an independent school, it would be harder for applicant A to get the grades as the standard of education is not quite as good... sounds about right to me.

Mr Angel also made reference to the hit TV show *Suits*, explaining that it paints a very different picture of the world of big law to the reality that

he experiences first hand. Whilst *Suits* portrays the main characters Harvey and Mike going about the skyscrapers of Manhattan solving problems for this, that and the other Fortune 500 client they represent, in the most badass fashion whilst also skirting the line of the law, Mr Angel made it abundantly clear that this was quite not the case in his day-to-day work.

With the help of a 600-odd page document brought from work, Mr Angel showed that the life of the lawyer is not quite arriving in the office at ten and then proceeding to win what was essentially a battle of the best lawyers in the nick of time with the odds stacked against them. Instead, it is being in the office for fourteen hours a day typing a document. Moreover, when out of the office, Mr Angel is connected to clients 24/7 via email, phone calls

and all the rest, which was demonstrated when he received a phone call from Finland while answering a question - the timing of which could hardly have been better.

That said, Mr Angel also showed that hard work does not mean that the Law is not enjoyable, and that people do not just become lawyers because it is a very well-paid profession. Mr Angel explained that people join the legal profession to challenge themselves - for the mental stimulation and the problems that need to be solved. It is safe to say that Mr Angel's humour, experience, knowledge and candour in his talk not only opened our eyes to the reality of life as a city lawyer, but certainly left people feeling enticed by the challenge of 'Big Law'.

Alex Cunningham (L6)

Kafka - The Predicament Of Modern Man

I do not think I have ever come across an author as cruel as Franz Kafka. His strange combination of mockery and agony is the human condition observed with a smirk. His gruelling portrayal of a world graceless and unencumbered by religious absolutes inclines the reader to a sympathy with those characters who make the sacrifices of faith. Yet, as Kafka indulges in sickening detail in the tortures they endure to this end, he likewise snatches away any certainty, and ridicules the convictions of his bloodied and starving pawns. One might forgive him, were it not for the fact that he read his stories aloud to his friends, pausing occasionally because they could not contain their laughter. Perhaps it is naïve to talk of decency in the modern world, but for me, that is more unsettling than any of his descriptions of worm-infested flesh or sentences inscribed upon human skin. There is a schoolboy in Kafka, who cannot extract the bitterness and self-mockery from his spiritual anguish. But this doesn't detract from the stories, provided the reader abstains from the death-of-the-author approach. There is value in what is unintentionally expressed as well as what is consciously displayed. Cut adrift from its creator, his work would be bereft of what makes it poignant: the inability to resolve tensions within itself.

The above polemic, my very much subjective and unsubstantiated take on Kafka, was not exactly a direct response to the talk, but a combination of a pre-existing interpretation, the passage of time, and an hour spent staring at a particular portion of the ceiling in the Adamson International Suite. The fact that I have so far spattered the page with the contents of my own mind rather than embroidering it with the words of an eminent professor is not coincidental. The evening did not have 'information transfer' as its primary purpose, did not convey a 'theory of Kafka'.

To the substance, then, without analysis: a man stands on an electric tram, rattling its way through Prague city centre; he has no purpose and nor does anyone else. The mechanical nature of tram and existence align. A few sentences later and Nietzsche's 'madman' holds a lamp up against apparent daylight, tells the assembled crowd that a Godless world is perpetual night. The atheists look up at the sun and down at the lamp and are baffled. Then there is a character who has been neglecting his aged father, who goes to cover him with a blanket only for the old man to spring up and condemn his son to death by drowning - a sentence that is dutifully carried out by the son. A man is put on trial for a nameless crime, but allowed to proceed with his life almost as usual until he is murdered, something he has been waiting for and to which he offers little resistance. There was an awareness that he couldn't escape.

Professor Robertson used the words ambivalence and ambiguity as his title. He explained that the former is an attitude where something is judged by two values, the latter denotes something with two possible meanings. It strikes me as odd to clarify such words, but there was not much further clarification. Pinning ideas down like a lepidopterist tends to result in their death. Rather, the lecture was a stylistic exercise in juxtaposition, fittingly, a discourse of the gaps. Professor Robertson gave us few clues as to what the passages of Kafka that he read out 'meant'; rather, he simply read them aloud, offered his own interpretation of them, and left the rest up to us to decide. The image that comes to mind is that of a Van de Graaff generator: between the fragments, the various 'illuminating passages' given in place of answers, was where it came alive.

Izzy Wythe (U6)

In Honour Of Jim Clark

2017 marked seventy years since the legendary British film editor Jim Clark, whilst a pupil at Oundle, began the School's first Film Society. Jim, who passed away in March 2016 at the age of 84, was regarded as one of Britain's finest film editors for his work over a fifty year period, ranging from *The Innocents* and *Charade* to *Marathon Man*, *The Mission* and *The Killing Fields*, for which he won an Academy Award for Achievement in Editing.

Jim boarded at New House whilst it was still all boys and recalls the hardships of boarding school life in his autobiography *Dream Repairman: Adventures in Film Editing*. If you have seen the film *If...* or the hilarious *Ripping Yarns* television playlet, *Tomkinson's Schooldays* (both of which I thoroughly recommend), you will know what I'm talking about. The prefects were not the diligent and erudite group of pupils you see today: far from it. They were instead a 'group of eighteen-year-old thugs who were into beatings in a big way', whose main purpose in life was to keep the 'new ticks in order' (one can only imagine Ian Ogilvy saying 'You call me School Bully, you miserable little tick!'). After waking at seven the boys 'went directly to the bathroom, stripped off their pyjamas, and were ceremonially dunked into a bath of cold water. A prefect was there to ensure complete immersion'. Despite this 'Life at Oundle was, for me, liberating and taught me patience and perseverance.' And it did more than that, as, through the inspiration of a new housemaster Arthur Marshall, nicknamed 'Cabby', Jim Clark discovered his lifelong passion: film.

When I arrived at the school, the projection equipment in the Great Hall was truly primitive...I decided to write a manifesto that was directed toward the headmaster, to persuade him to allow me to start a film society within the school. It would be open only to senior boys and staff... Mr Stainforth [the then Head] much to my surprise, sanctioned the idea, provided a master was in charge and knew what films were to be shown, cautioning, 'No smut please, so be cautious with the French films' (!)

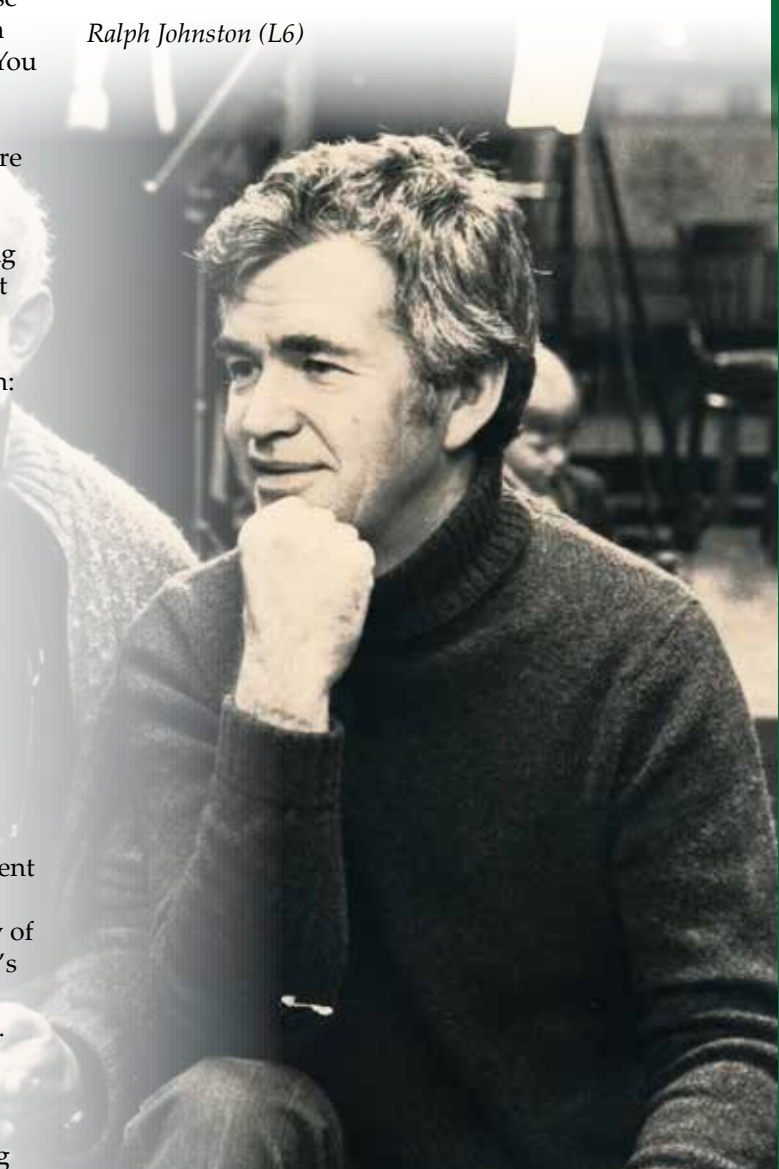
Jim's Film Soc oversaw the 'scrapping of the ancient projectors and installation of two new 35mm machines in a soundproof booth up in the gallery of the Great Hall'. Showing films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, 'the Oundle Film Society was a hit'. The OO concludes: 'My education was complete'. He goes on to say how the Film Society led to his very first job in the film industry, as a gofer for a documentary production company. He rose quickly: in the mid-1950s he began work at Ealing

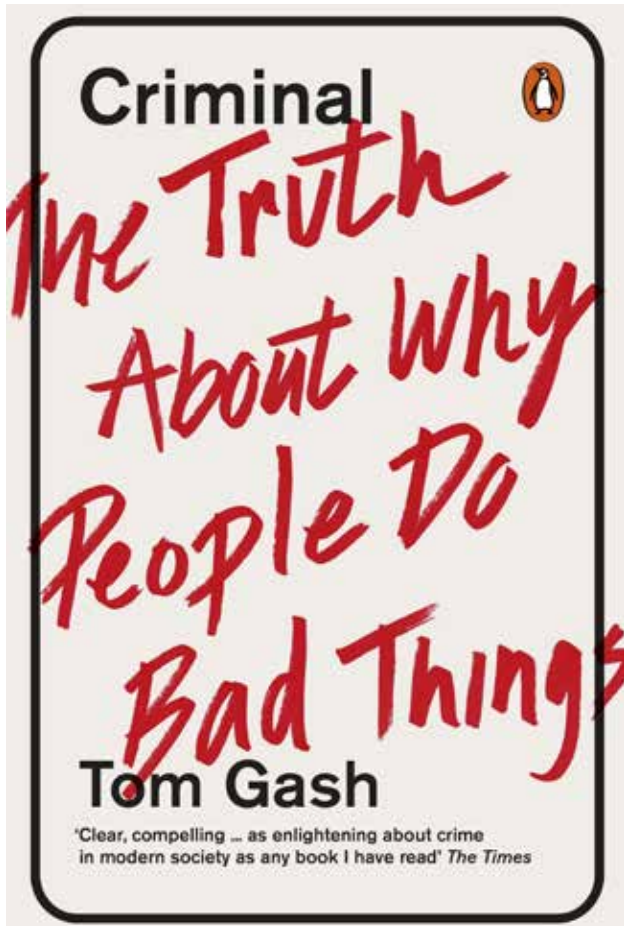
Studios, where he came to work as assistant editor for Stanley Donen, which led to him getting the job editing Donen's superb thriller *Charade*, starring Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant.

Clark collaborated repeatedly with the director John Schlesinger. Their relationship resulted in the brilliantly cut thriller *Marathon Man* with Dustin Hoffman and Laurence Olivier, as well as *Yanks* and *Midnight Cowboy*, on which Jim had to come in after a previously hired American editor (who got the credit) was unable to make it work. Jim totally recut the picture and as a result he was nicknamed 'Dr Clark' due to his fantastic skill in revitalising films. The masterpiece went on to win three Academy Awards: Best Film, Best Directing and Best Adapted Screenplay. Jim's Oscar came fourteen years later for his chef-d'œuvre, Roland Joffé's *The Killing Fields*.

The Oundle Film Society recommenced in the Easter Term 2018, with a screening of *All The President's Men*, with a mind to featuring cross-curricular classics to maintain the tutelage of an academic life whilst opening the gates to the 'fantasy land' that welcomed Jim all those years ago.

Ralph Johnston (L6)





Is crime an immoral choice, which can be eliminated by tough punishment? Or is poverty its main cause, and social reform the remedy? Neither, says Tom Gash, the author of *Criminal: The Truth About Why People Do Bad Things* and an honorary senior lecturer at UCL's Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science.

On 13 October 2017, Tom visited Oundle to share with the Upper Sixth pupils the central ideas of his book, while exposing popular myths about crime and discussing the path to a safer world. He drew on his experience as crime adviser in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and Director of Research at the Institute for Government, arguing that our attachment to old theories of crime leads us to neglect the simple steps that individuals, criminal justice practitioners and policymakers can take to transform our levels of safety and wellbeing.

Tom opened his talk with the question: 'How many of your lives have been touched by crime in one way or another?' Over half of the audience raised their hands and Tom responded by taking off his jacket and revealing his t-shirt with the word 'criminal' printed on it. He continued by stating that crime affects all of our lives and is around us all of the time. People often have this instinctive belief that criminals are completely different from us, hell-bent on crime, but that really is not the case – in fact, according to him, nine out of ten people have committed a crime at some point in their lives. To start off, Tom told us a little bit about how he

became interested in crime and explained that serving as an adviser to the Blair government allowed him to see how political decisions are often based more on myths about crime than on evidence. Instead of looking at facts and figures, politicians are often persuaded by media reporting, which simplifies complex issues into 'selective, partial and biased' views.

Tom classified people's attitudes towards crime into two categories: Heroes and Villains (right-wing claims that crime is a moral issue best dealt with by ever tougher sentencing) as well as Victims and Survivors (left-wing beliefs that it is caused by poverty and inequality). These distinct attitudes are often represented on various TV series and newspapers - for example *Inspector Morse* and *The Daily Mail* under Heroes and Villains, and *The Wire* or *The Guardian* under Victims and Survivors. Tom was keen to show us how these common myths and misconceptions about crimes can be dispelled, by drawing examples from findings of his research.

Tom illustrated how small changes can have really big consequences with a story about Surfers' Paradise, an area in Gold Coast Australia which was known for being associated with alcohol-related violence. That violence was often triggered by trivial events such as fights over spilled drinks and accidental jostling, or people posturing to impress and defend love interest. In order to curb alcohol-related violence, police forces worked with local clubs and bars to make their environment more welcoming and less hostile. Door staff became hosts who tried to anticipate and cool down any conflicts before they occurred, instead of being intimidating enforcers who embarrass and humiliate people who are trying to get into their venues. They also lowered mundane frustrations, alcohol consumption and excessive drunkenness through reducing binge drinking incentives, making food available, and introducing smaller glasses. These subtle changes at first seemed rather unrelated or insignificant but had quite a dramatic effect – violence around bars and clubs reduced by 52% within one year. These staggering results confirm that crimes resulting from the stresses and strains of an environment can be prevented with careful engineering and manipulation.

Tom also demonstrated that tough punishments or sentences are not always effective, using statistics from Scandinavian countries. In the 1960s, Finland dramatically reduced its prison population by replacing heavy incarceration with lesser sentences and community services. Although crime rates in Finland did go up during that period, all the other Scandinavian countries experienced similar crime trends. Even Scotland, who was doing the complete opposite by putting more people into prisons, had exactly the same patterns of crime. These surprising statistics prove that prison is indeed limited in its

effect, and that being tough on crime is not always the way to go.

In response to a question regarding cybercrime during the Q&A session, Tom proposes that we can eliminate billions of dollars in internet fraud by simply changing the way that we do online shopping. We just need to replace the current system where you only need your card details to make online payments with a new version of 'chip and pin' for online transactions. However, retailers are unwilling to change their system as they are worried about slowing down purchases or driving away customers. Tom thinks the government should step in and encourage a more rational approach to crime reduction - not only in this scenario, but in many other cases as well.

When I posed a question on the effectiveness of restorative justice (when victims meet with offenders to talk about the impacts of the crime), Tom answered by stating that he would rather place

most of the crime money on preventive measures - which are incredibly cheap and cost-effective - than on rehabilitation, while saying restorative justice can sometimes provide closure which is often desired by many victims. Ultimately, there are a large number of examples on the successes and flaws of modern criminal justice systems - Tom concluded by saying that crime prevention is an ongoing process so we should continue to try, test, experiment and evaluate what works, so as to get a more rounded view on criminality and find ways to deal with it better.

Tom was an engaging speaker and I found his lecture very intriguing and informative. In his book, he discusses and dismisses more myths about crime which are just as fascinating as the ones he presented in the talk - I highly recommend Tom's book to anyone who wants to read more about his insights on why people do bad things.

Sammie Kwong (U6)



Clara Goodman (U6)

Louise Gray: My Year Killing To Eat

The title *My Year Killing to Eat* was not your typical subject for our Friday afternoon talk. Even with the pre-warning of what this week's talk would entail, Louise Gray, environmental journalist and OO, did not fail to surprise. The title was true to its word; Louise's enlightening talk consisted of the challenges she was presented with and the conclusions she came to during her year in which she only ate meat that she had killed herself.

Being environmentally conscious, Louise decided that she would take a practical approach in order to answer the question she raises: is it possible to be an 'Ethical Carnivore'? Starting small with oysters and fish, and working her way up to rabbit, squirrel and even stag, Louise did not eat any meat apart from what she had killed herself. Louise says that she was able to appreciate what goes into creating the final product we see on our plates, and could strip away the distance that supermarkets create between the animal and the person. She places herself in a more intimate position with the story behind the meat on the plate, a story that any carnivore should be (at the very least) aware of.

She presents a balanced argument around the long standing debate on whether we should eat meat. Placing significant importance on the environmental benefits of abstaining from meat, she simultaneously addresses the opposing argument. For example, through her own personal experience, she explores the morality of abattoirs, and is quick to correct the assurance that the livestock are 'dispatched humanely', describing her somewhat vivid and unpleasant experience witnessing all areas of the slaughter process. This, as well as some scary statistics describing the extent of livestock's carbon footprint, was enough to persuade the audience

that if meat was not going to be going to cut out of our diets, something at least needed to change. Yet Louise does not discard the contrasting argument. She was able to convey a genuine appreciation of the countryside practices, farmers and animals alike. It's also important to remember that a vegetarian who eats large quantities of imported foreign food is more hypocritical than 'morally superior'. She also suggests ethical alternatives to perhaps replace the abundance of beef and chicken that is consumed. Foods such as squirrel and pigeon are more ethical alternatives to these, and Louise discusses her consumption of roadkill, vitro meat (created in the lab) and even insects; the cricket brownies which she brought for us to try went down surprisingly well.

What Louise has opened our minds to is the necessity of being aware of the meat we eat, and its origin, without cutting it out of our lives completely. Although actively killing your own meat is not a practice that is likely to become either popular or practical for the majority of people, Louise encourages us simply to question a little more the impact of the meat we buy. Hopefully this will not only encourage the population to consume less meat overall, but will provide a more ethical approach to eating it.

So, sitting in the Stahl, contemplating the issues addressed in this lecture, the nature of the School's culinary habits immediately sprang to mind. Where does our meat come from? Are our eggs free-range? It turns out that Oundle is actually conscious of the origins of the School's food; according to the kitchen staff, the meat is from the local butchers and the eggs free-range. However, to some extent, Oundle (along with the majority of the country) is still behind Louise's hopes for a meat reduced future. Eating meat three times a day is not only unethical, but is also simply not necessary for the human body.

Emma Thompson (U6)



Yale Young Global Scholars Program

This summer I attended a session of the Yale Young Global Scholars (YYGS) entitled International Affairs and Security.

When I touched down at JFK I was nervous and full of anticipation. I was about 3,500 miles away from my house and I hardly knew anyone. I think one of my biggest anxieties was whether I would fit in. Would these highly intellectual people accept me and would I make any friends?

When I finally got to Yale - a little late due to problems at Heathrow, in true British style - I stumbled into the Yale Law School to listen to, and be welcomed by, the course instructors. The people that I sat next to in that lecture theatre are people that I hope to keep in contact with for the rest of my life. They were charming people full of ideas and aspirations - I knew that from pretty much the first time I spoke to them. When I got to my room, which was surprisingly similar to those in Oundle, I was in a suite with people from New Jersey, India and Turkey, which was testament to the international reach of the course.

My time at Yale each day followed a fairly fixed routine. My alarm usually went at 6:30 and my breakfast at 7:00. Although the first lecture of the day started at 8:15, I normally had time to grab a cappuccino from a café between breakfast and the lecture. This little bit of caffeine was essential as the lecture was two hours long. Then for the rest of the day there were seminars (my favourite was about Brexit, quelle surprise), followed by some free time to go and get an ice cream and work on projects.

My project was about International Law and whether the International Criminal Court could punish anyone for possible Crimes Against Humanity committed in the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine. My group was made up of an Austrian, an American and a Mexican, and this diverse range of backgrounds opinions and views enabled us to produce what I hope was a fascinating presentation to fifty other people.

I think one lecture that will always stand out for me was the Professor John Gaddis' lecture on the *Hedgehog and the Fox*. There is a fragment of Ancient Greek by the poet Archilochus: πολλὰ οἶδ' ἀλωπηξί, ἀλλ' ἔχινος ἓν μέγα (a fox knows many things, but a hedgehog one important thing). Indeed, in Erasmus' Adagia (1500) the expression is recorded as multa novit vulpes, verum echinus unum magnum. Professor Gaddis used this, much like Isaiah Berlin, to examine some key figures in history

and whether they were foxes, hedgehogs or even hedgefoxes.

In addition to the friends that I made, the teachers, professors and instructors were also amazing. They enlarged my opinions, tested my philosophies, but they also taught me whole new topics that I would never have encountered if it were not for them.

The main question, however, is what did I learn from YYGS? First of all I learnt that Europe is definitely no longer the centre of world affairs. I learnt this through my seminars, lectures and discussions, in which I was exposed to a truly global perspective that we rarely hear about in Britain. From now on I have every intention of continuing to consider topics from a global perspective in my future endeavours.

Secondly, YYGS exposed me to various perspectives on numerous issues such as Brexit, Trump, History, General Politics, International Law and many others. These various opinions have informed my own views and broadened my perspective. I also became more adept at defending my own points of view, as they were put to the test every day by the range of alternative perspectives present. This enabled me to analyse my own thoughts critically, beliefs and indeed philosophies, and I leave this point with a quotation from someone I met at YYGS: 'What I once considered to be final and concrete, is now more fluid and ambiguous. My opinions are in the process of being reformed in a way that I had never truly considered.'

George Brettle (L6)



When teachers from the Oundle Modern Languages department visited Oxford University last year to meet Prof. Katrin Kohl, they learned about the 'Creative Multilingualism' research project. When Prof. Kohl heard about Alice Sze, a pupil at Oundle who was determined to turn herself into a polyglot, she was very impressed and asked her to write a blog post about her language learning experience. Alice's blog was published on their website (www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk) and is reproduced in full here.

My Love Affair With Eight Languages

Like many polyglots, my language-learning path has taken some very unexpected turns; my seven-year-old self would never have imagined the present me. And if we were ever to meet, her jaw would drop, hard.

I grew up in Hong Kong and detested English for the first eleven years of my life. It was completely alien to me with its grammar and alphabet; my head hurt when I tried to read English, and using it was an onerous task. Then things changed in sixth grade, when the top pupils in English were put in another set and suddenly I was one of the top myself. It was surreal. For it had never happened to me before. Once I realised it was possible to be good at English after all, and that my inspiring teacher Mr Shanker believed in me, I began to pay attention, to put in effort, which as I realised later on, is the most indispensable ingredient in language-learning.

The level of my English hovered around intermediate level for a while. What really took me to the next level was the language work I did outside lessons, after having decided to study abroad in England. I watched English programmes every day for an hour or two, anything from Masterchef to Sherlock Holmes to Glee, with English subtitles instead of Chinese. During my daily commute, I would read any article that interested me in the Guardian on my phone and I also read children's books, not because I liked them but because they were easy. I looked up (and still do) every word that I didn't know, however tedious and time-consuming. It is a habit which has stood me in good stead, as it allows me to use words accurately and remember them after seeing the word only a few times. Over time, as if by magic, my English improved by leaps and bounds, and I was comfortably fluent by the time I arrived at my new school in England within a year.

This was only the beginning. My new school opened the floodgates of opportunities for language learning for me. Since I was going to be arriving

in second form, I would be learning French, Latin and German. So I signed up for an intensive thirty hour summer course at the Alliance Française in Hong Kong. My progress was slow due to the size of the class, and I had only learnt the very basics, nonetheless I enjoyed it enormously. One of the joys of learning languages is that you learn about how one is different from another, that there is a whole world, or indeed many worlds, outside your own. French was the first Romance language I learnt, and despite being much more similar to English than Chinese is, it seemed curious and therefore very exciting to me, with its conjugations and agreements (okay, maybe not so exciting to some).

Then I met Latin. I didn't know what to expect, for no one I knew in Hong Kong had studied Latin. In fact, I knew so little about it that I thought it was a Middle-Eastern language. But it was pretty much love at first sight. It was the perfect balance between pure logic and humanities. At that time the exercises were more like puzzles and maths, whereas now we analyze the original literature, but either way I was hooked from the very first lesson three years ago and have never looked back.

German was a bit of a blur in my memory. I dropped it after second form and swapped it for Greek, because of how much I loved Latin and those comics on Greek myths that I read and re-read. It was like Latin, only more difficult, and I used to worry about its vocabulary, which has far fewer cognates in English and is therefore harder to remember. But the problem has fortunately resolved itself over time with more practice.

By then, I already knew a handful of languages, but I didn't really register it and I just sort of got on with it. Then on the European Day of Languages in 2015, Richard Simcott, a hyperpolyglot who has studied forty languages and uses over twenty of them on a weekly basis, came to my school. I had always been aware of people who know a stupefying number of languages, but to me they were super-humans with one-in-a-billion-talents, queer habits and absolutely dogged determination, a bit like the guy who can hula-hoop for seventy-four hours. But coming into contact with a hyperpolyglot made me realise that it wasn't impossible after all. Then I counted the languages I knew or studied ... oh wait, I already know seven! Obviously I was only a beginner in many of these languages but I was only thirteen.

Sorry to disappoint you, but I didn't go and sign myself up for 101 language courses after the talk, instead I just carried on with my existing ones. However I was now open to learning new ones. Then came Italian, the love of my life. It was February, I was on a History trip to Prague, and one night we went to see Puccini's *La Bohème*. When I came out of the theatre my heart was set on Italian.

If I am honest, the plot was a little too clichéd, but the music and the lyrics enchanted me. From then on, whenever I heard Italian, my ears would prick up and absorb and revel in every bit of it, appreciating the gentle rolling of the 'r' and the clear pronunciation of every letter in the word. As much as I wanted to learn Italian, however, I could only pick five subjects for GCSEs and I couldn't fit Italian in. But that didn't stop me. In the summer I started having two-hour Italian private lessons at Società Dante Alighieri in Hong Kong, which I still do now.

Then there was Japanese. Well, I know it sounds implausible, but I learnt a lot Japanese from watching anime, thousands of episodes of them. Although I could barely speak or write it, I could understand daily conversations without having to think about what they meant. Last summer, I went to Japan alone for two weeks on my own to visit my elder sister, who was studying in Japan, and my friend. Obviously my Japanese improved, but much more importantly this trip served as a critical wake-up call for me. I had a few French and Senegalese classmates, and when I tried to speak to them, I realised just how bad and unhelpful my French was. I could converse with them on Whatsapp but I just couldn't understand what they were saying in person. My Japanese was considerably better, but similarly I had to face the reality that my Japanese was too flawed to be used with ease. It motivated me to endeavour to improve because languages in the real world are nothing like they are in the classroom. It's like going from patting a little fluffy pomeranian to being howled at in the Underworld by Cerberus.

Spanish was a pleasant surprise and Spanish songs are currently one of my biggest obsessions. Three weeks into Fourth Form, I realised that I hated Geography. So I swapped that for Spanish. At first the teachers were unsure whether I could catch up, but fortunately with my knowledge of Italian and other Romance languages, I was able to do so very quickly. It was like buy-two-get-one-half-price, my two being Italian and French. This applies to all languages actually; the more you buy, the more you save.

It goes without saying that learning multiple languages can be demanding sometimes, and a lot of devotion goes into maintaining competency in all of them. I am an unexceptional, average teenager. I procrastinate a lot, I love cooking and baking, (online) shopping, scrolling on social media and going to the gym, amongst other things. I try my best to incorporate all my modern languages into my daily life by listening to the radio and songs when I walk or cook, by cooking with recipes in the original language, reading books and newspapers, watching TV series etc. At the moment I would like to achieve fluency in my current languages before learning new ones, but life is never predictable, and just like you can't control who you meet, you can't control which languages you learn. You meet them, get to know them, and fall in love with them.

Alice Sze (5th)



The Case For IB

It cannot be denied that there is a large proportion of pupils at Oundle who are likely to be overjoyed about reducing the number of subjects they take when going into Sixth Form. While it seems fair that the importance lies in the individual's choice, the fact that you are still cutting out several options at a critical period in your life cannot simply be ignored. Surely some of the principal purposes of Sixth Form education include enlarging your knowledge and intellectual curiosity, which is undeniably reduced by cutting down the number of subjects you study. Keeping a range of subjects is not only beneficial for those keen beans eager not to drop, but for everyone. To start with, at the age of sixteen it is often the case that you do not know what you want to do, and will most likely change your mind over the next two years. I know I certainly struggled to pick my A Levels, let alone decide what I wanted to do in the future. Yet by specialising to three or four subjects so early on you are immediately narrowing your options, not only for your academic learning in the following school years, but also for your future. Want to study a science at university? When only studying three subjects, this is a decision you essentially need to make at the age of sixteen. Most universities won't consider a candidate for Biology, for example, who does not study one other Science or Maths. Although Science is the main culprit in this, it can be an issue across the board.

In Oundle's Sixth Form, there is a definite divide between science and arts. In general, Oundelians do either science subjects or arts subjects. We have managed to create a physical divide between the two, one building housing all of Maths and Science, and the rest elsewhere. I hardly even see 'the Science people'. There is even a sense that when choosing your Sixth Form options you have to decide: 'should I enter into the science faction, or the arts?' Rarely do you get people studying a combination, even if they do in fact have an interest in both sides. Biology is often not seen as compatible with the study of English and History, for example. Yet a division between these two subjects is surely to be discouraged. Learning across the curriculum should not be seen as a negative thing, just because it does not go with your other subjects. Of course, it must be taken into account that with only three subjects it does make sense that you choose them to complement the other two, especially with the foresight that doing French might give you the edge when applying for English at university, for example. This is why the system of A level means that it is very difficult to resolve this problem. With more breadth, and less cutting down of subjects, perhaps Oundelians would not be so inclined to shut off the other half, or even two-thirds, of curriculum in Sixth Form.

And this is not an implausible suggestion. The obvious alternative to A Levels is the International Baccalaureate, the globally acknowledged qualification which is becoming popular in England. The six subjects that you are obliged to do spread from science and maths to a language, humanities and arts. The course does not take your choice away either. You can choose any subjects within these six boundaries, and then from these choose your strongest three to study at Higher Level, and the other three at Standard Level. A student with an IB qualification will have studied across the board, having obtained skills in creativity, logic, language and critical thinking. The detailed focus on chosen subjects at A level is something that you can develop at university, and so replacing this depth with breadth at Sixth Form is not necessarily a loss.

Of course, it's undeniable that IB is not for everyone. Nor am I suggesting that everyone must reconsider reducing their studies to only three subjects. The stimulating depth and precision of the A Level and Pre-U course is ideal for those that specialise in interest and ability, and any who have a clear idea of what they want to drop. I really don't advise the IB to someone who has a passionate hate for most subjects, for example.

However for those individuals who feel themselves relating to the desire to not cut down their interests to just one subject area, and any who also struggle with indecisiveness, IB sounds like a persuasive alternative.

Emma Thompson (U6)



Clara Goodman (U6)

Have A Go Day

Picture the scene: Field Weekend, earlier this year. In the Cloisters IT room, the *Oundelian* team are tapping away at their keyboards, idly waiting as they think of ideas for their next article. 'Why doesn't one of you go and have a look at Have A Go Day?', someone suggests. An audible groan fills the room.

Have A Go Day has the reputation of being a chore: a veritable pantheon of activities with the sole intent of keeping some kids busy while simultaneously boosting the reputation of the School. Take a quick stroll through Two Acre on Have A Go Day, and it would be hard to dispute this. Pupils sitting, chatting to their friends, by a crazy-golf hole waiting for someone to come and take part in their activity, vast queues of people waiting to have their photo taken, and seemingly more Oundelians hosting activities than there are people actually partaking in them. And that indeed was the impression I got from walking through the event, when I helped out there last year. Yet, it was through talking to people at the activities that I realised the true significance of this day, and how misleading its reputation is.

The first person we met was the chairman of the Kettering Mencap Gateway Club, the social branch of the mental health charity in Kettering, which caters for mentally disabled people of 18-80 years of age. They have been coming to Have A Go Day twice a year for the last fifteen years. When I ask him why they keep coming back, his face lights up; 'The people love it. Every week I get people asking me when the next Have A Go Day is, or when they can next go to Oundle. It really is a highlight for them'. And the happy faces of the

visitors are testament to the chairman's words: at the art table, Richard - from Peterborough - tells us how much fun he's had, whilst proudly showing off the photo-frame he's designed. While walking past the archery, we notice a group young children gleefully taking aim and ready to fire. As we enter the main building, we see a woman of about thirty happily hammering away at the drum kit, relishing in the attention of her attentive audience. The sense of celebration is everywhere. A footballer, Rob, with Down's Syndrome, sums up the atmosphere: 'There's so much to do, and so much going on. I have to come back so I can have a go at everything!'

Eager to find out what makes Oundle's day so special, and certain that there must be hundreds of events like Oundle's that these people could be going to instead, we approach the chairman of Mencap Gateway Kettering again. He tells us that the people love coming to Oundle so much because Oundelians don't look down on people with mental-disabilities. 'If you want to be successful in life, you have to remember that there are some people more disadvantaged than you, and if you can remember this, and spend some time on this, you will go far'. I think this sums up what makes Have A Go Day so special; not only does it give hundreds of mentally disabled people a great day, but it allows Oundle pupils to act in a way that they may not have the opportunity to do elsewhere, and to learn how to help those who do not have the advantages they have had. Community Action is often unfairly passed off as 'the easy option', yet it is days like Have A Go Day where one realises the real difference it makes.

Ed Hodgson (L6)



Mencap

'It was the best experience of my life thus far': was the cringeworthy, hackneyed statement I used to sum up Mencap when talking to my tutor at the start of term - but that's exactly what it was.

There is a Chapel talk each year presenting the reasons to volunteer for Mencap: it's incredibly rewarding and enjoyable, it looks great on your CV and it helps so many children. While Mencap allows for, and is, all of these things, it is so much more. However, because it's such a unique experience, it's hard to put it into words. I could give you the basic definition - a holiday for children between the ages of eight and eighteen with moderate to severe learning and physical disabilities - but that simply doesn't do justice to what is an incredibly fulfilling, entertaining and emotional week.

If the child you're looking after wants you to dress up in a gorilla onesie and chase them for half an hour while making sound effects as you perspire excessively, then that's exactly what you're going to do. You have to become completely apathetic to how you are being perceived by the other helpers as you prance around dressed in an array of ridiculous costumes. The importance of not being afraid of being yourself, while not caring who's watching, was one of the many important things Mencap highlighted for me. One afternoon I spent over an hour sitting on the floor with a girl who laughed continuously as I emptied all the costume boxes (of which there were at least six), taking each item out and putting it on either her or myself.

Though dressing up provided the children with hours of fun, as did visiting Wickstead Park, Hunstanton and Twin Lakes, I think my favourite activity was 'sing-song', which took place every evening just before the children's bedtime. There was not a single child who didn't enjoy singsong and some even spent the entire day singing the songs and looking forward to it. Though usually I do abide by the rule 'what happens on Mencap, stays on Mencap', on this occasion I will have to break it to share a priceless moment. From dressing up as Batman's Robin to dealing with the most difficult situations that arose, nothing was too embarrassing or demanding for Mr Banerjee as long as it made a child smile. However, watching him dance around the circle singing 'I am the music man ... I play the piano pia-pia-piano ... Oom-pah, oom-pah, oom-pah-pah' was undoubtedly an unforgettable highlight of my Mencap experience, which has altered my view of my psychology teacher ever since. Sing song was so special because everyone was present and sitting in a circle (as usual, dancing and singing like fools for the sake of entertainment) and the sense of unity was moving.

On the third day I looked after the same boy all morning and in the afternoon we went to Barnwell Country Park. We were watching one of the activities organised by the senior staff when a dog came within two metres of us and the boy leapt on me, wrapped his legs around me and hugged me tightly. Inevitably, he sent us both tumbling to the ground. Once I had got over the initial shock, I realised that he had seen me as someone he could trust, someone he could rely on and someone that would keep him safe. In that moment of panic he jumped on me because he was afraid, and after spending the morning with me playing football and making art, he knew I would protect him. Though I was covered in mud and had acquired a couple of bruises, I felt unbelievably happy because it showed me exactly why I was volunteering.

Aside from watching the children reunite with their parents, which brought tears to even the players of the 1st XV Rugby team's eyes, the most poignant moment of my Mencap experience was on the final night when I was sitting on my night time child's bed having tucked her in. She sat up and whispered: 'This is our last night time chat. I'm going to miss them. Will we have them next year?' I suddenly realised that the week had come to an end, and how much I had learnt about myself in such a short space of time. In the days after Mencap, most people suffer from what is commonly referred to as 'the Mencap blues'. Having spent 24 hours a day for a week giving one-to-one care to the children, when I got home I felt lost and rather lonely. I missed the staff whom I had bonded with over the weeks; I missed being involved in all the crazy activities; but most of all I missed seeing the children's smiles and knowing I had contributed to making them.

Eleanor Bines (U6)



Movember

As November rolled around, the evening light faded, and the last remnants of warmth disappeared, there were also some rather notable additions to the streets of Oundle. These were, of course, the moustaches of twenty Oundle staff members who had agreed to cultivate some facial hair in the name of 'Movember', a charitable venture organised by Mr Pitcher. These 'taches ranged from the standard mo along the upper lip to the odd full-on handlebar, and it is certainly safe to say that some were better than others. No matter how 'outgoing' the moustache was, they all did the job of grabbing attention, and the homage to the Movember team in Cloisters ensured that no-one missed them.

The tribute I am referring to was situated just inside the main gates of the cloisters. With an A4 sheet of paper for each letter of Movember (just like the one in the windows of the geography department), there was never any doubt that it would grab the attention of passers-by. Accompanying this somewhat eye-catching heading was, of course, information about Movember and how to donate, but also a 'wall of fame' for the twenty members of staff brave enough to step-up. It provided people with a reminder of what these staff members looked like before donning their respective moustaches.

Needless to say, it caught the everyone's attention – thus achieving the objective of Movember.

Through making people aware of the moustaches, they made people aware of the real issues that Movember tackles - not how bushy or well-groomed the moustaches were, but male health, both physical and mental. In particular, raising awareness of mental health issues, as well as prostate and testicular cancers, was the primary aim. Three quarters of all suicides are male. An eighth of men will experience a mental health issue. Nearly fifty percent of all testicular cancer cases diagnosed each year are within the 15-34 age bracket. Therefore, the Movember cause is primarily aimed at males, but everyone was implored to think more about gender specific cancers. It is not a pleasant cause to speak about, but one that it is of vital importance. Furthermore, the intention was to raise money for the Movember cause, and it is safe to say that the team achieved their goals in this area as well. Through the poster displays, brektime fundraising and the facial hair on display (with the prize of best moustache going to Mr Pettit), the Movember team raced passed their fundraising target of £1,500 and made just over £4,000. I suppose that it goes without saying that it was a tremendous effort from all involved.

Alex Cunningham (L6)



Devizes To Westminster Canoe And Kayak Race

The Devizes to Westminster Canoe and Kayak Race has been running since 1928, for seventy years. The course is 125 miles long, running along the Kennet and Avon Canal for fifty-four miles, then the non tidal River Thames for another fifty-four miles and finally joining the tidal River Thames at Teddington lock. It finishes under Westminster Bridge, seventeen miles later - a spectacular finish to a spectacular race.

There are two ways to do it: the most famous way, over twenty-four hours, or, alternatively, over four days. We had to do the latter, racing as one junior double (AJ Richardson and I) and one junior/veteran double (Robbie Hayes and Mr Mansergh). We all met at the wharf on Good Friday morning, and got our boats ready, off the top of the car and into the waiting pen. We put on our life jackets and fitted all our kit. This included water bottles, a torch, emergency energy gel and a survival blanket, just in case. Eventually, at about 8:15, we were given a tracker, put our boat in the water and set off. Under the bridge and away. The first fifteen miles were very difficult. No portages (when you have to get out the boat and carry it around a lock or low bridge), and no breaks. Our legs were cramping and our shoulders were aching. The next nineteen miles of day one we were in and out of the boat constantly, lock after lock. Luckily we had the support crews, groups or parents and siblings ready at locks to hand us food: jaffa cakes, flapjacks, mars bars and sandwiches.

Towards the end of the first day, we were very tired, and the prospect of camping in a wet field didn't exactly appeal. There were hot showers, though, in which we spent quite a long time warming up, and proceeded to put on as many layers as physically

possible to keep in the heat. The campsite was muddy, and there was ankle deep sludge we had to wade through to get to our tents. Supper was delicious and we managed to get an early night at about 8:30, as the thought of waking up at 5:30 the next morning drew us into sleeping bags and sent us to sleep.

The next morning we were woken up by camp staff shouting times of departure at us. Luckily our times weren't 6:15. We managed to get in a quick breakfast, pack up the tents and change into our kit before 7:15, when AJ and I were to leave. We found our boat amongst the many laid out on the wet grass and set off quickly. We were kayaking and portaging for about twenty miles before we were told to portage early, where we would join the Thames. The weather had definitely improved and we even had a few spells of sunshine which lifted the mood significantly. At this last portage, we were told: it's over. It's too dangerous. After a mile or so you're getting out and that's it. We were surprised. No one had told us cancelling was an option, but apparently it was. We didn't know it, but by this time ACM and Robbie had already got out. We were disappointed, as was everyone, but we couldn't exactly do anything about it. The Thames was on red alert because of the huge amount of rain and the officials were not going to let children out on a rapidly flowing river.

Despite this, it was good to finish on a high. We felt as though we had completed the hardest part of the race and so we knew we could have done the rest, and it felt as though our training had not gone to waste. As an added bonus, we managed to be home in time for Easter. I think we would all say this race was a success. We may not have won, or have been extremely fast, but we knew we could have done it, and in the meantime we raised almost £2,300 for Mary's Meals, enough to change the lives of 165 children.

Holly Kunzer (L6)



Sports MasterPlan

Over the next few years, Oundle will be experiencing a transformation of epic proportions. This process is in fact already underway: the new maths and DT departments are built and in use; the music department has experienced something of a makeover in recent times and now it is time for the masterpiece: the Sports MasterPlan is being put into action.

While some may opt to focus more on the cost of this undertaking rather than the facilities gained, I do not fall into this category. Personally, I am in awe of the facilities set to be installed. Whether it be the high-tech swimming pool, new sports hall or new gym and dance studios, there is something for everyone. Let's not forget, however, that this plan has been underway in various guises for a while now. The new astros are in use, the new cricket pavilion has been around for a few years, the new netball and tennis courts have just been finished, as have the new artificial cricket nets, and as I write this, the foundations are being laid for the new athletics track.

Of course, the cost of this project is not to be ignored, but the fact remains that whatever your standpoint on the expenditure, Oundle is to be blessed with some of the best sporting facilities on offer. The opportunity to have an upgrade on our already excellent facilities is something for which we should all be hugely grateful.

After the finishing of the new athletics track, the next step will be the new swimming pool, gym and dance studios, as well as other features of the new sports centre, which will take the place of the current athletics track and swimming pool. Half of the new pool will have a movable floor, making it suitable for teaching swimming to beginners or

for people with mobility difficulties. It will have a 'submersible divider' which will be able to separate the two halves of the pool as well as be submerged, leaving the entire pool unseparated. Moreover, the pool will be fifty metres as opposed to the current fifty yard pool, and complete with advanced timing equipment.

A café area will accompany the pool downstairs, and upstairs is where the dance studios will be situated. The studios, will be able to be opened out for match teas and hospitality events owing to the retractable wall. They will be fit for dance, martial arts and a host of yoga-like activities. The new fitness suite will be of a similarly high calibre, and all will look out onto the 1st XI cricket pitch, with a balcony running parallel to the windows, and all of this at the pupils' disposal.

I suppose that it goes without saying that the sporting opportunities at Oundle will be boundless when all of this is completed. It is safe to say that what few limitations there are on sporting activities now will be non-existent. Few will be able to say that they have more advanced facilities to play with, but that's not really the point though, is it? The point is that sport at Oundle and the opportunities outside the classroom for every single Oundle and Laxton Junior pupil, will be enhanced exponentially. Furthermore, it will enable pupils to keep succeeding beyond the classroom, which is such a vital part of school life at Oundle. At a school level it will enable us to improve and achieve, but we must remember that the same goes for beyond school level as well. We cannot forget those elite athletes in the School who require the best facilities in order to compete. In brief, what we have before us is a programme of development that will cultivate a new generation of elite athletes.

Alex Cunningham (L6)



Girls' Sports, Boys' Sports, Sports

'What I don't get is why all the girls want to play boy's sports, do you? Hahaha, can't they just play netball?'

This off-hand comment, a reaction to some advertisement for the Women's Football Euros, was something that, when I heard it said over the summer, got me thinking. I found it this surprising, busy as I was focusing on the skill that these women clearly had. It was so far beyond what I would ever be capable of myself, that the idea that they were only good enough for netball*, seemed completely extraordinary to me.

Was this really true? Were we girls pinching all the lads' games and appropriating them as our own? While it was, and still is, true that girls' rugby, cricket, football, baseball etc., have seen an explosive surge, not only onto the pitches but also into the media, has this been at the detriment to male sports? I mulled all this over in my head for a bit and then came to my conclusion: it's about time we ditched this gender prefix and just call it what it is. Football is football, golf is golf, tennis is tennis: you get the picture. With this in mind, the reason all the girls want to play 'mens' sports' seems obvious: it is because they're good fun, not because they mean to try and emasculate anyone.

I know the argument against watching women on the telly: 'Men are physically stronger and more athletic - it's just a fact. Watching women play is just not the same'. And I agree, at least partially. It's true that men are, generally, physically stronger than women: an average man is going to be able to lift heavier things and run faster than an average woman. So this argument would be bulletproof if professional sport, or indeed any sport, was about physical strength alone, or indeed if professional sport was played by 'average' people. However, this is not the case. As Gandhi said (and yes, I know he wasn't much of a leading light on the rugby pitch but still, he is Gandhi) 'Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.' And at least in a mental capacity, men and women are equal and therefore it's about time that women's sport got equal, or in some cases started to get any coverage. Sport on a professional level, a level good enough to watch on television, involves the very best players in the world, regardless of their gender. Women's teams do not train any less hard than the men's in their respective sports and thus, the more I think about it, the more unfair it seems that they should get so little recognition for their efforts. In the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, the idea that women are deemed not good enough play a sport, even though it only

requires passion and strength (rather than anything else), is ludicrous.

Happily, things are changing, and Oundle is at the front of the wave. When last year, the girls' Cricket XI was formed in earnest and had its first fixture, it was a resounding success. Girls' Rugby is as strong as it has ever been, with more girls than ever lacing up their boots and charging onto the pitch. The Thommy Purbrook Charity Match which takes place in March is the most watched School sporting event nearly every year: people seem to have no problem with girls playing sport in the name of a good cause. This year, the Girls' Football 1st XI were victorious, 4-1, in their opening match, the first football match any Oundle girl has ever played in. Though, of course, sport at Oundle has always been fabulous regardless of gender, opening up these new opportunities to girls' teams has only led to more inclusion, more passion - and more silverware.

On a national scale, too, things are progressing in positive directions. As of this year, St Andrews allowed women onto the green for the very first time, and, at the time of writing, England has Rugby, Football and Cricket champions, with all the trophies being held by the ladies. Since 2015, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race for both the women and the men has taken place on the same river, on the same day, breaking nigh on 200 years of male segregation.

The Brits are a nation obsessed by sport, in the same way that we are obsessed with tea, or *Love Island*; so with regards to our female teams, shouldn't we be using the phrase, 'the more, the merrier' and welcome them to our screens?

*Not a judgement on netball, just in keeping with the comment in question.

Rose Asquith (U16)



New Head Of Hockey

Grahame Mansell-Grace is, unquestionably, highly qualified for his new position at Oundle: he has worked at international level with various England hockey teams for twenty years as well as working with Hockey Wales, Beeston Hockey Club and the US Women's National Team in 2003. Such a rich coaching history is unusual, and nobody could deny that we are very lucky to have him. Nonetheless, Mr Mansell-Grace - otherwise known as 'Panda' - is not a new face around Oundle, and he has been being working part-time since around 2003 as the School goalie coach. He made it clear that he is often perceived as 'purely a goalie coach' and emphasised that he is far more than this. He is an entrepreneur, co-founder of Spartan Hockey, and also works with the development of coaches and their methods of coaching. If Head of Hockey of a major independent school doesn't sound taxing enough, it is important to remember that he also coaches Loughborough Hockey 1st XI Team, and yet he still manages to bring enthusiasm and energy to all sessions with his signature sense of humour.

His focus for Oundle Hockey is clear: reaching National Finals in all age groups - as has been done frequently in Oundle's past - and helping all pupils to develop to the best of their abilities. He believes that 'a big part of what we do is developing, not only the players but also the coaches', and this is something that he is looking to focus on to ensure that a 'consistent message from the coaches' is passed down to all players, no matter which team they are in. He hopes that everyone who plays Hockey at Oundle will continue the game in some form after leaving the School.

Reflecting on the difference between being Head of Hockey and just a goalie coach, he uses an interesting airport analogy: 'When you check your bag in at an airport, you check your bag in, then you go and get a coffee and then you go and get on the plane'. Now as Head of Hockey, he knows 'where the bag goes, how the coffee gets to the coffee shop and how the passengers get to the plane'. This change now means that he is able to see the workings of the whole School, and has now a greater idea of how much work goes into organising all of the fixtures, booking the buses and the general running of the sports department.

However, his transition was a not an easy one, with his appointment two and a half weeks before School started. He has admitted to having faced several challenges so far, which is understandable given that he had such short notice. He says that his main challenge is getting to understand 'what has been done in the past [tradition], what can change, and what is set in stone,' and getting to know the right people to talk to around the School for help

in certain areas. He then goes on to say that people have been extremely welcoming and that the pupils have been really supportive, making coaching a lot easier with their huge desire to learn by asking 'such fantastic questions'.

The most common question Mr Mansell-Grace is asked is what his role was in the England Squad. In his own words, he has been involved since around 2002, running the goalkeeping academy and taking goalkeepers to Loughborough twice a week. If GB were away for a tournament, he would look after the goalkeeper at home. Working with goalkeepers so often, such as current GB goalkeeper, George Pinner, also allowed him to work with top outfield players which enabled him to understand the whole game. The biggest difference between coaching the GB team and Oundle School is simple: the pace. Pupils at Oundle don't have the time to be in the gym for three hours a day and don't have access to the psychologists, physiotherapists and nutritionists, so there is a huge element of trust involved in coaching at school level, putting faith in the players to look after their bodies properly and eat the right things. Surprisingly, working with England was not the highlight of his career. This, he says, was working with Beeston Hockey club, winning the premier league and qualifying for the Europeans within just six years.

Finally, the question that everyone is now asking: who coaches the goalies now? Amazingly, 'Mr Mansell-Grace' is still the answer. He continues to coach them along with his vast number of responsibilities as he believes it is hard to find 'the right person to come in at the moment'. For him, it's important that we hire the person who is right for the job, not the person who just happens to come along.

I'm sure I can speak for everyone when I wish him the very best of luck in his new position at Oundle as Head of Hockey; it was really interesting to hear about his plans for us all in the future, and discover the ins and outs of his hockey career.

Ella Johnsrud (L6)



A Peculiar Pastime

Every now and then, if you keep your eyes peeled, you might just catch a glimpse of a strange creature, one foreign and alien to most of us. Beware: this strange species moves fast, so blink and you may miss it. It does though tend to boast vibrant colourings, neon yellows being the most common, making it easier to spot. The most accomplished members of the population often sprout swanky tech around their lycra-swathed frames, marking them out as figures of unquestioned excellence. What are these strange beings, you may ask? These are what we call 'runners'.

Runners? Ah, running. Ugh. The mere thought of this fills most with an unrivalled, sweat-provoking, butterfly-inducing dread. This is perhaps what makes these 'runners' so alien to most ordinary folk. What is the point? They ask. Why force yourself to endure such agony? They wonder. Surely these people (if they can even be so simply referred to as people, bracketed in with the rest of us like this) are somehow crazy?

But what if this is in fact not the case? What if these people are not crazy? What if (and bear with me here) they just know something others don't? Because, of the many people who claim to hate running, most don't understand it, and have only ever really given running a go when they have been utterly unprepared for it. Running when you are not ready for it is like going away on a camping trip but bringing nothing with you: no food, no clothes, no sleeping bag, no tent, and no way to get any of these things in time for your trip. This is unlikely to be an enjoyable trip. Similarly, anyone who charges out of the door on New Year's Day, having finally resolved to exercise for the first time in years, is unlikely to enjoy this first venture. Running is a challenge at the best of times, an excruciating torment if you are not in shape for it. So many people experience this first agonising run, and that is it. Their minds are set: running is painful and pointless.

But it is not always so. The few who turn out again and again for a second run, then a third, then a fourth, will find that by the fifth or sixth, the pain will start to recede, ever so slightly. They will find that, after a while, it is possible to run without losing control of their legs and seeing stars when they finish (it is possible, but of course many runners will still choose to push themselves to such lengths). It is these few who, after persevering and sticking with it, dragging themselves through these first torturous runs, come to define themselves as true runners, devotedly pursuing their pastime ad absurdum.

But why bother? Why push yourself through such

pain just to be able to exercise with slightly less pain? Even many runners find themselves unable to answer the seemingly simple question, 'Why do you run?' Because it's a good question, and I'm afraid 'because it's fun' just doesn't quite cut it.

The art of running is in fact not an art at all. Humans were made to run, and it was likely instrumental to our evolution from apes to humans. It is something that comes (or should come) quite naturally to humans, something that is intuitive even. The modern verb 'to run' derives from the old English 'rinnan' of the same meaning, which has the alternative meaning 'to flow'. (Not at all coincidentally, our word today can also have this meaning, as in the running of water.) This is a clear sign of the ease with which humans were made to run: it is to us as though we are merely flowing. Or at least this is how it should be in theory. Thousands of years ago, this was probably far more accurate. Men would hunt animals far faster than themselves by staying close enough to follow them and then just not stopping. It came down to who could keep going for the longest, and invariably the man beat the cheetah. The creature would collapse, exhausted, now easy prey for the hunter. This hunting technique, called persistence hunting, is still practised today by bushmen in the Kalahari desert, and humans are the only surviving primate species to use it.

Perhaps it is even our ability to run, and to keep running, that has prevented the human race from meeting with extinction long ago. In times gone by, running was necessary to hunt, and hunting was necessary to eat, and needless to say, eating was necessary for survival. In a society where we no longer have such necessity, running has become somewhat redundant.

So this brings me back to my question: 'Why do we run?' There are the obvious answers: 'to get fit', 'to lose weight'. But then there are also the more complicated reasons. These reasons may in fact be no more than an intuitive understanding gained by runners, an understanding of something that is seemingly obvious, yet hard to put into words. This is why the question, 'Why do you run?' is really not so simple at all.

With so many people around (a whopping 8 billion of them), it is a given that there will be times when we find ourselves wanting more than anything just to get away from the hum and the buzz. Especially at Oundle, we find ourselves constantly surrounded by other people, often overwhelmingly so. And the best way to solve this? Well, pulling on trainers and running away. Of course I don't advocate actually running away: it is probably best to come back after a few miles. But the point is, you could. When I run, I am completely free; I could stop, I could choose not to. I go wherever my feet take me.

This makes it sound as though I find running to be some blissful experience. I don't. Running is hard. But running would be nowhere near as worthwhile if it were easy. It is the challenge of a long, tough run, and the mettle required to get through this, that gives you the smug satisfaction that carries you through the rest of the day. Going on a run is an achievement. On a slow day with no particular plans, it is easy to let the day crawl by with little being accomplished. But go for a run and suddenly you have done something with your day. And it isn't just this sense of achievement giving runners an extra dose of optimism. Exercise, and especially running, boosts the brain's serotonin and endocannabinoid levels (don't worry, I don't really know what those things are either), which are the feel-good hormones that reduce stress and anxiety. See, I'm not just spouting nonsense, even science agrees.

So I now return to the point made 900 words ago: maybe runners do know something others don't. Because, surely, you can only truly appreciate the benefits of something once you have experienced it, and you can only fully acknowledge and accept these bona fide reasons to run once you have, well, run. And by 'run', I mean really 'run', not just the occasional whimsical run, regretted and not repeated in a hurry. You can only really appreciate running once you have dedicated yourself to it, made it a habit, and become 'a runner'.

So I implore you, non-runners, don't knock it till you've (really) tried it.

Alice Gadsby (L6)



A Posh Boy At Oundle

I burst into tears as soon as I realised that my dream was over. I had barely sat down at my end of season review when I was told that I was being released after three years playing at the club.

I had always played Rugby and was a Leicester Tigers supporter. With Tigers out of Europe in 2010 we decided to go and watch Leicester City play Newcastle. It was freezing cold and with Solano sent off, Leicester hung on for sixty minutes for a hard fought 0-0. The noise and atmosphere were amazing. I wanted to be a footballer. As a rugby player who enjoyed making try-saving tackles it was unsurprising that I decided to become a goalkeeper. One of my friends at prep school had been scouted by Lincoln City and found that they were looking for a goalkeeper. It was not long before I was training two nights a week with them before signing my first contract.

As I walked around the training ground I introduced myself to the Goalkeeper coach and it wasn't long before I had arranged a training session with him. I was then invited to sign for a 6 week trial which proved successful. I had signed for Leicester City. This was a big step up in terms of facilities and the opportunities I had to strengthen my skills.

Being in Laxton gave me the freedom to train three nights a week after school with matches on a Sunday. I saw Leicester win the Championship, make the Great Escape and then go on to win the Premier League title as 5000-1 outsiders. Proof that you can beat the odds. Whilst at Leicester I got to visit many other academies including Spurs, Liverpool, Chelsea, Aston Villa and had the privilege of playing end of season matches at St Andrews, Molineux and on the sacred turf of the King Power stadium. One of the most memorable experiences was playing in the U14 Premier League Truce Tournament in Belgium when I visited Tyne Cot and the Menin Gate where I returned this year to march through with the CCF band.

As Oundle had longer holidays than my friends at Leicester schools I was able to go along to some of the day release days when my squad spent the whole day at the training ground rather than go to school. On these days we had training followed by match analysis. After lunch we would have gym work, a physiology session and more training before having an education session.

So why was I released? The simple answer is that I wasn't good enough. The more complicated answer is that they didn't think they could take me to the next level based on the time that I was able to attend sessions. My squad was to take a reduced timetable at a college in Leicester studying for eight GCSEs



each morning and playing football every afternoon. I was to stay at Oundle and train for only a fraction of that time.

Whatever the reason it was still a shock when the decision was made. After my release in May I was invited to train at Nottingham Forest and Derby but it soon became clear that they were both too far away.

I decided to attend Terry Mason's Goalkeeping academy at Peterborough for a four-week course. After the first night, he told me that my talent was being wasted and couldn't believe that I had been released by Leicester and he put me in touch with Peterborough United. I now need to balance my time between Peterborough Utd and School. The fact that training is now fifteen minutes away rather than seventy-five minutes means that I will have an additional eight hours each week to study.

I hope that it will work out, as I really enjoy being at Peterborough. The boys are great and the coaches are committed to helping us be the best that we can be. One of the boys coached by the GK coach has been on trial with England U17's so I hope to be the next.

Five things are required ahead of talent to make it to the higher level of the game. You have to be the loudest, the most aggressive and want it more than anyone else. Be hungry and passionate. I will be giving it everything I have to be forever posh.

Freddie Craven (4th)

The Argument For Rugby

As the legend goes, in 1823 William Webb Ellis, a Rugby School pupil, picked up the ball in a game of football and ran with it, thus creating Rugby Football, and with the rules of this form of footie were codified in 1845. From this concept various forms have developed, with Rugby Union and Rugby League being the main two, and now people of all ages across the world play different forms of the game. And where does this game develop and grow? In grassroot clubs and in schools, which produce the next stars. Rugby has benefits not only for every player, but for every coach, for every community and country in which it is played.

Rugby is beneficial for everyone who plays it, both physically and mentally. Obviously a sport which involves a significant amount of running helps maintain and increase cardiovascular fitness, in addition to creating an increase in speed and strength from tackling, scrummaging and running with the ball. Furthermore, at a high level, strength and conditioning sessions are becoming integrated into training programmes, further increasing muscular strength. And with numerous reports of rising levels of childhood obesity, surely a sport that improves physical condition is of benefit to a child? As well as building physical endurance, rugby boosts mental endurance as players are pushed to their limits on the pitch in games and off the pitch in training and preparation. For many, the social side of rugby is yet another attraction. Everyone loves to throw a ball around with their mates, and there's something rather pleasing about being able legally to wallop your peers.

Grassroot clubs and schools are where people start their Rugby lives. In these places, Rugby allows community cohesion to flourish. For example, here at Oundle there is no greater atmosphere of fraternity than when the whole School unites to support the 1st XV playing on Two Acre. No other sport at Oundle attracts nearly as much support or generates such an impressive crowd. All the professionals have to start somewhere, and so if Rugby, or a significant aspect of the game (such as tackling) was banned for U18s, the professional world would be hit hard. The touch version of the game, although fun as a warm up, lacks the diversity and skills requirement that the contact game has. Therefore if tackling was banned at school, far fewer people would choose rugby as a serious sport, and probably would be less likely to take it up once they leave. This would considerably reduce the rising social and economic impact that the game has.

You may be thinking that all the benefits of Rugby I have mentioned can be found in other sports, such as Football. However, the crucial point of this debate is not whether the advantages of Rugby are present in other sports too, but whether these other sports combine both enjoyment and mental and physical benefits in the way Rugby does. The popularity of Rugby Union is rising significantly in the world; the last Rugby World Cup, which was held in England in 2015, had the fifth highest attendance at a major single sport event ever, with only the past four Football World Cups having a higher attendance. Articles reporting head and neck injuries in Rugby and suggesting that tackling should be banned continually circle the media: admittedly, there is a risk of short term harm in the form of concussion and long-term harm in the form of paralysis, but we understand the risks we are taking. Increasingly, research is revealing that sugar and fats can lead to obesity, type two diabetes, and even heart disease, but we still go to Co-Op and Trendall's at break to consume food and drink that contain these substances.

Rugby is the ultimate team game. In other team sports, a team can be held up by one or two stars. But Rugby requires a team effort in most instances; in the 2015 Varsity match, Cambridge happened to have Jamie Roberts (who was studying medicine there) on the team. Jamie Roberts is a Harlequins, Wales and British and Irish Lions centre. Cambridge lost the game. So many different aspects of rugby require a team effort: rucking, scrummaging, lineouts, passing the ball down the line. One man can run with ball and tackle, but that's about it; one man cannot form and win a ruck, one man cannot form and win a scrum, one man cannot form and win a lineout. The requirement for team effort of Rugby allows a sense of team cohesion to develop throughout a season, which is a part of the social aspect of the game.

Rugby is a team game that helps with physical and mental strength. It teaches its players traits of self-discipline, courage and teamwork. Rugby is the game many of us love. Rugby is the game we want to play. Rugby is the game we should be playing.

Will Parker Jennings (5th)



Girls' Hockey Tour

On Friday 14th July, 2017, thirty girls, two women, two men and a lion (our mascot) embarked on a three week tour to places which were (for most) unknown territory. The trip commenced with a thirteen hour plane journey to Singapore, 'the garden city', that we were about to learn unequivocally lives up to its name. Although we were only in this prosperous city for four days, our visit was rife with activity on and off the hockey pitch. Mr Terrett's tour of Singapore remains a highlight of the trip, consisting of a quick photo outside the famous Raffles Hotel along with our first chance to taste the local cuisine and view the colonial landmarks. The weather in a country in such close proximity to the Equator was undoubtedly an arduous experience for us all to begin with; not helped by fatigue from the flight! After an intense training session in the high levels of humidity, we became accustomed to these conditions and consequently remained unfazed by the heat as we won our opening match of the tour two days later. Chinatown and Little India provided the perfect excuse for making some unnecessary purchases, accompanied by an outing to the National Orchid Garden where we were overwhelmed by the natural beauty and serenity of the area.

Next on the agenda was a 4:00 am awakening followed by an eagerly awaited flight to Australia. We were treated to some unforgettable, meticulously planned excursions which enabled us to enjoy the full Sydney experience. During a quick stop at the Featherdale Wildlife Centre we spent time with koalas, kangaroos, dingos and other renowned Australian animals. We felt humbled as we played in the Sydney 2000 Olympic hockey stadium, knowing which celebrated teams

had competed there before us. We were lucky enough to be trained by Larry Macintosh, a high performance coaching consultant who prepared us for the subsequent match. Mr Terrett announced that we would be splitting ourselves into two teams: Oundle Great Britain v Oundle Australia. Eventually, it was penalty shuffles which would determine the victorious side: Oundle Australia had the edge in the end. Our first competitive match in Australia was against PLC Sydney School for Girls, resulting in comfortable wins all round: a reasonable reward for having spent the entire morning braving the shark infested waters during an exhausting surfing lesson at Manly Beach. The next morning we explored another of the Olympic sites: the North Sydney Olympic Pool which was situated outdoors, directly underneath arguably the best known attraction in the city: Sydney Harbour Bridge. We later climbed this incredible landmark and appreciated the stunning sun-soaked city from a new angle. We then ventured into Paddy's market and squandered the remains of our Australian dollars on red and white clothing in preparation for the greatly anticipated Aussie Rules match that evening, marking the end of our time in Sydney.

Our nine day stay in New Zealand began in Rotorua, an area we could smell before we could see it, due to the pungent stench of sulphur. We visited the Agrodome, a reptile park and Rainbow Springs, after taking a tour of Te Puia, New Zealand's living Maori culture which is home to the world famous Pohutu Geyser and more than five hundred geothermal wonders. We witnessed a performance of traditional Maori dances followed by a Hangi meal, a culturally enriching experience. The announcement of a spa day in one of the world's top ten spas was naturally well received by all, as a long bus journey to another city was coming up next. The arrival in Hamilton signalled our first opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the way the New



Zealanders really live, a very different experience to the generic hotel sojourn. We discussed the various similarities and differences between the Brits and Kiwis: two countries so distant in location but indisputably identical at heart. It was here that we suffered a loss on the hockey pitch, with the Firsts putting up a respectable fight; however the team came away with an excruciatingly tight score of 2-1 to Waikato Diocesan School. The novelty of staying with a New Zealand family did not wear off but was merely accentuated as we travelled to the North Shore to lodge with girls from Rangitoto College, and become once again accustomed to the individual family's way of life. We felt humbled to be welcomed by a Haka performed by the 1st XV Rugby players. Fortunately, we demonstrated no fear and were unperturbed by the intimidating display, with the first team winning 6-1; the seconds were just as successful. We had come to this country to compete with the best hockey teams in the world, and after a hasty breakfast we were set to play St Kentigern College in an early morning game in typical icy winter conditions. Unfortunately, the trip had taken its toll on a couple of the players, and although we were capable of beating this side, we did not perform to our potential and lost 2-1. We were treated to a phenomenal lunch at the Orbit Restaurant in Auckland's Sky Tower and were stunned by the breath-taking views of the city. One of the 'things to do' when visiting New Zealand is to experience Kelly Tarlton's famous aquarium, and we were transported back to our youth as we stared intently at the sea-life animals in pure amazement. Our final stop in New Zealand was the Auckland Museum, where we laid a wreath and were silenced by the memory of those who gave their lives during the war.

Upon arrival in Kuala Lumpur, we suddenly realised how fast this incredible trip had passed and although we missed home, how we really did not

want it to end. We reached the last hotel and found ourselves in five star accommodation. We woke up to an impressive buffet breakfast where our eyes were definitely larger than our stomachs; after breakfast we drove to the celebrated Batu Caves. 272 steps led us to the summit of a hill where a natural limestone cavern housed a Hindu Shrine and crowds of monkeys hassled for food and attention. We ventured into FRIM (the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia), a well-managed forest and science park where we were given a nature walk to learn about flora and fauna in the tropical rainforest. Finally, we came to the end of our three weeks together with a match against the KL Sports School. It was Mr Terrett's last game with us after eighteen years and five hockey tours with Oundle School and so all we wanted was to do him proud. It was a brilliant way to finish, with both teams playing tirelessly throughout, persisting through the heat and general fatigue from all the travelling. The score for the first team was 2-1 to KLSS, yet another close score. As the whistle blew signifying the end of the final match on tour, the whole team walked off the pitch feeling that they had given their all to the game, despite the loss.

The tour only happened because of the tireless, care and planning from our staff in charge. The standing ovation is directed at Mr Terrett, because we would not have had this amazing opportunity without his time and effort. His love of hockey was prevalent throughout the trip. We hope that by osmosis his dedication and talent in this sport will encourage us to reach the heights in the sport that he has. We wish him all the best in sunny California, and perhaps he will welcome the thirty girls back for another tour one day.

Phoebe Ashby (L6)



School Rugby: Professional Academies Or A Place For Amateurs?

In the past, school 1st XV's were groups of amateur Rugby players-cum-pupils coming together to play Rugby, in large part out of simple enjoyment of the sport. I am not saying that the enjoyment has been lost from the game at this same level, however the notion that all school Rugby players are purely amateur (i.e. playing for the love of the game) is becoming less and less of a reality. What school sport at first team level is becoming, and what rugby at this level has largely already become, is a bunch of élite and professional academy Rugby players competing against each other for the places in schools, who are themselves competing against one another essentially to 'buy' in players under the guise of scholarships and bursaries.

This is, of course, only the case in certain instances and to varying degrees. There are schools that will effectively buy in an entire first team of scholars. Take for example Hailybury, who took on ten Sixth Form Rugby scholars in their first team this year. There are others that only have one or two, such as Oundle, and there are those few that have none. For some this ethos of bringing in élite players at Sixth Form is highly appealing; given that nowadays, school sport being played to the highest possible standard - what is not to like in the availability of ready-to-play talent? For others, the fallout of this practice is that those being bought into a school at sixth form are essentially depriving those who have been at the school all along of a chance to play in the first team. For them, the thought of any people being bought in at Sixth Form just to go straight into a first team is results-driven and oblivious to the argument for rewarding loyalty.

However, there are other, arguably more nuanced, reasons for people advocating the use of Sixth Form scholars and those being opposed to the idea. Firstly, those in favour of bringing in swathes of scholars to make up effectively an entire team are presumably this way inclined primarily in order to elevate the quality of their own school team - why else would they do it if not to win more games? That being said, it is hardly a nuanced approach to bring in more players of higher quality in order to become a better team, but what does a better team really mean? Some favourable score lines that look good on a website and sound good when giving a brief rundown of the season? To build up the school's sporting esteem and attract more, sport-prone perspective parents? Probably all of the above, but is that what really matters? Yes, at first glance these factors are 'beneficial', but it must be asked who stands to benefit. It is certainly not the pupils who have been at the school from the beginning. These are the people that the schools should be focusing

their attention on, not any more than any other pupils, but the agenda of these schools should not be centred around pupil intake or school image, but the pupils that are under their care and for whom the school was built.

There are, however, others whose agenda does not consist solely of sporting victory at what is a largely obsolete level. Whilst this practice does undeniably increase the standard of sporting performance at every strata of each club, let's not forget: school sport remains school sport - no one is playing under sponsorship or salary. Contrary to what many would like to see for their child's sporting career, these institutions are not professional academies, but places of education and amateur sport, and this must not be forgotten. According to our own Mr Finch, the aim for school coaches, besides winning games, is to inspire players to continue the sport after leaving school. This is something that can only occur if the players enjoy the sport, something they are less likely to do if there is a sort of 'glass ceiling,' keeping them away from the top teams.

Others are vehemently against the manufactured influx of sports scholars at Sixth Form for a range of reasons. As mentioned, there is the viewpoint that these scholars take the chance to play first team away from those who have been at the school all along, often working towards this very opportunity only to lose out in the name of results-driven prioritisation. There is also the school of thought that the sense of a team togetherness is diminished somewhat by the import of talent from a range of sources, pieced together in a Frankenstein-esque fashion. Admittedly there is plenty of quality to be found outside Oundle, but if there is no team chemistry, if they cannot, or will not, gel as a team in the same way that those who have been playing together for three years can, then it must be asked whether this method is worth the effort and, indeed money? Moreover, not only does this practice threaten the morale of a team in some cases, but so too is the sense of competition at risk.

In a team that consists almost exclusively of academy players, if you were an equally gifted non-academy player, it would be highly unlikely for you to get a run-out, no matter the form of either player. This seems to send a bizarre message in opposition to the supposed aims of sports coaches: essentially, in actively recruiting a sports scholar, the school has assured them a spot in the first team. To place a scholar in any team but the top, even in the name of giving a better player their deserved chance, would be an admission of failure on the school's part.

However, as I have already suggested, there is a middle ground. Undoubtedly, bringing in one or two scholars does remove one or two first team spots that would have otherwise been up for grabs, however it also achieves a happy medium between the benefits and the disadvantages of bringing in sport scholars at Sixth Form. The increase in standard will be achieved, and this is assuredly a pivotal factor as we all know. It is no fun to be on the end of a trouncing on a sports pitch, and the thrill of winning as many games as possible is undeniable. Naturally, 'ordinary' players (ie. non-scholars), will improve due to the few additions; those elite athletes will be able to impart their own knowledge on others, competition will be increased

as there are fewer places up for grabs and so arguably complacency will be minor, if not non-existent. Additionally, this increased competition will not be accompanied by the undesirable presence of a 'glass ceiling'. There is of course the flip side to this that if a school recruits a scholar who turns out to be a poor addition, these factors specified above will be negated. However, it speaks volumes that out of the fourteen people in my Sport Science set, thirteen opted for the 'middle ground'. It would seem that, at least among the pupils, loyalty, enjoyment and team spirit still prevail over victory in Oundle sports.

Alex Cunningham (L6)



England Netball

I started playing netball from the early days of prep school when I was seven, and loved the fun tournaments and matches. Luckily, when I was ten I found a good club, Turnford. This was the start of my journey that recently culminated in me going on tour with England U19s in New Zealand.

Like all girls going through the netball system, I started playing at county level and slowly progressed through the ranks. From the age of ten I was playing a couple of nights a week and doing competitions and tournaments with my club, and that kicked off my passion for the sport. Turnford is like my second family now - we have spent so much time with each other and been to so many competitions together. The team environment is definitely something that motivates me and makes me appreciate netball.

Training happens most days of the week bar one. I have training sessions twice a week where I leave school either to train with Wasps or Turnford. Also, once a month there are residential England camps. I have matches every week on a Sunday and once the Season it underway, on a Saturday too. Being a very competitive person, I really look forward to the challenges brought up by these weekend matches. This year my Turnford U16 team are competing at nationals and were all determined to get the title we were robbed of two years ago. There is also training which includes weight sessions in the gym and sprinting sessions. Whilst this was tough to start off with, I have grown to love it!

Earlier on this year I was selected to compete at Netball Europe for the U17's gaining my first cap. This summer also brought on a big challenge when I travelled to Wellington, New Zealand with the England U19's for two weeks of intensive match play. This is definitely one of my most memorable and amazing experiences. The country has stunning scenery and the people were so lovely, I am sure I will not forget this tour anytime soon! During the tour we learnt about the New Zealand aggressive yet tactical style of play and how to combat this, as they are one of our main rivals. I have netball to thank for seeing many places that would have otherwise remained unknown to me.

Whilst ambitions and influences are a very important motive for me, it is playing that pushes me to improve. The peaks and troughs of an athlete's life are often much higher and lower than what everyday life can throw at you. It can often seem impossible but my coach says, 'when you're on a high, it's really high and you feel unstoppable but when you hit a low, there are very few things stopping you from throwing the towel in.' It's this, I think, that makes me want to play more and sets my

ambitions higher. Being able to overcome a tough season, when maybe your team, or you, are not achieving successful performances, with a national win is a feeling that inspires everyone to continue. The feeling of a 'high', for example, being selected, is one that I believe people will only experience a couple of times in their life and sport widens these opportunities of feeling overwhelmed and ecstatic. I find it quite addictive even with a small success, perhaps finding out that you can do one more pull up than you could last week.

I've always been very fortunate to have lots of support through family and coaches. Mrs Burnham and Dannii Titmus have been coaching and supporting me, pushing me to achieve higher goals. However huge credit has to go to the whole sports department at Oundle in improving my netball performance and helping me with important decisions. Without family driving, often up to six hours a day, none of this would be possible and I could not be more grateful for the support which has given me opportunity to thrive and enjoy my sport. Thanks also to my Housemistress, Mrs Ratchford, who often stays up rather late until I am back from training. Many older girls at my club and England senior shooters have always inspired me through their abilities too. I've been lucky enough to train with them to gain experience and ultimately reach at the level I am at now.

Sienna Rushton (5th)



Somme 101

The air was cool, the yawns of an early morning barely suppressed, as 250 Oundelians prepared to board the fleet of minibuses and single coach that would ferry us to the Somme.

For those of us in Fourth Form, new to the rigorous world of CCF, the previous few weeks had been a whirlwind of preparation – a hectic dash to ensure we were all up to the standards required for the trip. We were issued with the relevant instructions, one of which, to the collective dismay of us all, was not to bring our phones. However, the removal of these 4-inch electronic distractions enabled us to engage fully with the experience of the trip.

Phone-less, the journey to the ferry port at Dover required a little more imagination: it turns out you're never too old for a game of I-spy. We ate on board the ferry and took time to stretch our legs, a welcome respite from the cramped seating of the minibuses. We arrived in France in the early afternoon and immediately left again. Our first port of call was the Belgian town of Ypres, where all 250 Oundelians would assemble at the Menin Gate.

The last-post service has taken place at the Menin Gate every day at 8pm since 1928, and Oundle is the only school ever to have played there twice. As dusk gathered we stood silently, awed by the sheer scale of the sacrifice honoured around us. The service was deeply moving. 3000 people gathered to commemorate the sacrifices made, and to hear our band play. The atmosphere was one of sombre gratitude and pride.

The next day we rose early once again, this time to take a battlefield tour of the Somme. We visited several memorials and sites; at each a historian would give a small explanation as to the significance of that site. One which stood out particularly for its poignancy was the Devonshire Memorial: 'The Devonshires held this trench, the Devonshires hold it still'. Each minibus had been assigned a particular OO, at whose grave they would lay a wreath. This very personal act of remembrance helped to bring home the stark reality of the sacrifices made, and on a truly horrific scale.

That afternoon we ate lunch at a small French café before continuing with our battlefields tour, and in the evening we assembled once more to carry out a drumhead service at the Thiepval Memorial. The band played, 'I vow to thee my country' was sung, and every Oundelian laid a cross bearing the name of an OO at the foot of the memorial.

The third day began with a visit to the Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge, a colossal white edifice whose scale, like the Menin Gate and Thiepval memorials, stood witness to colossal losses of the war. We then visited the trenches, preserved there by the Canadian authorities, which allowed us to get some small sense of what life in the trenches must have been like. After this final visit, we clambered back into our minibuses for the return journey to Oundle.

This trip proved truly memorable, and it was both poignant and enjoyable. It is one thing to be told that 250 Oundelians died, but quite another to see the name of someone who sat in the same classrooms as you, who knew the same halls, hewn in the white stone in some corner of a foreign field.

Tom Aubury (4th)



Second Person Narrative

With the final term of Lower Sixth drawing to a close, exams behind us and the Summer holidays just around the corner, many Kirkeby girls found we had an unusual amount of time on our hands. So, naturally, I set about making sure that that would absolutely not be the case in our first term of Upper Sixth. After a few enthusiastic conversations around the House it was firmly agreed that after a ten year absence, it was high time for Kirkeby to take to the stage.

Having met with the Stahl team to discuss logistics, it was settled. Kirkeby was due to perform at the end of the third week of the Michaelmas Term. Although I was confused by the odd combination of sheer terror and utter excitement by this lack of time to stage a play, I was thoroughly reassured by Mr Burlington who reminded me that nothing really gets done until the last three weeks of the directing process anyway, when everyone realises the play is actually incredibly soon.

Jemma Kennedy's *Second Person Narrative* was brought to my attention by the suggestion of Miss Jones. This brilliantly written one act play consists of thirty scenes - some two lines in length, some several pages - which are chronological snapshots into a girl's extraordinarily ordinary life, while tackling topical and relatable issues throughout. I read it, loved it, ignored how incredibly complicated it was and thought, yes - this is the perfect play to direct in three weeks. So, on the last day of the summer term fifteen extremely eager girls and two boys were sent on their way, armed with scripts and under strict instructions to know every single one of their lines perfectly by the time they arrived back in September.

Obviously, this didn't happen. Upon arrival in September it did take a few gentle reminders to the cast that they were all going to be on stage in three weeks without scripts, however once they had this knowledge firmly imprinted in their memory, they were flying. Rehearsals tended to be loud, stressful and occasionally productive; however as they went on, it was truly humbling to see the massive increase in everyone's confidence levels. They were all incredible in the way they made their roles their own with hilarious mannerisms and subtleties which I never could have thought of!

After barely two weeks of rehearsals show week was upon us. Nerves were high but balanced by excitement and confidence that our hard work was going to pay off. Fresh excitement about costume, make up and set fuelled the tech and dress rehearsals which were, although inevitably bumpy,

significant morale boosts for what was to come. As opening night arrived, the noise coming from the green room was something else. As the whole of Kirkeby united backstage, whether doing lighting, acting, dressing or backstage, we were a force to be reckoned with. And, to everyone's delight, this force created two nights of sold-out success. The communal sense of pride, relief and euphoria backstage after closing night was simply awesome.

A special mention must of course go to Mia Derrick (L6) who led the show in the role of 'You' with such professionalism and poise, and never faltered throughout the whole process despite having to act as a character at 30 different ages. Also, enormous Thank-yous to Jo Henderson for her inspiring costume creations, to Cat James and Liam Doyle for their never-ending and ever-appreciated work backstage, to George Jones and Paul Mullen for their admirably patient and skilful work on lighting and sound and to Miss Jones for mentoring me through my first time as a director. The whole backstage team, Kirkeby and Stahl, was completely amazing in the way that they helped turn my crazy ideas, which more often than not made no sense at all, into reality.

Finally, I want to thank the cast. Whether it was a Sunday morning rehearsal when they'd rather have been in bed or a Thursday evening rehearsal when they'd also have rather been in bed, they always had the energy and the attitude that said they wanted to be there. The experience of directing the Kirkeby House play was an intense one to say the least; however, it was made so thoroughly enjoyable by those who threw themselves into it at every step of the way. The feeling of elation achieved through watching a group of people with a vast range of experience make their journey from being single actors to being a cast is one I would highly recommend.

Mille Tusa (U6)



A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

If you had asked me at the beginning of the year what a radio play was, I would have probably struggled to give you few more details other than the snippets of *The Archers* I had heard my mum listening to in the bath. In fact, if you ask me now what a radio play is, and what a radio play should be, I probably still wouldn't be able to tell you too much either. That is, other than the experience I have had this year from directing *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* for OSCAR Radio.

Thus, when the process of choosing and directing a Radio Play started this September, I was overwhelmed, to say the least. Luckily for me, the procedure of selecting which radio play would be broadcast in November was made significantly easier by the fact that the first thing YouTube threw at me when I searched for 'Radio Play' turned out to be just what I was looking for. I had read all five books of the *The Hitchhiker's Guide* trilogy, and they were some of my favorites: fascinatingly weird, subtly funny and so different from anything I had read before. The radio play version was no different.

Having chosen the play (which coincidentally celebrates its 40th anniversary in the year of Oscar's 40th broadcast) the first time we realised how different this would be from the comfortable realms of Stahl theatre which we were so used to was when it came to auditioning. In hindsight, we could have made this process - which involved talking - a lot easier for ourselves had we not decided to hold the auditions in the library - one of the few places in the School where talking is expressly forbidden. This presented us with two challenges: firstly, we had to listen to how people could act at normal volume by hearing them whisper, but more pressingly, we had to determine people's acting ability purely from their voice.

This would become a recurring theme in the development of this piece, as I began to realise just how different acting becomes when you remove all visual aspects. If I were directing a normal play, rehearsals would have involved telling the actors where to go, or how to move, or when they should enter and leave. Yet in this play, all this went out the window and in rehearsals I found myself strangely redundant, relying so much on the raw talent of the voice actors to do the hard work. Consequently, in the first few recording sessions we had, before I had really discovered how to make myself useful, I found that most of my job was correcting people's pronunciation, or making sure they didn't speak

too loudly into the microphone - and these are legitimate concerns; in the theatre, a small slip-up sounds perfectly OK, but on the radio, when the listeners have no way of knowing whether or not the actors are indeed reading from a sheet, they are far more obvious. Despite this, after a week of intensive recording sessions, I had finally found how to make myself the most useful. It turns out that directing a radio play was not too different to directing an actual play after all: I could tell people how to make their lines more authentic, help them with developing their characters' motivations and personalities, or simply just work with them on their acting. Even the spacial aspects of directing for theatre had a role here - the studio was set up to record from a stereo audio rig so listeners would be able to envisage where the characters were standing from their two separate headphones.

Once all the recording had finished, all the files - and a carefully annotated copy of the script - were sent off to Mr Pettitt for stitching together. None of us knew how the final product would sound, and none of us had a clue as to whether our efforts would pay off. The first time we were to hear the piece was when it was broadcast live on OSCAR one fateful November day.

Luckily, we were wrong to be worried, and thanks to Mr Pettitt's editing mastery, the radio play ended up slick and professional: true to the original and equally hilarious. Principals Charlie Dickinson, Henry Stringer, and Lizzie Martin bounced off each other in hilarious and genuine ways, and worked seamlessly with the team of smaller - yet equally important - characters such as Desmond Hui's fantastically sarcastic Marvin, or Charlie Willis's grumpy but loveable alien. These characters added subtle details to the piece that made it both hugely immersive, weird, and greatly entertaining. Adding to this detail was Emma Bruce-Gardyne as the book, whose narration provided some much-needed sanity to this phantasmagoric world.

In the weeks of recording this play, it would be an understatement to say we learned a lot. None of us had ever been involved in a radio play before, many of us never with OSCAR, and most of the cast had never even been in a play at the Stahl before. The learning curves were steep, but by the end of the process, we were all happy to have produced something so fascinatingly weird, subtly funny and so different from anything we had done before.

The podcasts of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* can be found online at www.oscar-radio.org

Ed Hodgson (L6)



Talking Politics

During the last two OSCAR broadcasts in November and March, Charlie Cobb, Joseph Meisner and I hosted a show in which we reviewed the week's news. As this was mainly political news – and as we are all interested in politics ourselves – we decided that we should try to interview someone involved in the political sphere for our last show. In the end we were able to get two interviews with a member of the House of Commons and a member of the House of Lords.

We decided to approach Tom Pursglove MP, the Conservative MP for Corby and East Northamptonshire, and currently Personal Private Secretary to Liam Fox MP, the Minister for International Trade. Given all the demands on his time both in Westminster and his constituency, we weren't really expecting him to say yes, so we were amazed when he replied to say that he would be happy to meet us. It did take a little while for us to arrange a time for the interview, but thanks to Charlie's persistence, we finally managed to fix a date.

Once we knew we would be doing the interview, we had to start thinking of the questions we would like to ask him, and these needed to be checked first by the School so that we didn't stray into territory that was too controversial. This process involved doing a lot of research into Mr Pursglove, and it was interesting to learn about his path to Westminster. He began his career in local politics aged only 18, winning a seat on Wellingborough council whilst still studying at Queen Mary University, London. In 2015, he was elected to parliament with a majority of 2,412, winning the seat back from Labour, who had held it since the 2012 election. At the time, this made him the youngest MP in parliament. In 2016 he was made Personal Private Secretary to Robert Goodwill MP, the Minister for Immigration, and in 2017 he moved to take on the same role working for Liam Fox MP. He supported the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum.

We met Mr Pursglove in the glamorous surroundings of the Waitrose café at

breaktime on the Friday before the November exeat. We had to take care when asking our questions, since all of our own political views differed to varying degrees and in various ways from Mr Pursglove's, but we knew that our listeners would want to hear his views rather than ours. We wanted to ask him questions that were relevant and interesting, but not impertinent; he was doing us a favour in giving up his time, and we needed to respect that.

Mr Pursglove answered at length, and he gave thoughtful consideration to all our questions. At times, though, it struck me that his answers might not have stood up to more careful scrutiny. He said, in reply to a question about his campaigning to keep the Corby Urgent Care Centre open, that the centre was in danger due to a lack of public funding, although it was his own Conservative government's policy of austerity that made the cuts. Whilst he said he would like to see an increase in funding for the centre, he did not specify where the money would come from, and what other cuts might need to be made to afford it. He also said that he admired 'a conviction politician', citing Margaret Thatcher as an example. He then, however, went on to praise Theresa May, whose own move from the Remain campaign to being a champion of Hard Brexit confirms that she is anything other than a conviction politician. Mr Pursglove spoke in favour of the Tory policy of privatisation, and gave the Corby steel industry as his example. However, the once nationally owned Corby steel industry is now in the hands of Tata Steel, an Indian corporation, which means revenue from the industry is leaving the UK. Again, this seems a point of view that is difficult to square with Pursglove's general attitude of 'Britain first'. Tata steel have laid off a large number of workers in Corby, which doesn't seem to offer the strongest argument in favour of privatisation. Whilst his answers had an air of plausibility, and although it was interesting to hear his reasons for supporting various organisations and motions, and for his stance on national issues with regard to his consistency, I did feel that at times his answers were a bit glib. But, then again, I am not sure what else I should have expected in a political interview.



The second interview was with Baron Daniel Finklestein OBE, a conservative peer and journalist for *The Times* newspaper. He was a founding member of the SDP (Social Democratic Party) between 1981 and 1990. He then ran for parliament in 1987 on an SDP ticket, but wasn't elected. When the merger of the SDP and the Liberal party was proposed, Lord Finklestein spoke against it, and he became the spokesman for a group of young SDP members who joined the Conservative party. Between 1995 and 1997 he was an adviser to the then Prime Minister, John Major, and between 1997 and 2001 he was an adviser to the then Leader of the Opposition, William Hague. Lord Finklestein was the unsuccessful candidate for Harrow-West in the 2001 General Election. He was made a life peer in August 2013 by David Cameron.

We were able to contact Lord Finklestein through Joseph's grandfather, and, owing to his busy schedule, we travelled to the House of Lords on 28 February along with Mr Pettitt to interview him. We were lucky enough to be allowed to conduct the interview in the Grand Gallery of the House of Lords, just opposite the chamber in which the Lords were debating the EU withdrawal bill. Lord Finklestein was also kind enough to give us a brief tour of the building. When it came to the interview, he answered all our questions with consideration. He spoke compellingly and it was really interesting to get an insight into his political ideas and the workings of the highest levels of government.

Lord Finklestein said that his refugee background led him into politics at an early age. Even in his teens he had ambitions to become an MP, but his serious involvement in politics only began at the London School of Economics. He said that his background also led to an opposition to extremism and totalitarianism of any kind, and that it is very important to understand your own fallibility and to listen to others, even, and perhaps especially, to your political opponents. When asked about the size of the House of Lords he said he felt that this was less of an issue that its legitimacy, being an unelected body. He did, though, qualify this point by saying that its limited legitimacy at least allowed the Lords to be left with limited powers, whereas an elected body could demand more.

Lord Finklestein spoke articulately about his concerns over the atmosphere of 'pitchforks' in modern society, and that he dislikes the 'court of public opinion' in general. In response to a question about whether he feels at home in Theresa May's Tory party he replied that he does, but that the shift of the party's 'target audience' from prosperous non-diverse areas to prosperous and diverse areas, which took place under David Cameron, has been complicated by the requirements of Brexit. Then, when asked if he thought a leadership change ought to happen soon, and who he thought the next leader of the Tory party might be, he said that he doesn't see the immediate need for a leadership change, but that Theresa May shouldn't fight the next General Election, and that there is a wide distribution of probability for the next leader.

Replying to a question about whether he thought those who lived through the 1930s would be able to recognize something of that decade in this one, he said that he thought it was alarmist to make that connection, but the rise of populist movements is very dangerous. He argued that the danger of these movements, and specifically those which claim to 'speak for the people', is the lack of definition as to who 'people' are. Lord Finklestein also said that he was in favour of having a Brexit referendum, despite being pro-remain, and that the fact that leave won justifies this view. He finished by saying, when asked about the prevailing culture of 'fake news', that selection of content is a massive part of journalism, and that journalism is providing a verified news source.

Conducting these interviews with Mr Pursglove and Lord Finklestein was certainly an interesting and worthwhile experience. To talk to people involved in the mechanisms of state helped us understand how government works, the role that parliament and the House of Lords play, and the importance of MPs and Lords. It also helped to highlight how national issues have an impact at a local level and how these issues are reliably reported, and we were very grateful to both Mr Pursglove and Lord Finklestein for taking the time and trouble to speak to us.

Tom Aubury (4th)



Earnestly Laundimer

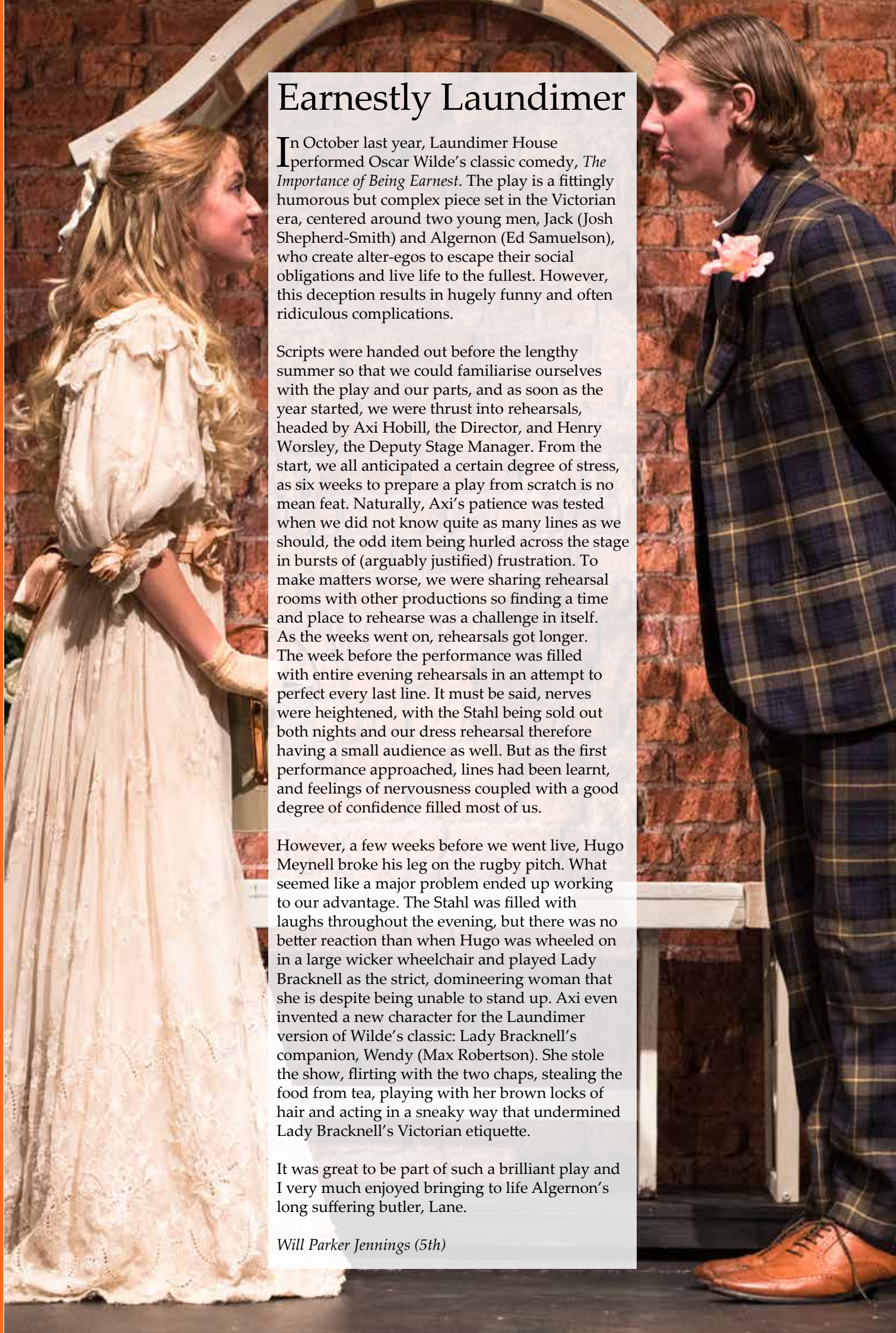
In October last year, Laundimer House performed Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The play is a fittingly humorous but complex piece set in the Victorian era, centered around two young men, Jack (Josh Shepherd-Smith) and Algernon (Ed Samuelson), who create alter-egos to escape their social obligations and live life to the fullest. However, this deception results in hugely funny and often ridiculous complications.

Scripts were handed out before the lengthy summer so that we could familiarise ourselves with the play and our parts, and as soon as the year started, we were thrust into rehearsals, headed by Axi Hobill, the Director, and Henry Worsley, the Deputy Stage Manager. From the start, we all anticipated a certain degree of stress, as six weeks to prepare a play from scratch is no mean feat. Naturally, Axi's patience was tested when we did not know quite as many lines as we should, the odd item being hurled across the stage in bursts of (arguably justified) frustration. To make matters worse, we were sharing rehearsal rooms with other productions so finding a time and place to rehearse was a challenge in itself. As the weeks went on, rehearsals got longer. The week before the performance was filled with entire evening rehearsals in an attempt to perfect every last line. It must be said, nerves were heightened, with the Stahl being sold out both nights and our dress rehearsal therefore having a small audience as well. But as the first performance approached, lines had been learnt, and feelings of nervousness coupled with a good degree of confidence filled most of us.

However, a few weeks before we went live, Hugo Meynell broke his leg on the rugby pitch. What seemed like a major problem ended up working to our advantage. The Stahl was filled with laughs throughout the evening, but there was no better reaction than when Hugo was wheeled on in a large wicker wheelchair and played Lady Bracknell as the strict, domineering woman that she is despite being unable to stand up. Axi even invented a new character for the Laundimer version of Wilde's classic: Lady Bracknell's companion, Wendy (Max Robertson). She stole the show, flirting with the two chaps, stealing the food from tea, playing with her brown locks of hair and acting in a sneaky way that undermined Lady Bracknell's Victorian etiquette.

It was great to be part of such a brilliant play and I very much enjoyed bringing to life Algernon's long suffering butler, Lane.

Will Parker Jennings (5th)



Frankie Vah

I showed up rather late to Luke Wright's performance of his one-man verse play *Frankie Vah*. Having negotiated a half-empty theatre and some disapproving glances, I slumped down in the front row. Beside me, a voice said warily, 'I'm told this is meant to be visceral.' Visceral, it was. Full of spitting and stomping, real sweat and imagined vomit, Luke Wright presented man, all of him. Like Ginsberg without the redemptive fragility, like Cooper Clarke without the arid wit, like a toddler who's overdosed on Skittles, he swaggered and sniggered his way through the story. Surprisingly enough, for a modern verse drama, there was a story, and, what's more, one in which things happened. It went something like this. Once upon a time, in Thatcher's Britain, there was a kid called something bland and bourgeois, like Simon. (My sincere apologies to anyone called Simon.) He goes to university, where he imbibes left-wing politics like an ideological canapé and discovers a passion for performance poetry (what a coincidence!). With Doc Martens on his feet and a frizzy-haired girlfriend at his side, he tells his father to go to hell and joins the Church of Angry Young Men Shouting At The Establishment. There follows a fairly nauseating amount of beer, ranting and blind conviction. Simon becomes 'Frankie Vah' and goes on tour with an indie band. You get the picture.

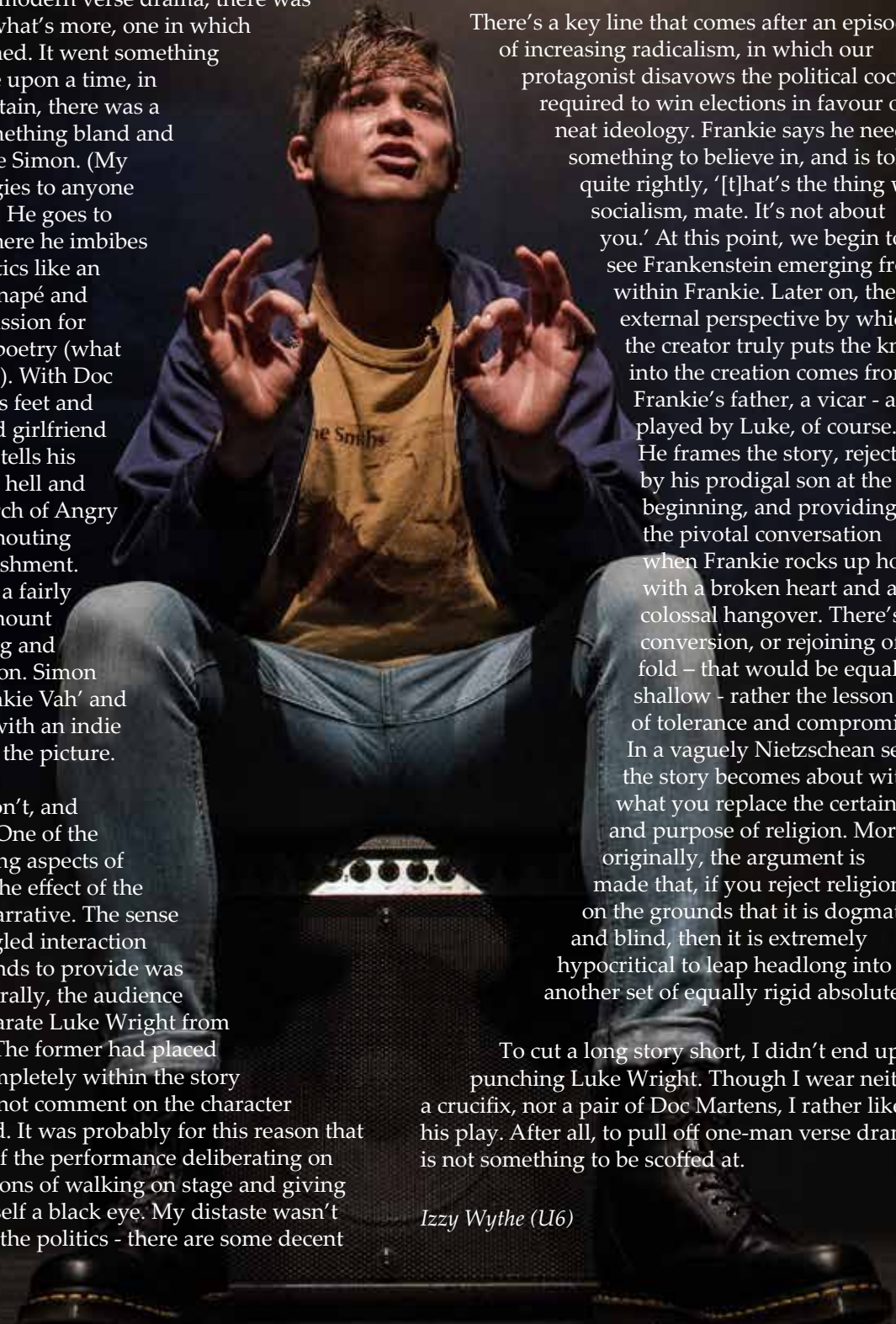
Except you don't, and neither did I. One of the most interesting aspects of the play was the effect of the first-person narrative. The sense of a many-angled interaction that drama tends to provide was lost. Quite literally, the audience could not separate Luke Wright from Frankie Vah. The former had placed himself so completely within the story that he could not comment on the character he had created. It was probably for this reason that I spent most of the performance deliberating on the repercussions of walking on stage and giving the actor himself a black eye. My distaste wasn't on account of the politics - there are some decent

reasons for hating Thatcher - it was Frankie's comic-strip worldview, a great fug of caricature and Manichean hatred and beer-slurred anger. I generally admire conviction but not of that kind. When you hold convictions, you become the means and they the end. Frankie Vah's semi-concussed egoism was an intellectually ugly creature, one that had never passed through the refiner's fire of doubt and self-interrogation. However, I must stop my polemic because it gradually became apparent that Luke Wright's portrayal of Frankie Vah was, at least partly, a critique of him.

There's a key line that comes after an episode of increasing radicalism, in which our protagonist disavows the political cocktail required to win elections in favour of neat ideology. Frankie says he needs something to believe in, and is told, quite rightly, '[t]hat's the thing with socialism, mate. It's not about you.' At this point, we begin to see Frankenstein emerging from within Frankie. Later on, the external perspective by which the creator truly puts the knife into the creation comes from Frankie's father, a vicar - also played by Luke, of course. He frames the story, rejected by his prodigal son at the beginning, and providing the pivotal conversation when Frankie rocks up home with a broken heart and a colossal hangover. There's no conversion, or rejoining of the fold - that would be equally shallow - rather the lesson is of tolerance and compromise. In a vaguely Nietzschean sense, the story becomes about with what you replace the certainty and purpose of religion. More originally, the argument is made that, if you reject religion on the grounds that it is dogmatic and blind, then it is extremely hypocritical to leap headlong into another set of equally rigid absolutes.

To cut a long story short, I didn't end up punching Luke Wright. Though I wear neither a crucifix, nor a pair of Doc Martens, I rather liked his play. After all, to pull off one-man verse drama is not something to be scoffed at.

Izzy Wythe (U6)



Macbeth

For two years in Fourth and Fifth Form, I had a very complicated relationship with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. As it was the set text for our Drama GCSE, I would regularly fluctuate between being genuinely fascinated by it to never wanting to read it again. Lessons upon lessons of studying in incredible detail seemingly every line in this gargantuan tragedy left me thinking I had completely done everything I wanted to do, and ever could do, with The Scottish Play. Thus, when I found out that *Macbeth* would be the whole school production of 2018, I was proven quite wrong.

Miss Jones is something of an expert on *Macbeth*. Having taken it around the world for years on a professional tour, she appears to know every line in the play by heart, and can quote entire soliloquies word for word on-demand. Thus, when the cast discovered that the play was to be set in the Kosovo War of 1998 - which I would go as far as to suggest that not a single one of us had heard of - no question was asked. We would quickly find out how fitting this setting was. In fact, one of the great things about *Macbeth* is how well it lends itself to any setting. Production week occurred around the time that the Zimbabwe Defence Forces led a coup against their dictator Robert Mugabe, and everyone in the cast immediately saw parallels when reading the headlines. This sparked a fit of interest in the Kosovo war, and a quick internet search showed the parallels here as well. One of the things that makes *Macbeth* such an important play is that these stories are repeating themselves all the time and everywhere; the play itself arguably tells not so much the story of a tyrannical Scottish King, but can be seen as a study in mankind's continuous lust for power.

Now, there is of course a reason why Oundle doesn't put on a Shakespeare every year: it is an immensely challenging process. Most of us hadn't performed something of this prestige before, which meant that the first weeks of rehearsal were spent not only getting the blocking of the scenes right, but also what is essentially equivalent to learning a new language before we could start acting. The play itself is so long that it would only be a few weeks before performance that we would see it in full, and so complex that it would be several weeks of reflection after the performance that we would fully understand it.

Like all Stahl productions, the scale of this performance was gargantuan. Design included a two-storey bombed building (in line with the play's contemporary setting), a table which literally contained Banquo's ghost, and at least enough fake blood to fill a bathtub. The atmosphere created lent itself seamlessly to the immediately dramatic

scenes, or the more ominous eerie scenes like those of the fantastically disconcerting witches, which in this production were imagined as roadside gypsy fortune tellers.

I have successfully made it this far through the article without commenting on the actual acting itself in the piece; my reason for this is that I fear by mentioning any of the specific performances I will inevitably miss out on the real group effort that every cast member put in to make this play so special. Having said that, it would be somewhat treasonous to fail to mention the work of certain people. First and foremost is Ned Freij (L 5) who took on the titular role of Macbeth; his colossal range of tones and ability to compellingly create any atmosphere within a scene was hugely impressive. Equally important was Izzy Salt (D 5) as Lady Macbeth who was victorious in creating highly believable and gripping tension throughout the performance. Of course, *Macbeth* is a play on the biggest possible scale, and realistically it was the lords and ladies, soldiers, witches and servants in the background who were responsible for the overwhelming sense of realism throughout the show.



One of the most impressive parts of the play, and the most enjoyable part of rehearsal, was the fights. Incredibly fast-paced, these wore gory and gripping in equal parts. To get them to the level they were, an external fight director came to help with choreographing the battles, but to get them right took a huge amount of practice from those involved, and a lot of bruises in uncomfortable places as well.

I think that the best thing about putting on *Macbeth* at Oundle, however, was that many of the people who came to see it had simply never seen a Shakespeare play before. Expecting to see some boring ramble that they couldn't understand, it was immensely satisfying to see when people really got into the story, and hearing the gasps from the audience at all the appropriate places. Putting on Shakespeare in a school is always going to be hugely difficult, but putting it on as successfully as this is a true testament to the actors, production team and backstage crew involved.

Ed Hodgson (L6)



Vinegar Tom

It's always interesting when you audition for something you know nothing about. You never know what you're going to encounter. It could be anything from the most hilarious comedy ever written to a deep tragedy that moves everyone in the audience- it's new, it's exciting, and it's unknown territory. Such was the feeling auditioning for *Vinegar Tom*. The few snippets of information I had gathered before we started was that *Vinegar Tom* was a play about witchcraft, set in the 17th century. A very mysterious blank slate to be working from, it intrigued me. You don't expect a play of that description to relate to our lives now many centuries later, but it turned out that the story we would soon be telling was surprisingly relevant.

Without writing out the whole plot, *Vinegar Tom* focuses on a 17th century English village where disaster is brewing and the threat of witchcraft is alive and well. Several female characters in the village are accused of witchcraft, which results in trials and the death of two. This is one of the issues that I realised was very relevant. In the 21st

century we no longer have trials for witches, no longer do people rove round the country looking for those who might be practising dark magic. However, we do still have witch hunts. I don't mean we're on the lookout for broomsticks and pointy hats. It is something far more real and far more frightening: the mob mentality. If someone is accused of a deed, it is scary how quickly a mob is whipped up. In the play, Margery accuses Joan Noakes, then a witch finder comes to town and eventually a large crowd of people eagerly watches as 'the witch' is hanged.

It is a very human thing that when there is a tragedy, people need someone as their scapegoat. They want someone to blame for all the things going wrong, ultimately to make themselves feel better. All it takes is a few loud angry voices against someone, and those voices attract more attention, more people to fan the flames. Sometimes a physical mob, sometimes online, people take it upon themselves to deal with a 'problem' and the power of a mob is terrifying. Whether the person is guilty or not, if a mob has enough belief behind it they will keep going. It can ruin an innocent person's life. Even if they are proved innocent, often the mobs don't cease. They bay for blood. Throughout the play there is a strong message of inequality, that if a woman does not fit in with the social norms then they are corrupt and evil. With all that has come to light in the media recently with Harvey Weinstein and the #metoo campaign, it is clear that we still have similar problems in society today.

Vinegar Tom will always be a fond memory for me, as, despite the subject matter of the play, it was amazing fun to work on. This was thanks to a cast filled with brilliant people I've looked up to since I first joined the school. It was an honour to act alongside them. The rehearsal period of five weeks was wonderfully intense, filled with the weirdest but probably most passionate work ethic I've ever experienced from a play at Oundle. I could babble on about all of the fun we had and the moments we found but if I did it would probably take up a whole edition of the *Oundelian* so instead I shall try to restrain myself. To go from the surprise and confusion on everyone's faces the first time Mr Burlington told us the rap we had been messing around with was actually going to be in the final production to performing the now much cherished sequence with full energy and ferocity was a very bubbly, joyful feeling. Whether it was mastering quick-changes through trial and error, learning how to construct a clay puppet that didn't look like a potato, or working out to hang someone onstage - I'm very glad that I was a part of such a creatively insane family.

Lizzie Martins (L6)



Homemade Fusion

It was three months after the amazing performance of *Les Misérables*, and with the songs still ringing in people's minds, when a dozen of Oundelians received an email from Mr Thomas (Jnr) telling us we had successfully auditioned for a role in *Homemade Fusion*. Obviously it is not quite as well-known as *Les Misérables* but with this piece of theatre we were trying to achieve something different to that bombastic play about love and revolution.

Homemade Fusion is written as a collection of audition songs by writers Michael Kooman and Christopher Dimond for Broadway applicants. It is made up of small solos and duets (and even the odd trio), and each song tells a story trying to encapsulate one aspect of life in the 21st Century. The cast worked apart from each other for the first lot of rehearsals so that there was a sense that each song stood alone as a distinct act or scene. The singers became close to their own particular piece, which gave the performances that intimacy of practice-room solitude. In their own ways, the songs also allowed the singers to boost their singing confidence. As such, when it came around to the first time that everyone heard each other's numbers the atmosphere was full of support. The individual pieces came together with a real sense of backstage camaraderie.

Overall, the reason why *Homemade Fusion* works as a piece of theatre is because you have that wonderful balance of humour and seriousness. Emotional numbers such as *Lost in the Waves* - performed by Charles Willis (L L6) and *Lucy's Laugh* - performed by Will Slinger (B L6) were juxtaposed with more humorous songs like *Homemade Fusion* - performed by Jack Wallace-Woodroffe (G U6) and the *Temp and the Receptionist* - performed by Sophie Lee (L L6) and Will Slinger. It is not often that you have a piece about 'chocolate loving' next to a piece about 'office love' and that is why it was so enjoyable for an audience to watch. I am sure the *Temp and the Receptionist* will remain in many people's minds - particularly with Will Slinger's ridiculous innuendos! The two trio pieces *I will be me* and *Can't I just be* particularly exemplified what *Homemade Fusion* was about: being yourself and enjoying each other's company.

On that note, it was not only the cast that was able to pull off this show with two weeks of rehearsals before actual performance, it was the music directorship under Mr Thomas as well as Alex Hill (C 5). Alex Hill is such a capable and impressive musician. More impressive still is his understanding when the cast have not learnt their words (well, most of the time). Special thanks must also go the band of Harrison Smith (F L6) and Max Ward-Lilley (B U6) as well as Roisin Emmerson (D U6) helping out backstage. *Homemade Fusion* was incredibly enjoyable and all members of the cast produced stand out performances in their own right. The group bonded so well and even after a couple of weeks of rehearsals we were nevertheless sad to see the curtain fall on the last night. It was an amazing experience to work on the show, which turned rather quickly into something very special.

George Brett (L6)



Bugsy Malone

On the face of it, the plot of Bugsy Malone is perhaps not entirely suitable for a younger cast; the idea of children playing gangsters and acting out a turf war with mass shootings may seem a little distasteful. But there is, of course, a lot more to it than that. The sense of fun, excitement, larger than life characters, and of course the instantly recognisable songs are what make it such a great show. And what other play would necessitate the holding of a 'Splurge School' on a Saturday afternoon round the back of the Stahl, with strict rules about not shooting each other in the eyes?!

Bugsy Malone is a musical I have always loved, and so it seems do many others. An enduringly popular show, I lost count of the number of pupils who gleefully told me that their parents too had been in Bugsy when they were at school, with a few playing the same roles as their parents previously had.

After the success of 'Wind in the Willows', Jo Henderson, James Thomas and I had the grand idea of putting on the biggest Junior play to date. And so began five long months of rehearsals, with a cast of forty-three, it was a little like herding cats at times and levels of chaos ran pretty high for much of it! Having not quite appreciated just how complex and fast moving the scenes and settings were before we began, staging this show that seems to have been written more for the screen than the stage, has been much more challenging than previous productions. But our superb technical crew were more than up to the task. Paul Laughton wove his magic in designing and building an incredibly slick and clever set (complete with disappearing bar and moving bookcase), alongside the most authentic Splurge guns ever seen! As well as directing and choreographing, Jo Henderson was responsible for the vast array of costumes required for a play with over seventy parts, with many pupils changing costumes three or four times during the show. Two tone brogues, sequined dresses, Trilbies and boxing gloves all graced the stage. James Thomas, our MD, patiently coached and coaxed reticent and confident singers alike to bring together the signature songs and the eight piece band. Alongside an army of ASMs, musicians, dressers, lighting and sound technicians and back stage 'shushers', this really was a huge collective effort.

As ever, what made it all worthwhile were the pupils. Many had to learn dances for the first time, and then the even more challenging prospect of dancing AND singing together was thrown at them! But the willingness to give everything a go by the youngest members of the School made the daunting task of directing such a complicated show well worth the stress! Their energy, enthusiasm and excitement at being part of something bigger than

themselves and the opportunity to work together to pull off such a project was a joy to behold.

And the end result when it finally all came together (right up to the wire in true Oundelian fashion) was more spectacular than I ever dared to dream it would be. Even though I'd seen the show countless times before curtain up, I watched every performance with utter delight and in awe at just what our 1st and 2nd formers can do. The sheer satisfaction of seeing many seemingly shy and timid pupils suddenly step out into the limelight and give it their all is something I will never forget. It is hard to single out individuals, but these deserve



special mention: Luke Seymour playing Fat Sam was a consummate professional, despite getting a bloody nose and nearly knocking himself out mid-performance one evening: he and Knuckles (Jamie Aubury) were quite the comedy duo; Nathan Raudnitz as Bugsy was cool, calm and collected throughout; Niara Popat and Eva Morgan as Blousey and Tallulah respectively, were responsible for some show-stopping singing and few will be forgetting Thomas Kemp's Tomorrow for a while. We have some incredible singers, some very fine actors and some comedy geniuses all coming up through the School, and the future of drama at Oundle looks very bright indeed.

Luke Seymour adds: Being a part of Bugsy Malone was a great experience. Rehearsals were a lot of fun and it was fantastic seeing the play come together bit by bit as the rehearsals went on. My favourite part, personally, was finally engaging with all the props and costumes, and when it came to the dress and technical rehearsals, the show really came alive at that moment. The end result very much reflected the time and effort put into the play. I would really recommend taking part in any school play you can, I'm sure you'll really enjoy it!

Hattie Hopper



A Concert Hall For Oundle?

This academic year I began my EPQ wanting to work on the new School Sports Complex - my initial idea was to plan and renovate the Sports Hall, imagining I were the architect. However, the opportunity arose to think about the design of a new concert hall for the School and given that I have regular lessons in the Music Department, this seemed ideal for my EPQ.

After discussions with Mr Thomas, he introduced me to the 1997 architectural plan for a new concert hall. At the time, this plan was seen to be feasible, however the project has never been undertaken. Mr Thomas, who wishes to advance the idea of building the School a new concert hall, has used the original plans as the inspiration for a new concept. The Head is also keen to promote a building for the Arts and the Gascoigne site is one option that is being seriously considered. Hearing about these ideas fuelled my desire to do my project about a new concert hall. I felt that there was more freedom and fewer limiting factors with this project, because unlike the sports hall, it had not already been fully planned. The idea is also fresh and therefore I hope that the architect who is tasked with the final design may be able to take a few minor suggestions from my finished work!

The main change between the old plan and the new plan is that the building will now be behind the Gascoigne building rather than behind the Great Hall. It is easy to see that this proximity to the Music Department will be a lot more convenient for moving musical instruments around, but I did not understand why the plan must be behind the Gascoigne, when it could be placed in the parking lot in front where there is a lot of flat space available. In order to research why this could not be done I contacted the School Estate Bursar (Mr Tremellen) and learnt that the area under Coach House building and the Gascoigne parking lot must be kept clear for historic reasons: according to the history of our town, this area was once a Saxon village, which was the oldest and first town of Oundle. The front of the Gascoigne building is also protected as it is one of the oldest buildings in Oundle and was once home of the priests of St. Peter's Church.

A few weeks into my EPQ project, Mr Thomas gave me another plan. This one was a new perspective which he had designed and drawn (rough sketch) to be presented to the Head for initiating further discussion. Having this plan to work from has helped me a lot, both in terms of design and possibility of shapes. After studying the rough design of the concert hall, I then redrew a neater

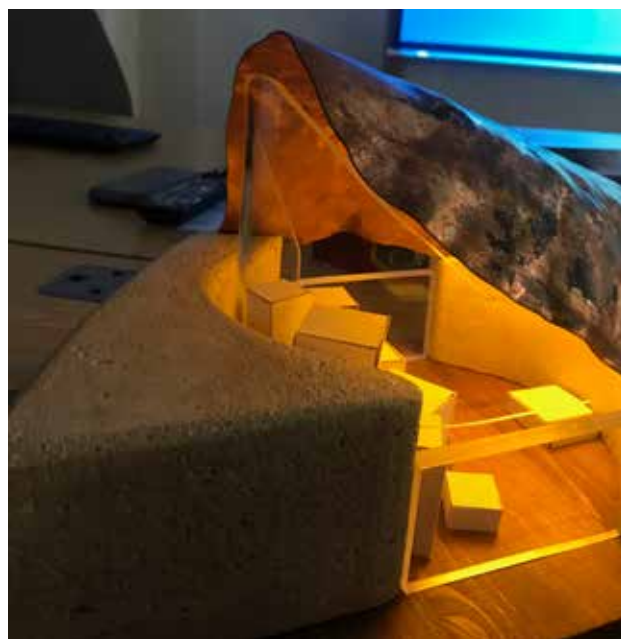
version of the plan and scaled it to the same size as the 1997 plan. Mr Tremellen and I then used AutoCAD (computer aided design) to see how it would fit into the area behind Gascoigne building.

At the beginning of the Lent term, I started building one of my models. This one was a solid block of clay in the shape of the new concert hall. I then cast the clay model into a white plaster and clear resin as well. The clear resin model was transparent, allowing an abstract approach as to how the acoustic wall inside the hall could be designed. Clear resin is strong and fast-drying, which worked perfectly for what I wanted it to achieve.

In addition to this, I have made a 3D scaled print of the Gascoigne building, using school ground plans and building floor sizes provided by Mr Tremellen. After noting down the sizes, angles and other measurements, I then made this into a 3D drawing on Solid Works, which allows me to print it using the 3D printer. This was useful because I will get an exact measurement of the Gascoigne building and since its only use will be to project where the new hall will be situated, it's convenient not having to spend a lot of time building a handmade model myself.

Even though I have not yet completed the project, I feel that I have learnt many skills and gained valuable experience which I could have never got from normal academic lessons. Doing this project is helping me to understand how much complex work an architect must do to come up with a building design and how they need to work within the remit of a client and their wishes. It is also providing insight into the considerations that need to be balanced in order to ensure that a specific building, in this case a concert hall, will be well-suited to the job it is designed for.

Krit Pichedvanichok (L6)



Sculptures

Oundle's sculptures and its artwork are an important part of what gives the School its identity. Take, for instance, the sculpture of the naked boy outside the Yarrow Gallery. The words 'Here I am, Send Me' evoke the biblical figure Samuel, as well as a sense of willingness and vocation; having it there is an imprinting of values upon the landscape. It was sculpted by Kathleen Scott, mother of OO Sir Peter Scott and wife of Robert Falcon Scott, who was famously beaten by Roald Amundsen in becoming the first man to lead an expedition to reach the South Pole.

Sculptures like this are part of the furniture of the School – familiar embellishments. It is hard to pinpoint why they create this feeling of reassurance, but they are inherent to the Oundle scenery. The sculpture of the horse on Chapel Lawns is one that I can't imagine Oundle without. In fact, it is just one of a collection of Judith Bluck's work that the School owns. Upon Bluck's death, Oundle bought all her remaining pieces, and put them around the School, including at the bottom of the stairs in the history department, the animal sculptures in Scitec and the deer in the garden of Cobthorne.

The other sculpture on the Chapel Lawns, and one of the most recent additions to the School collection is that of Eric Yarrow, OO and soldier of the Great War. Created by Alexander Johnson, as part of his A-level Art course, it was unveiled three years ago, just a few months after he left. It is given pride of place, outside the West door of the Chapel, and depicts Yarrow with his head drooped, holding his helmet under his left arm and his rifle under his right. The pose resonates with profound meaning: it is desolation personified. It exudes a sense of depression and despair. One look at this sculpture calls to mind the real horror of war as it affected those who fought in it. Moreover, it is in memory of OOs who gave their lives - of a pupil, by a pupil, for hundreds of pupils. Just like the pupil-read citations in commemoration services on the mornings of centenaries of OOs deaths, it is a tribute from recent or current students to those who came before them.

The artist who has doubtless contributed most to the scenery of Oundle is our very own head of art, Jeremy Oddie. The sculpture in 'Viney's Garden', is one of his finest, and was commissioned in memory of Elliot Viney, a renowned bibliophile, by his wife after his death. It represents a school ideal, perhaps a lost one - a boy lounging under the trees, book in hand, evoking a carefree blend of leisure and literature in some distant summer.

Whilst these sculptures are the more conspicuous around the school, there are ones that tend to escape attention. Prime examples of are those of

Arthur McKenzie, who sculpted under the name of George Kennethson. He made, among other things, the stone carvings of camels on the front of the archway from the Cloisters to the churchyard which represent the relationship between Oundle and the Grocer's Company. There is another sculpture that is a little more off the beaten track - the sculpture that many refer to as 'the man outside the pavilion', by OO Charlotte Cundell, of her neighbour, Mr Patterson, and it is uncannily lifelike. I have heard stories of people being more than a little spooked when passing it after sunset.

The last of the renowned sculptures around the School is the bust of F.W. Sanderson in the Great Hall. Sanderson is Oundle's most famous headmaster, having been in the position from 1892 until his death in 1922. Sanderson was by all accounts an exceptional person. He was an education reformer and the inspiration for the character of the 'progressive headmaster' in the H.G. Wells novel 'Joan and Peter'. He arrested the decline of Oundle in the late 19th century and took the number of pupils from ninety-two when he was appointed to 500 at the time of his death. He was the driving force behind the creation of laboratories and workshops, amongst a whole range of other similar developments that were more distant from the traditional classroom. It is therefore fitting that Sanderson's memory still lives on in such a profound manner around the school.

The most recent addition to Oundle's sculptural landscape is the striking installation in the Scitec foyer. Whilst I think it is fair to say that it has divided opinion amongst the current pupil community, perhaps even this will become a much-loved part of the school in years to come.

Alex Cunningham (L6)



George Longmore (U6)

Lewis Speirs

Lewis Speirs is a talented guitarist, bass guitarist, drummer and singer in Laxton U6 who has been writing his own music for four years. With both his parents being guitarists, his music has been influenced by their genres of interest: his father enjoys classic rock and indie, while his mother admires folk and northern soul. When Lewis was given a guitar at a young age, his father taught him four chords and from then on he was self-taught, learning songs as he heard them on the radio. When asked how many guitars he now has, Lewis laughed before confessing to owning fourteen. His favourite is surprisingly a fake that he rebuilt and customised.

Lewis describes his music as 'a mix of all my influences'. When asked who inspires him, he listed numerous names including the Gallagher brothers and Mark Bowman from T. Rex. Another was Dave Groll from the Foo Fighters who was a drummer before he turned into a guitarist and front man, which is similar to what Lewis did himself. Newer bands such as Wolf Alice also inspire Lewis, and he is pleased to see more front women like Ellie Rosell in music. However, what he finds most interesting is the power music has. He described John Lennon as 'groundbreaking' for him as it was the first time he had ever heard anyone sing about something so politically charged. The idea you can attack or change something through music, like the Sex Pistols aim to, fascinates him.

Lewis rarely busks, however he has done various gigs, the first of which was in a bar where he played alone with his guitar. He didn't expect anyone to turn up, so he prepared a set of only twenty songs, but by the end of the night sixty people were crammed into the small room. He described the experience as 'powerful', because 'seeing how people react to you entertaining them, even with [his] own songs' is an incredible experience and 'it's hard to explain but once you do it, you never want to stop'. His favourite gig was his first headline gig at the Voodoo Lounge in Stamford. It was special for him because 'everyone had bought tickets, not because they were just coming to a bar or restaurant, but to actually see me play'. As I watched Lewis on the stage at the Voodoo Lounge I was astonished not only by his talent, but also by his confidence on stage and interaction with us, the audience.

Balancing music with School is challenging and Lewis described it as a 'massive issue' until you master the art of time management, at which point it is easy to find a routine. When asked what influence OSCAR has had on his music, he said it had little effect on him, however he is aware of younger pupils who have been encouraged by his live lounge performances. Lewis commented he isn't 'really fussed' whether OSCAR is helpful for him, before

explaining when he and Toby Learoyd play tracks together 'it's nice to see other people wanting to do the same thing'. Lewis believes it is particularly important, now that he is in his final year at Oundle, to get those younger than him at Oundle to want to play; he thinks OSCAR helps a lot with this.

OSCAR also provides an outlet for Lewis' music within School. However, he believes there needs to be 'a change in attitude' at Oundle towards his genre of music, saying that 'what [they] do classically is absolutely fantastic, but there isn't that same sort of push when it comes to more modern styles of music'. He would like to see more musical events at Oundle than Guitar Madness and 'the odd club night'. The majority of Lewis' other methods of promoting his music are online, however he recalls one occasion where he dispersed flyers all over the town of a venue the night before a gig because 'sometimes the old ways are the best'.

Usually, a lot of young musicians believe the best thing about being a musician is that you can play what Lewis called 'the young card'. This is the term for gaining recognition simply because you're young and your talent is regarded as more impressive. However, Lewis thinks this is 'patronising' and 'it can feel like you're being labelled and boxed into a certain genre, and that you can't be expected to do anything of any weight because of your age'. He thinks the hardest thing about being a musician is 'dealing with the feedback of doing something different', particularly in a school environment where you feel obliged to conform in a certain way to the expectations of those around you, and there is the potential for backlash when doing something creative.

When I asked if he would ever consider becoming part of a band he immediately said, 'Yes! I would love that!' but explained that it's 'easier doing it under your own name while you're at school because you're unlikely to be in that band forever and it's easier to keep control of.' He particularly enjoys playing with a band because he likes to feel like he is a 'part of something rather than to be that something'.

Perhaps the most interesting thing I learnt about Lewis in our interview was that he cannot read music because he taught himself 'to play everything by ear'. He learnt to play drums with his neighbour and the guitar by 'messing about' in his bedroom 'across a summer'. However, he does not think his inability to read music hinders him and is in fact 'thankful' as it 'makes you stand out a little bit'. Ultimately, Lewis would love to make a career out of music and be able to 'live quite comfortably just from creating and playing music'.

Eleanor Bines (U6)

Hepburn

The Hepburn is arguably one of the most prominent features of the Oundle Musical calendar. There were over three-hundred performances, taking place in a wide variety of venues, across nearly all instruments, and all year groups. This year's Hepburn competition took a slightly different turn, with nearly all of the instrument classes being crammed into one frantic day - with the exception of the piano categories, having taken place the on the Thursday beforehand. In the advanced level categories, the winner would go through to the grand Hepburn final - a prestigious award in itself - to compete for the Hepburn cup.

After last year's Hepburn final, it was decided that the number of finalists should be condensed and hand selected by the Director of Music himself. After this, only nine finalists remained, and the winners from the woodwind, piano, percussion, upper strings, lower strings, electric guitar, harp, classical singing, and, my own class, brass were selected.

The final was definitely one to remember, feeling like more of a celebration of each other's music than a competition. There were, however, a few stand out performances for me personally, most notably: Ruth Palethorpe (L U6) playing the Fauré *Impromptu* on harp stunningly; Mark Bonner (Ldr L6) playing the Suk *Appassionata* on violin; and, of course, the incredible opening performance of Mason Lam (StA4), who blew us all away with two fiendishly difficult Chopin *Etudes*.



In keeping with Hepburn tradition, the winner of last year's competition - Bethany Peck - came back to play the Trombone whilst our adjudicator, - John Bowley, made his decision. With Mason Lam winning the David Bateman cup for musical promise, and Ruth Palethorpe winning the Tatum cup for the runner-up, it was only the winner who was left to be announced.

To my great surprise, my name was announced, and with a rather shocked expression, I walked past the other competitors, and collected the prestigious cup for the Hepburn winner. One of the reasons for my great surprise was the piece I played: the Hindemith sonata. Hindemith (1895-1963) is not exactly easy listening as a composer. The Nazis called it degenerate, though that's probably a compliment, and it has an incredibly hard piano accompaniment, which was heroically taken on by my accompanist Tatiana Boison. Nevertheless, the adjudicator seemed to enjoy it.

The piece itself was written in November 1939 in Germany, at the beginning of the Second World War, and describes Hitler's rise to power and the decision to go to war, starting optimistically and ending on a solemn tone. In the music you can almost hear the foreboding and menacing nature of the war itself in the intensity of each section of the piece.

Not conforming to the 'ideal' German music of the time: classical composers such as Mozart and Bach, who wrote neat and elegant music, following the 'rules' perfectly, or the bombast of Wagner, Hindemith used his music as a powerful weapon to rebel against the Nazis, and soon emigrated to Switzerland in 1940 (partly due to his Jewish wife) as a result. John Bowley seemed to like my expressive interpretation of this piece, as I tried to bring together the feelings of foreboding and rebellion, and to connect the audience to the music as best I could.

Overall, the Hepburn was a great success, regardless of prizes. It is clear that Oundle celebrates both music and the talent which the School has, whether it be at diploma level, or not even grade I. Opportunities like the Hepburn give the pupils a chance to show how hard they have worked in all of the gruelling hours in the practice room. Oundle is renowned for its musical talent, and after this year's Hepburn, it looks set to thrive for many years to come.

Harrison Smith (L6)

Bramston Part Song

It's a bleak October Sunday afternoon and there is the gentle patter of rain against the windows of a Bramston dormitory. It provides a light musical beat but the rain is the least of our worries. Will Slinger and I are disagreeing about what Bramston should do this year after the disappointment of the previous part song result. Finally, after about 100 suggestions from all boys in Bramston, we decide to do a medley of Bloodstream (Ed Sheeran) with All Along the Watchtower (Jimi Hendrix) – both suggestions by Oliver Mills. Little did we know then what Bramston would be able to achieve over the coming weeks and months.

I was asked to write this article about the experience of doing Part Song and quite simply it was a wonderful experience and a huge privilege to co-run Part Song this year. Well, most of the time... As everyone knows who has been involved in Part Song, it is a rollercoaster ride, full of obstacles and difficulties. The difficulties are not simply the arranging of the notes on the page, but actually the arranging of the people involved. Navigating different bed-times and events/talks/plays etc, are the norm for a standard Part Song rehearsal. As pupils we lead such busy lives here at Oundle and all this means that Part Song rehearsals can sometimes have most of the people missing!

There is also a lot of emotion in the running of Part Song and in particular a Bramston Part Song. After Bramston's win five years ago, the House has always had a reputation to live up to, to uphold and this year we did just that. Apart from the slight organisational nightmares (unanimous failure to turn up to rehearsals), I always looked forward to the end of prep and the beginning of a part song rehearsal. There was such great enthusiasm from the pupils involved. What's more, lots of people not involved in Part Song take great pride in how the Part Song is coming along (well, if it is good). Everyone involved in Part Song is constantly asked about it and Bramstonians even offer up the odd 'tip' for how it could be done better. Very rarely did I hear a grumble or a moan when I suggested having a longer rehearsal. Slinger and I are both in L6 and during the rehearsals were very lucky to have our U6 Guy D'Olyly, Nick Wong and Christian Dunn being so supportive and non-hierarchical

in how they participated in Part Song. This is a fine example of when there is true 'House-spirit' because although Slinger and I were the 'arrangers' everyone played their part, whether it be suggesting a new rhythm, new notes or even a new song...

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned how this year's Part Song was a medley of two songs and indeed it was going to be until a chance joke by Oliver Bell in our rehearsal changed everything. He started singing the song Ain't Nobody (Chaka Khan) and then suddenly we all looked at each other and realised that we could do that song as well! For me, this was the turning point for this year's song. The suggestion gave this arrangement an extra layer but more importantly it is an up-beat song and from then on the rehearsals were certainly more positive. This energy and enjoyment was continued right up to the day of the performance.

We had been rehearsing quite hard in the week leading up to the performance and there was a quiet sense of optimism as we walked up to Chapel on that Sunday afternoon. However, we had forgotten how strong the opposition was and Slinger and I were looking at each other with grimaces on our faces whilst applauding the other houses. Finally, it came to our turn and as I tried to play the starting notes on the piano, it hit me that all the rehearsals, all the obstacles we had overcome came down to these four minutes.

Four minutes later all of us left the stage with beaming smiles on our faces. Whatever happened next did not really matter because we had just done our best run through and so were delighted!

It was a pleasure to run Part Song this year and I felt a colossal amount of pride in what we achieved. The great thing in Part Song, unlike House Shout, is that everyone matters; from people who have never done Part Song before (Robert Brettle, Roman Cunningham-Reid and Arthur Dennison-Smith) to some old timers (Oliver Mills, Marcus and Freddie Stewart). Everyone who was involved in any of the fantastic Part Songs put in a huge amount of effort and Bramston were very fortunate on the day to come out on top - bring on next year!

George Brettle (L6)



Music At Oundle

I am in my penultimate year at Oundle and music has been a huge part of my life here. I am a music scholar, and this carries a lot of perks and rewarding experiences, as well as a lot of responsibility. I have been involved with some remarkable orchestras and bands, but playing jazz is my particular passion in music, and playing in OSJO, as well as other small jazz trios, for the past four years has been an unbelievable experience.

A particularly rewarding experience that comes to mind was the OSJO tour to Montreux, which we did a few years ago. This was an incredible opportunity to play at the most famous jazz festival in the world and to spend time in such a wonderful place in Switzerland. There was a huge amount going on, especially on main stage, which is in fact where we performed. The numerous acts from other big jazz bands left us all in awe, and the feeling of playing at such a prestigious event was phenomenal. We had our fair share of free time as well, which allowed us to roam the streets of Montreux, with jazz emerging from every street corner we passed, not to mention ice cream stalls and market stalls dotted around the road. They are sights and sounds I shall never forget, and I hope I will be able to go back to Montreux in the future, after I have left, and see OSJO performing there again!

Another occasion that springs to mind as a musical highlight was playing at The Ivy in Covent Garden.

The trip was hosted by Mr Milsted and Mr Hone, and they took Harrison Smith, Alex Hill and me to play in a jazz trio for the parents of Oundle as well as some OOs. This was an honour, to play in such a place, and to play amongst some of Oundle's most brilliant musicians. We played quite a few numbers, and Alex gave some superb renditions of famous songs, particularly those by Frank Sinatra. The memory both of listening and playing that evening is one that will stay with me. It was a great joy to be there.

One final memory from OSJO is the tour we did around Lake Garda, in Italy. On this trip, we were joined by the school choir, and we collaborated forces to give the people of Italy a taste of both choral and modern jazz music. We had the privilege of performing in St. Mark's Cathedral, in Venice, which was stunning, but also slightly surreal to sing in a world-famous landmark. As OSJO, we did a number of gigs around the town, despite the scorching heat that left us all sunburnt, and the constant loss of music stands and instruments...

On the whole, there are countless opportunities to get involved with music at Oundle, regardless of what kind of music you want to play. There are a lot of ensembles out there, and if you are thinking about joining one, the time is now! They are amazing fun, and you improve your music skills along the way.

Mark Bonner (L6)



A Year In The CCF Band

To someone who doesn't know the CCF Band well, we look like a peculiarly-dressed collection of people marching around with instruments. While this is true, it's not the miraculous occurrence it appears: a lot of work goes in to pulling this off. From the rehearsals, to the uniform fittings and everything else in between, this is what a year in the CCF band looks like.

While many areas of the School like to ease everyone in gently in September, after a long, lethargic summer, the band likes to start with a bang. With the trip to the Somme Battlefields only three weeks away, a lot of work needs to be done quickly. If this wasn't stressful enough, try adding twenty-five new Fourth Form pupils to the mix. The skill of playing and marching at the same time is not easy when you are first starting. You have to think about your feet, your dressing (your position in the line) and the direction you are marching all whilst trying to play a rousing tune. The first weeks are always the hardest but with enough positive encouragement, we manage to pull through. A typical rehearsal is split into two parts. We start by practising the music with Mrs Hudson, before going out onto the parade square to practise marching in formation with Sergeant Major Palmer. Getting your first uniform fitting is always an experience. Putting on this itchy, woollen uniform that is always way too warm and tight makes you think whether or not you'll do this for a whole year!

After three busy weeks, the band, along with the 4th Form, venture across the Channel to the region in France and Belgium, where the Battle of the Somme occurred over a hundred years ago. Before we get a chance to relax, we are driven straight to Ypres to perform that very night. After a quick dinner, we suit up and form up outside to march to the majestic Menin Gate, where there are the names of 54,395 soldiers who fell but have no known grave. The moment you turn the corner to find thousands of people looking at you is the moment you realise that this is the real thing. After playing inside the memorial, we soon proceed to march out and into the streets of Ypres. With cobbled streets, escort cars, and strangers' cameras in your face, it isn't easy to focus on the music you're playing, but it does make you think how significant the band is. With the performance behind us, we swiftly board the minibuses to our hostel in Albert, France. After a restful/restless night, the day is filled with excursions to various memorials of the battle, each more moving than the last. Before long, we are back at the hostel rehearsing for our next performance, involving the whole School at the Thiépval Memorial, where another 70,000 names are displayed. Taking a walk around the memorial makes you really think about how devastating the battle was. This service features readings, hymns as

well as the music we play, creating a very sombre atmosphere to reflect the occasion.

You'd have thought things would have eased off after this, but no. We have six weeks to prepare for our next big event: Remembrance Sunday. With the pieces and the marching getting more complex, and the weather only getting colder, this portion of the year becomes a real challenge as we near to the event. After only a small number of rehearsals, the day soon arrives. Trumpeters across the town give a rendition of the *Last Post*, some giving two or three renditions during the day. At 2pm the band marches through the town, followed by the CCF amongst other sections such as the Cubs and Brownies. Standing still for about half an hour in the freezing cold is endured only with an understanding of the occasion in mind.

As we draw nearer to Christmas and with everyone's energy slowly depleting, we still have one final push before the holidays – performing at Franklin Gardens, home of the Northampton Saints. However, after the poignancy of the Somme, this is just another day at the office. Soon we are off on a bus to Northampton. After a dress rehearsal out on the practice pitch, we watch the first half of the game before our cue is called to form up. The adrenaline starts to kick in as we wait to march onto the pitch. Even though we are only on there for about eight minutes, it feels like we are there for a lot longer. If playing in front of the crowd isn't enough, having your face put on the big screen is the cherry on top of the cake.

As we build up our repertoire and our all-important moves, we continue to work towards our final goal: Passing Out Parade, the formal last day of CCF. While this may be in mid-May, the weeks soon whittle away. By the time we get to the summer term, the Fourth Form no longer seem new and we are much better than we were. Performing at Passing Out Parade is the band's final flourish to cap off the year. Complex manoeuvres, tricky pieces and a sweltering day, this event really does test all of our skills. As we march off for the final time for the year, there is a collective sigh of relief that all our hard work has paid off. It is really rewarding to show to people what we have been doing for the past four months and it also shows how much work goes into making the whole thing happen.

So, after a long and tiring nine months, the year draws to a close. The final bits of music get collected in and the uniform gets put back on the rack for the summer. With people leaving and a new group joining in September, it is crazy to think that all of this happens again the following year.

Reuben Sector (L6)



Musical Masterclass

It had been two weeks since Mr. Robb had asked me if I would like to play in his flute masterclass and only now as I hurried across the road in the rain did I realize how unprepared I was. I reached the side of Chapel and pushed open the wooden doors. My copy of C.P.E. Bach's Sonata in A minor was sodden from the unforgiving rain, and I glanced anxiously at my flute teacher. Mr. Robb's long list of accolades include playing with London's Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and with The Halle and BBC Concert Orchestra, to name a few. I had just sat down next to Marcus McDevitt when Mr. Thomas began to address the small congregation who had gathered in the warmly lit Chapel.

The first performance, Thalia Garnett's Bach, was of a piece I had worked on previously when I was doing my Grade 8, and it was a real joy to listen to Mr. Robb's alternative take on expressing the piece. Subtle changes in the dynamics and articulation painted a dramatically different picture to how I had played it. This was an excellent reminder that Bach's music leaves a lot to the musician's interpretation and a chance for their individuality to shine. I have always been fascinated by Bach's unparalleled ability to manipulate harmony and his gift to create motion and melody through simplistic rhythm. This beautiful performance from Thalia was no exception.

Marcus McDevitt is an exceptionally talented 3rd former who has just arrived at Oundle and is already making a huge impact in the Music Department. We have played side-by-side in the Symphony Orchestra for weeks but I had yet to listen to his solo performance. In the masterclass, Marcus' wonderful technique and flawless fingering were on display, and coupled with Mr. Robb's gentle advice on tone colour: it is certain he will blossom tremendously and become a performer to look out for.

My own performance, C.P.E. Bach's *Sonata in A minor*, was a piece I had been working on for a while, but in the masterclass, Mr. Robb drew my awareness to the importance of the pedal note. Since the flute could play only one note at a time, and the Sonata was unaccompanied, the first bottom note of a phrase often acted as a pedal note (Mr. Robb's analogy was a heavy bow from the cello section preceding a phrase by higher strings), and was crucial to the contrast in range and affirmation of the key.

Oundle's Masterclass Series has been a hugely successful programme boasting a line-up of distinguished maestros in a wide variety of instruments, ranging from Trumpet to Cello. It is often held in the candle-lit Chapel in the evening

and offers the chance not only to experience the wonderful teachings of these experts, but also to support and celebrate the achievement of Oundle's young, talented musicians. I sincerely encourage students, parents or anyone wanting to take a break from the daily grind to come along to a masterclass performance. Peter Stark (Professor of Conducting at Royal College of Music) came later in the academic year to work with the Symphony Orchestra and held an awesome conducting masterclass with a small ensemble of more advanced musicians playing Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. This is merely one example of the amazing opportunities Oundle has to offer, and I am very grateful to have been part of the journey.

Bosco Wong (5th)



Behind The Stalls

As the mass of ordinary pupils files respectfully and silently into the sunny and airy west entrance of the Chapel, the choir is a babble of noise, chatting and laughing about the most recent Saturday night. Once Rev. Cunningham begins making the week's notices, the choir begins the stressful process of lining up, while the Head of Choir (Sophie Horner) attempts to coordinate the restless rabble. Once the logistics of the lines are achieved (a complex formula, involving where each of the three rows split in the stalls) the stragglers arrive. The Proctor pops out from his concealed spot behind the main archway of the Chapel entrance and exclaims (amazingly, still managing to whisper whilst conveying his anger) that they have to stay behind after to help clear away service sheets. They also face the public humiliation of being made to sit at the back of the Chapel, separate from their House. The Choir gazes on at this performance every single week, along with the two prefects who guard the entrance like bull dogs. Then Mr Arkell fires up the organ, and the Choir begins to trundle in. Now, this is far more difficult than first it may seem: try holding a folder, reading words, singing them, and walking (while trying not to trip over your culottes AND your cassock) whilst trying not to step on the back of your fellow Choir member's cassock in front of you, all while trying to avoid eye contact with your friends in the congregation. These challenges are all before you even reach the steps, where things get even harder. Everyone, at least once in their choir career, has either tripped or fallen up those stone steps. Climbing the Chapel steps is one of those moments in life when you have to keep walking, and just hope for the best. If you conquer the steps without embarrassing yourself, you are then safe to then swiftly sidle into the refuge of the stalls and squish up to your neighbour: they're really not that roomy.

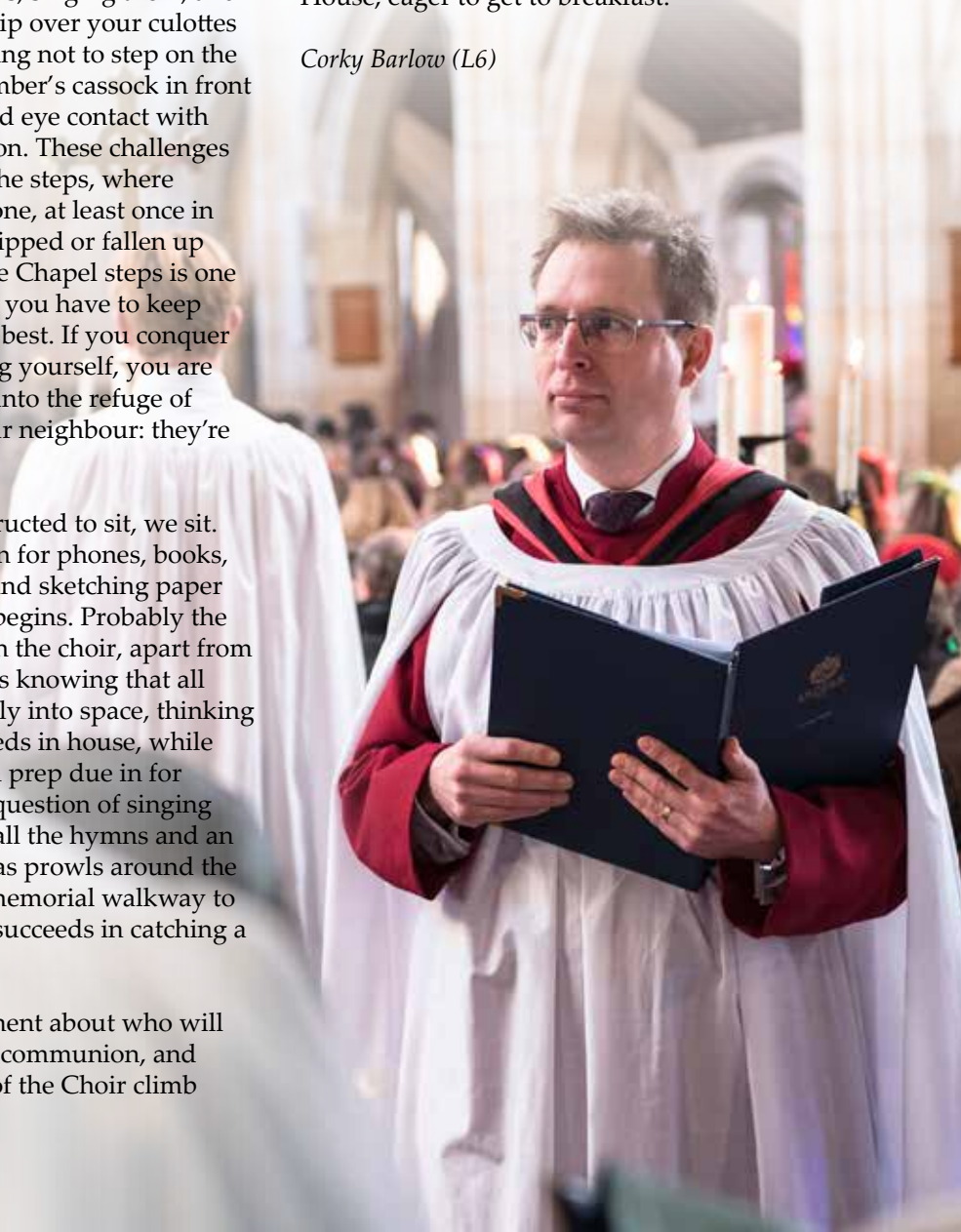
When the congregation is instructed to sit, we sit. At this point, it is not unknown for phones, books, prep, revision, chewing gum and sketching paper to emerge as the first reading begins. Probably the most satisfying part of being in the choir, apart from singing in concerts of course, is knowing that all your peers are gazing tranquilly into space, thinking about their recently vacated beds in house, while you are completing your Latin prep due in for tomorrow. Then it's simply a question of singing *Lamb of God*, a few responses, all the hymns and an anthem. Sometimes Mr Thomas prowls around the side of the stalls through the memorial walkway to check on us, but usually only succeeds in catching a few newer Choir members.

There is usually a little excitement about who will be leaving the stalls to receive communion, and how the confirmed members of the Choir climb

and weave their way to the end of a the very long row, and how they then manage to get back. Now is usually the time that more inexperienced members trip while making their way back, but we have all experienced the same embarrassments in our time. Being a new member can be quite scary. The first time you sing in the Choir, the rest of the School just looks so unbelievably massive: the unending rows upon rows of pupils, starting small at the front with Berrystead, then getting progressively larger, with tall boys jutting out from the masses. That can be a tiny bit daunting, especially processing out, as you walk towards everyone and don't have the excuse of having to keep your eyes fixed on a piece of music in front of you. The procession out of the Chapel is considerably faster than the orderly rhythm with which we process in.

People then run round the edge of the Chapel as the organ voluntary continues, and return through the side door to replace our folders in their cubby holes, and then neatly hang our cassocks on their named hanger (on the rack devoted to the voice part to which you belong). We then rush to leave the Chapel before the waves of pupils from the congregation come flooding out to race back to House, eager to get to breakfast.

Corky Barlow (L6)



Running Out Of Time

The tea flowed out of the spout of the pot and into five white china mugs as the clock struck five times. The flowery decoration on the pot had worn away, replaced by dull shades of black and grey - the result of the daily ritual of British afternoon tea. Four of the five mugs were snatched up, and an appropriate drop of milk swiftly added to each. The working day had drawn to a close and Margaret watched as her husband, Peter, collapsed into the maroon paddings of a leather armchair with his mug in hand. He was still wearing his navy overalls, coated in streaks of greasy oil from slogging away in the armaments factory for hours on end. A few strands of white hair were pressed against his gleaming scalp, revealing his fatigued and weathered countenance. He should have been passing many more hours in this armchair, enjoying a well-earned retirement, but when a tyrant had risen, national duty had been rightfully prioritised over personal pleasure. Margaret stared anxiously at the clock. She wore a bland cardigan, beige in colour, along with a grey skirt that reached down to her ankles. Her eyes were restlessly fixated upon the clock as if she had a strange obsession with timekeeping. Occasionally, her gaze shifted to the untouched cup of tea, getting colder by the second, as the situation seemed to get all the more serious. Two of her grandchildren sat on the floor next to their grandfather, huddled around the wireless which was tuned to the BBC. There should be three. He had said that he would be back by now; he had promised. But still the cup of tea remained on the tray, undrunk, untouched, while she remained unable to rest.

'Where is he? Where is he!' Margaret whispered to herself. The minute hand moved once again: five minutes past five; time was running out. Her skirt flapped as she walked purposefully through to the kitchen and started slicing potatoes for supper, keeping herself occupied lest her worry overwhelm her. But as the sharp, bone-handled knife cut through the spotted flesh of potato, her weathered hand trembled with trepidation.

'What if he's stuck out there?' she thought to herself. 'What if one of them lands on him? What if we never see him again?' Countless possibilities of her grandson's whereabouts rushed through her chaotic mind as she continued her preparation of supper. She had moved on to cutting the rye bread, ensuring the slices were relatively thin so that the week's ration would last as long as possible.

The gentle chimes of the clock echoed around the house: Five-thirty. Margaret's inherent maternal instinct, which had started developing fifty years ago with the birth of her own children, amplified her worry. Her anxiety increased with every chime. He had been gone for far too long now and her delicate, brown eyes once again focused on the ticking metal hands of the grandfather clock in the hall. Through the windows, she could see a dark lilac horizon, a sign that night was approaching fast. That meant they were approaching fast. Spurred on by such anxiety, she shuffled back into the living room, where still her grandchildren remained huddled around her husband, preparing themselves for a rough night ahead. They looked as though they were in a dark bedroom having awoken from their worst nightmare. What was approaching was nightmarish; it was why their parents were



no longer here, why Margaret's son was no longer here, taken to the other side far too early - engulfed in flame and flash for a blink and gone forever. And Margaret did not want her family to be shrouded in further grief and loss; she did not want the love binding the family together to be obliterated by explosion and flame. She crouched by her husband, her forehead wrinkled with concern, her eyes wide with apprehension, and whispered into his ear - she did not want the children to hear lest her worry become contagious - 'He's still not back! He said he'd be back half-an-hour ago. We need to do something. We need to find him.'

As Peter's exhaustion was brushed aside, his face became one of realisation, stricken with concern. His eyes flickered with worry between his other two grandchildren while he considered a calm response for his tense wife: 'There's still time - they're not here yet. I assume they haven't even been heard down south or we would know.' Peter used a gentle tone in an attempt to relax his wife, but he failed; Margaret's worry only burnt stronger; her chaotic mind only raced faster; her maternal instinct only prevailed further. Before Peter could rise from his leather armchair, Margaret was out the front door and onto the street in a desperate attempt to find her grandson.

Silence sounded throughout the street while Margaret apprehensively stepped out of the front gate. Down the entire street, doors were firmly shut, curtains tightly closed: it really was the calm before the storm with everyone preparing indoors, attempting to suppress the fear in the safety of their own homes. She purposefully advanced down the eerie pavement, surrounded by an unnerving gloom. She was headed to the park, supposedly where her grandson should be: he had been playing football with a friend. They were both meant to be evacuated soon, taken to the safety of the countryside, away from this danger, fear and death. However, for that they would need to find shelter and survive this night first. Margaret headed through the creaky gate of the park, only to find the vast expanse of field as abandoned as the street. There were no boys in sight. Her desperation engulfed her as hope of finding her grandson faded.

Suddenly, the blaring shriek of a siren sounded throughout the city, like a banshee's wail, sending shivers down Margaret's spine. They were here. She had failed - she had not found him in time. He could be gone forever... Soon, the air raid siren's wavering howl, a harbinger of approaching disaster, was accompanied by the low droning sound of fast-moving propellers, a ubiquitous symbol of disaster. She had to find her grandson; his life was more important than her own, only just beginning, while her's was nearing its end. She continued down the deserted streets, headed to his friend's house; 'He

has to be there?' she speculated, buried in distress. 'Surely?'

Her heart racing, Margaret rushed to the house and knocked frantically on the hard wooden front door: no answer. She continued banging it with her hand, her concern for her grandson rising with every knock: no answer. She persisted: no answer. As she realised that no one was coming to answer and calm her worries, a tear rolled down her cheek. She was certain she would never see him again now, certain that her family would be broken, veiled in loss and grief.

But her moment of uncontrollable emotion was violently interrupted by distant explosions, with the bangs accompanying them rippling throughout the city. Her eyes took in the bright orange flashes of German bombs, annihilating everything they hit. The flames rose to the sky like the fires of hell, incinerating everything they touched. Luftwaffe bombers flew over the city, like angels of Death, deciding who to slaughter next, dropping metallic cylinders of destruction on the innocents below.

As her proximity to death became reality, human instinct rose in her. Margaret prioritised her survival. She ran out into the street, her grey skirt tangling and her frail legs moving as if they were young once again. She was too far from home now. And no-one on the street would let her in, all tucked away in bomb shelters, or if they did not have them, under the questionable safety of wooden tables or beds. On the street she stood, a look of bewilderment across her face: she didn't know where to go. She wandered slowly on while distant bangs edged closer. But Margaret, in her desperation, spotted a lit Underground sign down the street. As she hurried towards this small light at the end of this dark tunnel of disaster, she felt a spark of hope deep down: she could survive this. Explosions followed her to the entrance, lurking in the back of her mind. She reached the bottom of the stairs, and moved onto the crowded platform, where she was kept safe by the metres of earth between her and the surface.

Several hours later, the all-clear siren was sounded and she emerged from the depths of protection, barely a speck of dirt on her beige cardigan. Taking in her surroundings, her expression was one of shock. Utter obliteration surrounded her. Suddenly, a fierce sensation of guilt passed through her as she realised that her grandson surely could not have survived. With every ambulance siren, every fire engine's blinding flash, she felt all the more choked with shame. It burned inside her, rising through her stomach, chest, heart. She collapsed, wailing, on the cracked pavement.

Will Parker Jennings (5th)

Ariadne

I'm the parasite. I'm the disease.
 The thing no one wants.
 Once I was the feast, now I'm a leftover.
 I served my purpose, played as a marionette.
 But now I know it was all a ruse.

I used to be a key that opened a door,
 But when it creaked open the novelty wore off,
 Like every new present a child begs for,
 Uses for a day, and discards.

I'm the athlete, promised a match
 But left as the reserve on the sidelines.
 There's no need for charm,
 I can't go back home. Just another
 Mouth to feed.

Beauty fades, so does usefulness.
 No love, no laughter, no life left in me.
 But the city celebrates. Theseus was triumphant.
 And I lost my head and my heart.
 I am a fish out of water,
 But I have to keep breathing.

Alice Broadbent (5th)



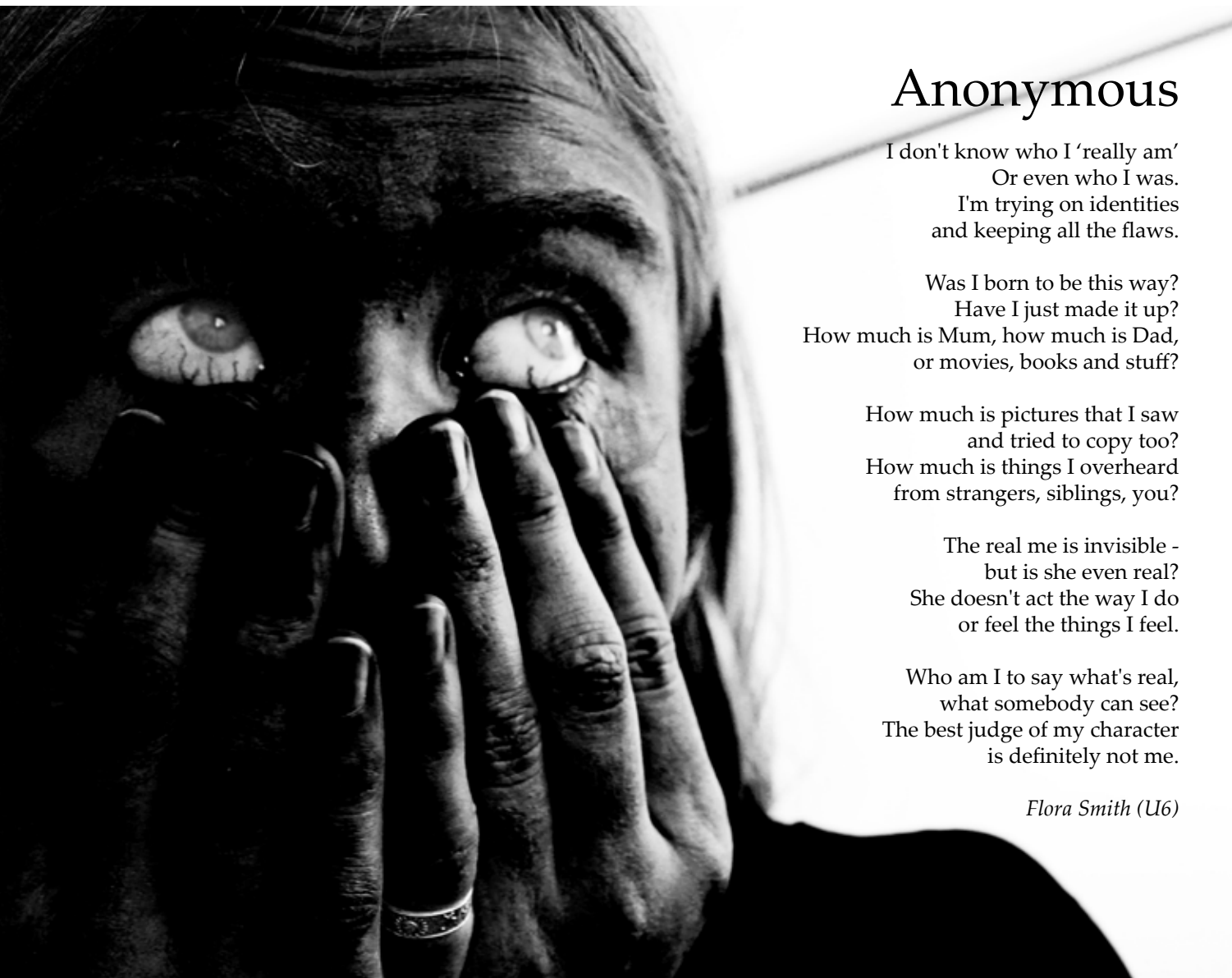
In Quarantine

Hospitality of white walls being the culprit for my confinement,
Invasion being the reason,
The prolonged peace prevailing over any attempt for sound,
The opening and closing of darkness doors stand as a constant
reminder of moments spent with no impact.

The dullment of my senses turning terrace houses to skyscrapers
and ants crawls to lions roars,
Phantoms in moon-folk armour stumble through door upon door to
further distance my consciousness from the tunnel.

Lara Wise (3rd)

*This poem by Lara Wise was Commended for the Hippocrates Poetry and
Medicine Young Poet Award. She drew upon her experiences as a patient in
hospitals and doctors' waiting rooms when she was younger. Toronto poet
Alisha Kaplan shortlisted and commended eight young poets from the USA
and the UK for the prize.*



Anonymous

I don't know who I 'really am'
Or even who I was.
I'm trying on identities
and keeping all the flaws.

Was I born to be this way?
Have I just made it up?
How much is Mum, how much is Dad,
or movies, books and stuff?

How much is pictures that I saw
and tried to copy too?
How much is things I overheard
from strangers, siblings, you?

The real me is invisible -
but is she even real?
She doesn't act the way I do
or feel the things I feel.

Who am I to say what's real,
what somebody can see?
The best judge of my character
is definitely not me.

Flora Smith (U6)

Gemma Harrison (U6)

AD(H)D - The H Is Silent

In lessons,
I'm sat and taught, and thoughts
Are dripped
Into
My head. Distraction
Serves as sole reward for consciousness.
But 'I'm not lazy, I've got AD(H)D':
It doesn't ooze, or bleed, or even smell,
My chemicals, they just don't do the trick:
That bird outside, that thing I did a year ago - that's what's in my head, but here I sit -
In lessons.

I've got AD(H)D -
The H is there, but in my head
- It stands for hyperactive -
Although my thoughts are just like yours,
They happen all at once:
It's never this and now, but always 'this and that' and 'now and then' and 'here and there' and...
Where was I?

I've got AD(H)D and I don't get much sleep -
When lights are off and curtains drawn,
All that's left is me... and 'that', and 'then', and 'wait, what if..?' - 'but no, 'cause then..'
Or maybe, I don't know -
That can't be it, or is that it? Wait, what's it? 'Who knows.'

I've got AD(H)D

Harry Angel (U6)



The Miracle

I must find the form for days after happiness.
The culminations and divisions that give life
to time must be cultivated. At present,
it lies an unmarked wilderness
of frozen earth, bound
by straits of mind and mountain.

The miracle is here, in the rough geometry
of irrigation inscribed upon lands that are
ruptured by the San Andreas fault.
There is no relief in such a land,
but there may be fruition. It will come
with the thaw and the spring rains,
with the waking of eyes and bloom
of thought and wound and wonderment.

There is a mountain reservoir, returning
sky to sky in an echo
of the unutterable.
The waking limbs of a morning swimmer
ripple the ether, bring to consciousness
the infinite, in realising a body
from formlessness of space.

The branches of the lightning tree are
corralling alcoves of blue from immensity
where the winds may be comprehended,
cupped like water in swimmers' hands.

This is the miracle.
For the window that opens within,
il cielo en una stanza,
is surely a surrender.
In contemplation, we cannot
forever evade the shuffling of selves,
the chiaroscuro of our souls,
and treachery of our bodies.

An act of humanity, conceived in freedom,
that alone is the articulation
of finite order and greater chaos
amid man's myriad realisations.

Let me be crushed in the agora,
by the jostling and the endless cries for war.
There is no dignity. The wings of the dove
cannot lift the humanity of which it despairs;
the crowds feel only a passing shadow
of grace cast from above.

Those who live here, they have the touch of Abraham,
that steadiness of eye that watches
descendants in the constellations, knowing
that days may unravel
our aphorisms and kisses:
we cannot make an epitaph of moments,
but only of the earth.

Found me once more in myself, in truth.
Grant me the skill to speak simply,
with words rooted deep in the silence
of this place, in the water that is the desert's heart.

In the momentary clasping of hands,
we broker anew the frontiers
of personal silence, forge a treaty between
these fragments of wilderness.

The need to speak, to read, to breathe,
stands as perpetual affirmation
that we are always suffused with another,
formed in our hunger for impurity.
It was as expressions upon a face
that I first loved kindness and integrity.

Mongrelised and damaged beings,
we stutter an unwritten scripture,
which finds its revelation
in the testimony of our hands.

Izzy Wythe (U6)



Reuben Parry (U6)

Overdrive

A few reluctant beams of sunlight sought their way through thick grey cloud. It was a Thursday afternoon, truly the worst of days for the working man; so close and yet so far from those days of leisure we call the weekend. With the five o'clock chimes, Paul ambled slowly down the cracked pavement, free for the evening but exhausted to his bones. He wore scrappy, ripped trousers, and a faded hoodie bearing a long-forgotten skate logo. His messenger bag was flung over his shoulder, with laptop, keyboard, notepad and water bottle stashed inside. His hair had not been cut for several months, and tended to remain unwashed and matted. His shoes were slowly falling apart, the laces frayed and the soles battered. In short, he was a mess, a loser with no prospects and nothing going right for him. He lived in a dilapidated apartment block, a grey sprawl with absolutely no architectural merit. It was too ugly to be bauhaus, too small to be brutalist. It was the epitome of awful 1960s town planning.

As he opened the entrance door, he noticed that yet again the long-suffering elevator bore an 'out of order' sign, printed in huge, industrial block capitals. As always, he walked straight past it, and up the vinyl-carpeted stairs that led upwards to his home on the third floor. His door was unlocked, and he almost fell through it, such was the extent of his fatigue. He threw down his bag and lay down on the sofa. Although it was only half past five, he soon drifted off into sleep, slumped over the misplaced, moth-eaten cushions.

An hour or so later, the crude, angry vibration of his mobile phone, sitting on the kitchen counter awoke him from his impromptu doze. Contrary to the habits of most people, Paul didn't carry one of those silicon chip, aluminium smartphones, featuring

biometric scanning, a fast processor and connection to anything, anywhere. In fact, the job he did practically forbade such things. He worked for one of the huge corporations, as a security 'drone', so-called because of the monotonous and subordinate nature of the position. His job was to trawl through the endless logs of the servers in the immediate vicinity of the office, looking for errors, or signs that someone was attempting to compromise the network. He would then report back at the end of each day to the regional superintendent, detailing his findings. Paul liked to think that this was fairly significant stuff, and to a certain extent, he was right. Utilities such as electricity and water had been sold off by the government to the mega-corps, after the crash of '92. Not long after, they had become digitally managed, controlled by huge banks of computers, stationed at regional hotspots around the country. But some people had other ideas about this. Attacks on the services came thick and fast, perpetrated by hackers concerned that handing over control to these huge corporations could have unwanted and far-reaching consequences. People were without electricity for days at a time, and it was nothing short of a miracle that the corporations' control over the services survived. After most of the hackers had been arrested and sent away to labour camps, it was clear that security was now big business, and not long afterwards, Paul got his first job, the very same that he had been in for 10 years.

But although his work was important, he was dimly aware that it was not just him who kept the local infrastructure safe: wages for his type of job were so low that they could easily afford to have five or more people doing the very same job. Of course he had never met these people, nor seen where they worked, but logic dictated that there must be several of them working in close proximity to him every day. Still, who was he to pry and probe. His job was his job, and what other employees of the corporation did was nothing to him.



The notification on his phone was a text from the automated supervisor that was installed on his computer, noting that his work output had been poor within the past few days, and suggesting that he get more sleep. It was just another way in which the corporations tried to increase output from their workers - the executives were constantly in desire of larger profits and lower running costs, and were time and time again frustrated by the inefficiencies of human workers (manual, blue collar jobs had been taken over by robots a long time ago).

He turned on the small, cathode-ray television, automatically tuned to the news channel. The block-capitals headline announced that a new, so called 'snoopers' charter' had been passed. It gave the government the right, amongst other things, to sell citizens' information to the internet companies. From now on, every corporation could have access to private and personal information such as healthcare, relatives, wealth and so on. Nothing new, or so he thought. He pressed the off button.

The next morning, everything seemed perfectly normal - the grey sky, and the hum of the power plant that sprawled a few kilometers away. He woke up early, and left immediately for work. There was no food in the fridge, and he had things to do. As soon as he arrived, he logged on to the terminal, and entered administrator mode, before pausing for a few seconds. Was what he was about to do right? Was it worth the consequences? He had a very firm idea in his mind of what needed to happen. Ever since he was a child he had seen the corporate world taking over people's personal lives. These days there was almost no concept of privacy at all. Everything was monitored, shared and retained on the huge data-logging servers. What had started as a bastion of free speech was now the very opposite; so-called art and media was now merely an extension of what the government wanted the public to see. There could be no emotion other than happiness about

everything, tolerance and 'inclusion'. Anyone who went against the grain seemed to disappear all too quickly.

No, there was no question about it. What he was about to do was right, though it might harm others to begin with. He began to switch off the regulatory systems, which made sure that power stations stayed on, and pipes wouldn't burst. He turned all the power off, and shut down the network. Then he walked downstairs into the server rooms, and viciously pounded the smug, sleek machines against the unforgiving concrete wall until he was sure that they would never function again. His work was done.

He trudged, exhausted out of the building and unlocked his decrepit, barely working car. Its engine struggled to start, wheezing and spluttering into feeble life. He pulled out onto the deserted road, long since abandoned by most in favour of the new subway network that lay deep under the city. As the road rumbled underneath him a vague sense of the gravity of his actions came to him, but he was able to suppress any feelings of doubt. All he knew was that he had half a tank of petrol and several hundred miles to cover.

A few hours passed, and he had finally left the concrete and neon sprawl where he had lived for so much of his life. He stopped his car by a windswept hill lashed by the rain. Having walked to the top, he lay down to sleep, curled up inside his ripped poncho to protect himself from the raging storm. But his sleep was turbulent and soon he woke up, shivering with fright. For in a world where everyone is connected, there is nothing more terrifying than the thought of true solitude.

Jacob Jones (5th)



Mark Wells



The end of the Summer Term sees the retirement of Mark Wells, the 'grandfather' of the Common Room, after thirty-eight years of dedicated service to the School. During this time he has served under five Heads, seen the introduction of girls to Oundle, physically helped with the move of the Physics Department into a new seven laboratory modern teaching block, watched the building of Scitec, worked through the replacement of O levels with GCSEs and the move from linear A levels to modular and back again! He is now also teaching the sons and daughters of former pupils. He was joined at Oundle by his wife Helen and then more recently by his children.

After graduating from Jesus College, Cambridge, Mark started training as a cabinet-maker in Bristol then Hay on Wye. Though he joined Oundle to teach Physics in 1980, his skill as a cabinet maker was further developed by learning the art of violin making from Paul Bickle in the holidays. He even converted a room in his first house in North Street into a workshop to pursue this craft. His instruments, violins and 'cellos, are very much a labour of love and in demand. The School has a quartet of his instruments (these were played in a concert in the AMR to celebrate his 50th birthday) and at home there resides a family of 'cellos (literally – three for his children and now one for

himself!). It is estimated that he has made about 125 instruments in total and many of these have been sold through reputable auction houses.

In Mark's early years at Oundle and alongside his teaching in the then Scott Block (now Adamson), he spent many hours coaching the senior boys on the river with the Rowing Club. Under the watchful eye of Vic Northwood, Mark's impact on his crews became more noticeable, and his ability to develop teamwork and a competitive instinct became all the more apparent when in 1984 he recalls 'the 2nd VIII beat 1st VIII in training and upset Vic!' His elevation to Coach of the 1st VIII the following year led to further success through a systematic programme of improvement; the pinnacle being a golden two years when in 1992 Oundle won the Childe Beale Cup for 1st VIIIs at the National Schools regatta and was runner up in 1993. Along the way, they beat Radley and Shiplake 1st VIIIs, which in the day and in rowing terms were mighty achievements. Mark was active in the Rowing Club for over thirty years, latterly coaching girls' crews to further success.

Within the Physics Department, Mark's subject leadership started in 1995 as Head of Electronics and, typical of his desire to understand more about his subject area, he undertook an OU course to gain a qualification in Electronics. His expertise and enthusiasm led to many pupils developing their interest not just in Electronics, but also the inevitable overlap with microelectronics and computing. Mark's encouragement of pupils in this area led to many an Oundelian assembling their first computer in the Needham Building, and pupils teaching themselves programming languages such as C++ which made them stand out in applications as part of the UCAS process or work experience.

In 2001 Mark took on the role of Head of Department in Physics in addition to Electronics and he led the department through substantial challenges. There have been detailed considerations of different courses and specification but Mark has never been one to take the easy option. Instead, he has sought to choose courses that demand rigour, thought, understanding and discipline. This was illustrated most recently when he led the way in reviewing and then selecting the Pre-U Sixth Form course. Arguably it is more demanding in many respects than the A Level course. However, it also prepares our pupils for university in a manner that A Level does not, and the course challenges both teachers and pupils. Indeed, the decision to deliver the Pre-U Physics course saw an improvement in grades achieved. Arguably, the most significant changes in Physics under Mark's tenure were the acquisition of some exciting opportunities for project work and collaboration with universities and other similar institutions. The wind tunnel in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust, the electron microscope and work with UCL, projects with

University of Leicester and online time on various telescopes around the world. Mark's interest in all areas of Physics knows no bounds, and Oundle pupils have benefitted from his expertise and enthusiasm in so many ways, not least the many Physicists and Engineers whom he has prepared over the years.

Mark has never stopped following his interests and reaching for the deepest understanding within his grasp. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the History of Science and he is equally passionate and he is knowledgeable about astronomy as a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. His reputation for making musical instruments is supplemented by a passion for the Harpsichord, the sole important piece of furniture in the Wells' home.

As a teacher of Physics, Mark combines the theoretical and experimental/practical elements of the course with considerable skill. It is also impressive that he has never ceased in seeking innovative, interesting and challenging new practical experiments for our pupils.

Mark is a highly principled man; he is not afraid of stating what he believes to be in the best interests of the pupils whether as they engage in their study of areas of Physics or as they go about their daily lives. As a House Tutor in Laundimer for twenty years, Grafton for fourteen years and more latterly Laxton, Mark has demonstrated his loyalty and commitment to guiding the young in his quiet but principled manner. Those taking the time to engage more deeply in conversation with him found many interests and treasures that he willingly shared with them. Having worked in the same department as Mark for thirty years and in the boarding house for eight years, I have admired his knowledge, his enthusiasm for understanding the physical world through Physics, his love for his family and of music and his refined approach to life. It is good to know that Mark will pursue his many and varied interests in the well-earned time he will now have whilst living locally and I am sure he will contribute to the pleasure of many more musicians in their music making.

Tony Burrows



Simon King



Simon King arrived to teach Biology at Oundle in September 1981, having previously worked as a Fishery Scientist in the Water Industry. He began as a Tutor in Laxton with a quota of twenty-four tutees, and went on to become Deputy Hsm in Sidney from 1988–1990, then Hsm of Grafton from 1990–2001.

Roger Page looks back on the Grafton/Sidney days with great affection: 'As our Hsms' studies were across the hall, I was the immediate beneficiary of Simon's wisdom. His approach to the job was to be utterly straight-forward with his charges and he made it blindingly clear to them where the boundaries were. Whenever he addressed the House, his thoughts were articulated with utmost clarity and seasoned with his wry dry humour. His exactitude of thought is one of many characteristics that mark him out as exceptional individual. A further quality is his focus on and application to all tasks; Simon rarely, if ever, prevaricated and if a job needed doing it was tackled immediately and with surgical precision whether dealing with pupils, attending to leaking taps or cooking a pig for the annual Grafton/Sidney hog roast. Simon rarely wasted time and railed against unnecessary bureaucracy and inefficient processes. Filing at the end of term often involved large black bin bags and sweeping piles of papers off his desk!'

Day pupils felt the benefit of Simon's pastoral experience when he transferred to Laxton in 2001. From there he took on the role of Senior Master in 2009 which he has continued to today, remaining an excellent Tutor in Bramston House where his understated and highly effective approach has seen him lighting bonfires in heavy rain, putting up marquees to host a hundred and sixty in under two hours and feeding eighty from a single barbecue. Crises were met with a phlegmatic 'ho-hum' and a solution. Above all, he enjoyed the company of the pupils and he always had a story to tell at the end of his duty night about something that made him laugh.

As Senior Master, Simon was a perfect choice to oversee the daily running of the School given his logical mind and attention to detail coupled with his skill at solving problems. I am informed that although he would rarely admit it, he enjoyed finding solutions to the logistical nightmares such as organising Speech Day and whole School concerts at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. His wisdom and leadership have brought the different arms of the co-curriculum together and enhanced the pupil experience. He has also taken responsibility behind the scenes for managing numerous essential and challenging compliance issues with utter reliability, remarkable good humour, and always without complaint. Always measured and insightful, his intelligent, wise counsel has been invaluable in his role as a key member of the Leadership Team and supporter/advisor to a succession of Heads.

A well-respected Biology teacher, Simon has also coached Junior Cricket, then the Hockey 2nd XI and latterly 'the mighty U15 C team'. He has managed trips with considerable care and a necessary emphasis on the safety and protection of the pupils and Staff who led them. He has also participated in many trips over the years, assisting on Rugby/Hockey Tours to South America (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay) and to Australia/New Zealand, not to mention Biology trips to Wales, Honduras and numerous Diving trips. Intensely creative and practical, he has been a regular in the workshops over the years and is enormously skilled at making and mending things (not least his three trailers, of which the first is pictured). His quiet 'let's just get on with' approach has seen him cycling around local reservoirs annually dispensing lollies to the Third Form on their sponsored walk. He is also a keen photographer (memorably starting one ISI Inspection briefing to Staff with an appeal to them to look out for a temporarily lost drone which subsequently turned up in a tree on Bramston paddock).

Simon completes thirty-two years of Diving this year, with 3000-4000 dives completed and approximately seven hundred qualified divers taught to dive by the Oundle School Sub Aqua Club

(OSSAC). Under his leadership, the club was hugely popular and always over-subscribed and those pupils who were members often singled out their experiences in it as highlights of their schooling.

Norman Brittain recalls: 'Simon and I were lucky enough to be able to run OSSAC together for twenty-two memorable years. From Wednesday CCF afternoons spent plumbing the murk of the brickpits east of Peterborough to holiday expeditions exploring the splendours of The Scillies, The Longships, St. Abbs, Mull, Harris and Lewis, St. Kilda, Scapa Flow, The Blaskets, The Skelligs, Malta, Menorca, The Red Sea (one could go on..), what a time we had of it! No scallop, no crab, no lobster was safe from Simon's eagle eye: didn't we eat well! If we were wreck diving, that meant salvage. Down he would go, armed with lump hammer and spanner and, on one notable occasion, diving a recently-discovered wreck in The Sound of Mull, up he came with a magnificent brass lamp and porthole. What a pleasure it was to see our trainees master the skills and grow in confidence, to the point where many of them took on the task of teaching new trainees themselves. Time after time, Simon's patience and unbounded good humour and wonderful sense of the absurd ensured that even the most nervous novices, shivering in their wetsuits as they gazed glumly upon the grey and grim prospect of Gildenburgh Water on a Wednesday afternoon in February, came away from the experience enlivened by their sense of having mastered a demanding skill.'

Adam Langsdale pays similar tribute: 'Simon has been responsible for most of the kit maintenance, training schedule and being the general dogs' body for OSSAC for nearly thirty-five years, and in that time he has overseen the training of hundreds of Oundle pupils. I cannot think of a single moment when he was anything other than completely switched on to total professionalism and the significance of what we do as dive instructors. A long time ago he told me that a frivolous attitude to most things is the way forwards in this world – try not to take things too seriously. Simon knows when to take things extremely seriously and I have seen him swing into action at a moment when time and the right call really did matter, but his default setting of gentle humour and appropriate ribbing is never far away and this makes him such a fantastic colleague.'

Simon's service to the CCF has culminated in the presentation of award of a Certificate by the Lord Lieutenant on Thurs 24th May. Extracts from the citation read as follows:

'Captain P S C KING has been a stalwart of Oundle' Combined Cadet Force for the last thirty-one years. He has been on twenty-five Adventure Training Camps, running an annual overseas

dive trip to the Red Sea. He has also completed sixty Field Weekends, taking Cadets to dive off Portland to gain open sea experience. Perhaps most impressively he has planned and run a varied dive training programme for Cadets on Wednesday afternoons whatever the weather for the last thirty-one years. He is faced with considerable challenges: limited time, few qualified instructors, poor weather, cold winter temperatures and limited training facilities. In spite of these challenges, Captain KING has delivered a varied, challenging and constructive programme that develops Cadets' Confidence, Skills and Personal Qualities. His contribution has been selfless, considerable and sustained and, accordingly he is worthy of national recognition.

Simon has given time and energy to the community now for thirty-seven years, and the respect and affection for him as he leaves is palpable from many, many quarters. A mentor and a friend to more staff that can be mentioned, and provider of inspiration and fun for the pupils in equal measure. A polymath and a dynamo, he has changed lives for the better with the minimum of fuss, the greatest of humility and almost always with a flicker of humour. He and Henny, whose contribution as Housemaster's wife and more recently as Relief Matron must also be noted, will be sorely missed. We wish them well in their new home (which no doubt Simon will have largely rewired and refurbished before we come back in September) and we hope that all seven Kings will be back in Oundle whenever possible: it simply won't be the same without them.

Daviona Watt



Richard Atkins



For such a gifted, passionate and dedicated mathematician, Richard has had a full and far-reaching career, involved in a vast array of activities in and out of the academic world. This can only be a summary: we need a book, not a page!

Richard was always destined for a rewarding and dedicated life in education. He followed his degree and PGCE from Bristol University with periods at Kings School Canterbury and Bedford School where colleagues recognised his superb mastery of his subject and his all-round commitment to wider boarding school life. In 1980 he married Liz who has loyally supported him throughout his career.

Since joining Oundle as Head of Mathematics in 1991, we have been fortunate to have this talented academic in our midst, with an absolute passion for Mathematics, but equally importantly, with passion for the teaching and learning of the subject. In the classroom, he set the highest standards, motivating pupils with his enthusiasm and brilliance, but also warmly encouraging the less able.

He has always inspired his colleagues with his subject knowledge and, as HoD for seventeen years until 2008, he led the Oundle department through the hugely successful years in the old Scott Block. A Levels were becoming modular which Richard embraced, believing that the graded syllabus presented in more manageable chunks made higher level Maths more accessible. Numbers and results of those taking Maths increased rapidly under his

reign. Some might say his style was 'Old School' but insisting that pupils learned formulae and laid their work out correctly was always because it was his conscientiously considered belief that that was how they would do best. He demanded meticulously high standards of himself too, which often found him marking into the early hours and commenting individually on every piece of work.

Richard forged new methods and programmes of teaching, making Oundle amongst the first schools to include Autograph, the computer programme developed by Douglas Butler, as a key teaching tool. Never afraid to think more creatively when he saw a need, Richard persuaded Edexcel that Oundle should be allowed to take the newly available and more interesting IGCSE course, moving pupils and teachers away from the burden of uninspiring syllabus coursework in the previous GCSE syllabus. Eton and Harrow moved to IGCSE the following year and got all the publicity – but we were the first!

In a School that had recently accepted girls in all years, Richard quickly became aware that their confidence was often more fragile than the boys', and looked for ways to encourage all pupils to reach their potential. Recruiting the first female Maths teacher was one of his earliest successful missions, after which David McMurray declared 'You've got your woman!' She had the privilege of being Richard's HoD for a few years a couple of decades later! He continued to offer sage and expert advice even as the roles reversed.

Encouraging all-comers, he offered a champagne prize for anyone who could beat his score in the UK Mathematics Trust Challenge. Most of Oundle's top mathematicians were inspired and nurtured by him, and Michael Ching, now Assoc. Professor of Maths at Amherst College, MA, USA is amongst his prodigies. Mentoring this pupil led Richard to be involved in the International Maths Olympiad through which he travelled extensively to Taiwan, Romania, South Korea, Hungary and Cyprus amongst others. During the latter, he made his film debut for a BBC Documentary 'Beautiful Young Minds'. Since that time his intellectual ability and organisational skills have been recognised by his extensive involvement with the UK Mathematics Trust as Chair of the British Mathematical Olympiad Setting Committee, setting and marking Olympiad papers, running National Mathematics Summer Schools and standing in several senior roles on the UKMT Council. This exposure to the very best young people in Mathematics led him to identify a need for mentors of pupils with exceptional mathematical talent who had no one in their own schools to nurture them appropriately. So the UKMT Mentoring Scheme was born which he believes is his best initiative! He ran it for 13 years and has been personally thanked by the Secretary of State for Education for this initiative which has had

a significant effect on the Maths education of the best UK pupils.

The Maths department enjoyed a real camaraderie throughout those years. The annual Summer party which he and Liz generously hosted was always a wonderful and uplifting end to the School year.

Outside the classroom, Richard has been equally dedicated to other aspects of his school master role. As a dedicated tutor in Dryden he took very personal care of his charges, supporting them to the hilt. The annual trip to the Chinese in Stamford for his tutees and his Scottish renditions at the Burns' supper will not be forgotten! Happy to play his part in the wider School community, staff will all recall humorous commentary throughout his time as Chairman of the Common Room. The twinkle in his eye was never far from the surface.

Richard always had a sports team to organise, train and motivate. He ran Hockey teams, notably the girls U16B which he did for 12 years. Most recently and right up into his final term at Oundle, Richard has been running the girls' Tennis and coaching the 1st and 2nd VIs.

Outside School, Squash, Music and Sailing have been passions at different stages and, as in every other aspect of his life, he could not help but get fully involved. He set up and ran leagues in the Oundle Town squash club for about ten years, much appreciated by townsfolk. He ran the School sailing club for several years, organising an annual regional championship involving a fleet of 18 boats and over 50 races in the afternoon – which Oundle won twice! When Liz and he moved to Nassington, he picked up his trombone again and joined the Yarwell and Nassington Band, becoming Musical Director a few years later. The Maths dept enjoyed regular outings to their rousing concerts! In earlier days he had even played the organ in Canterbury Prison!

Richard is a kind, professional, and supremely intellectual man. It is no surprise that he has influenced so many learners and colleagues so positively. He has made an outstanding contribution to the education and personal development of Oundle pupils, but also in the wider world of mathematics. He has already left a significant legacy in and out of School, but there is more to come. He will continue to be involved in the wider Maths world through the mentoring scheme, and will enjoy quieter times in his Suffolk home with Liz.

Those who have had the privilege to work for or alongside him know that Richard is one in a million. Of all Maths teachers there cannot be anyone with bigger shoes to fill. We all wish him a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Nicola Guise

David Milsted



Armed with an Arts Honours Degree from Dartington College, a Licentiate Diploma and a Certificate in Education, David set foot with some trepidation into the unfamiliar world of a private school in the January of 1993 to teach woodwind. At this time, the Music School was divided between the premises next door to the Stahl Theatre and the Old Sanatorium, with the woodwind department nestled snugly in the barn conversion situated at the former. During the warmer months, many an ad hoc barbecue was enjoyed by David and members of his team, and Friday morning break-times were frequently spent down the road at Fitzgerald's Bistro (now the Onkar restaurant), occasionally resulting in a more mellow rest of the day.

It was during these halcyon days that David made the mistake of allowing his ability to conduct and rehearse an orchestra to be discovered, and he was quickly conscripted to run both the School Symphony and Chamber Orchestras. Both orchestras flourished under his direction, producing some memorable concerts. The evening of four concertos with pupil soloists accompanied by the Symphony Orchestra was a particular highlight, featuring Miho Hirobayashi with the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, and Ian Farrington performing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. As well as developing the variety of chamber groups for

the woodwind pupils to be involved with, David saw the need for a tiered arrangement of wind ensembles, based on his own musical experience at school. So, from the very large Concert band, he and Richard Kauffman formed a more specialist Wind Orchestra which the younger players could aspire towards and this group is still flourishing and exploring the more challenging repertoire of the Wind Band world.

September 1993 saw the arrival of a new Head of Drama, Robert Lowe, and he and David soon discovered that they had a mutual love of musical theatre, and so began a partnership of Director and Musical Director lasting over 10 years, resulting in the school productions of *Cabaret*, *Jack the Ripper*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, *Cinderella* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. A staff and pupil venture, *Songs from the Shows* proved to be a popular evening accompanied by an orchestra with music especially arranged for the occasion and this became the template for the Music Theatre Singing Competition that has now become a biennial event. David has remained a large part of the Stahl musical team up until the present day and has always welcomed opportunities to tread the boards himself, even if the only roles available have been Pantomime Dames!

Many wonderful, colourful music tours were undertaken by David with the Chapel Choir or various orchestras and ensembles. There was no trouble recruiting for the Jazz Orchestra tour to Barbados where Oundle students were able to hear how steel pans should be played. Other highlights have included tours to Belgium, Holland, New York, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, the latter being invitations to the famous Montreux Jazz Festival with OSJO, experiences not to be forgotten.

David was happy to find his tutoring feet in New House under its new Housemaster Tony Burrows. He had to get used to some new terminology ('Sir, may I have a bed extension?'; 'Certainly, where are they kept?') but he loved the sense of belonging and loyalty that is unique to a boarding house and it was with great sadness that, after five years, it was announced that New House was to change to a girls' house. However, the Headmaster did not feel that it was fair that the new Upper Sixth should be dispersed among the other houses so part of the Old Sanatorium was converted into flats for the boys and a slightly apprehensive David Milsted. All that can be said is that they somehow made it to the end of the year relatively unscathed before David moved to Laxton House, soon to become Fisher.

David McMurray also decided that David would be ideal to head up the committee overseeing the inception of the new Junior Club on the Two Acre site. It soon became apparent that this was a committee of one but David got on with things

despite no budget to furnish the site. Having begged, borrowed and stolen, a weekend club for the 4th and 5th form was soon in full swing, complete with tuck shop, and the area has continued to develop into the site where both Senior and Junior clubs now co-exist. David relinquished the running of the Junior club when, after a couple of years he was invited to team up as Deputy Housemaster with the newly appointed Fisher Housemaster, Noah Wood. He was an immensely loyal, longstanding and much-loved Deputy in Fisher for twelve years, leading field trips and social events, stalking the corridors with his light-sabre and tutoring some choice individuals that sometimes only David's man-management could keep on the right track.

Amongst David's fondest memories of Oundle are the celebrations for the school's 450th anniversary, firstly in St. Paul's Cathedral, and then at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham in 2006. They were amazing occasions where the school, parents and OOs were treated to exactly what the music department was capable of. A moment no-one present will forget was David conducting the massed woodwind, brass and pipers for a rendition of 'Highland Cathedral', an overwhelmingly powerful and moving highlight. Another great moment for him was getting a whole school 'Mexican Wave' going in the middle of an OSJO performance of 'Tequila'. The whole event was so successful that it has become a regular event to enable every pupil to enjoy the experience at least once.

David has found that a special part of teaching young individuals to explore and aim for their musical potential is that no two musicians have been the same, and encouraging both their individual progress and ensemble training has been the main reason he has loved Oundle and stayed so long in one place. He is retiring slightly early in order to shift back to his original career of over 30 years ago, playing music. He will still be seen around Oundle though with his spaniel Skye and playing Gilbert and Sullivan! His colourful contributions to the school over 25 years, especially in its musical life, will be much missed.

Noah Wood

John Olver



John Olver leaves us after twenty one years as Master in charge of Rugby, during which time he also ran the PE department for sixteen years and served as a much-valued tutor in Grafton House.

On John's arrival in September 1996, there was no formal PE department but, as a trained PE teacher, John was keen to introduce the subject and, from a single initial trial set, the department grew under his leadership to the point where, in 2007, it became a fully-fledged academic department. In his time leading the rugby club, he not only presided over an extremely successful era for Oundle rugby, with two unbeaten seasons on a highly competitive circuit and overall positive win-loss ratios at 1st XV level against the likes of Harrow, Radley and Bedford, but also produced several professional and international players at both junior and senior level. John was extremely proud when his son Sam represented England U18 and went on to professional contracts with Northampton Saints and Worcester Warriors. John's prowess as a coach was considerable: his first XV's were often forged from teams that had enjoyed modest Colts seasons, but with his inimitable combination of carrot and stick, he motivated the boys to play for the shirt to a degree that opposition coaches often envied. He was an enthusiastic tourist and led countless tours overseas, often with his great friend and fellow international Simon Hodgkinson, including pioneering four-week trips to Australia and New Zealand.

A fiercely competitive man, both as a player and schoolmaster, John was interested, however, in far more than mere results. From very early on Saturday morning at the legendary 1st XV 'breakfast club' to kick-off time he did his best to educate his players in the wider sense by inculcating notions of

loyalty, friendship and commitment to one's team mates, both in the physical sense on the field and in terms of behaviour off it. He demanded complete dedication to the cause and occasionally struggled to understand why certain boys did not share this all-encompassing drive. Training was often physical and few boys he has coached (including many 2nd XV packs who fronted up bravely) will forget the infamous line-out game. Old school, perhaps, but very few Oundle teams were second best in the set piece on John's watch and the collective identity developed in these sessions carried his teams over the line in many a tight game. He could be abrasive at times, especially when the 1st XV were playing badly, but gave so much of himself to the boys and the only time he was genuinely frightening was when he took out his false teeth...

The importance of Saturday as a shop window, when potential parents and staff visit Oundle, was never lost on John. His match day hospitality was full of warmth, conviviality and bonhomie; John rightly insisted that opposition masters and coaches were met off the bus and entertained properly, and the very heart and soul of rugby were summed up by the sacrosanct principle of each coach finding his opposite number after a hard fought match and escorting him to the Common Room where, with fires burning at either end, the world would be put to rights over a pint or two. Indeed, long-standing relationships with the likes of Haileybury and Radley were celebrated by sit-down lunches pre-match and many friendships were sealed around these tables in the very best spirit of schoolboy rugby. John was an intensely loyal man who backed his staff and inspired much trust and loyalty in turn - despite enjoying adopting the role of the pantomime villain around the boys with tongue firmly in cheek. He invested time in his colleagues and this sincerity, kindness and generosity was often most appreciated by younger staff starting out coaching rugby at the school. He favoured the underdog, too, and often gave chances to boys who had incurred the wrath of colleagues once too often. It was a big mistake to underestimate him intellectually - he had an uncanny, at times prophetic knowledge of the quiz questions in the Saturday Telegraph - and attending the opera as a result of a lost bet was one of many instances in which he was able to laugh at himself. A keen practical joker, those that have been phoned on their mobile during Tuesday or Friday briefing or had their notes stolen and hidden two minutes before they rose to deliver a speech might not always have seen the funny side as quickly as Christopher John! Life spent coaching, tutoring and teaching with John was certainly never dull and the combination of success on the field and fun off it meant that the Oundle School rugby club in the CJO era was a most enjoyable place to be.

Scott Jessop

Marianne Smith



Marianne has made an exceptional contribution to the life of the School having been involved with a wide range of areas, including leading New House for 13 years, teaching both PE and Geography, undertaking numerous School trips and, most recently, running the PSHE programme and taking the lead in terms of delivering this crucial area of the curriculum in an original and dynamic way. She arrived at Oundle in 1997 as Head of Girls' Games, following twenty years working across a wide range of schools including in the maintained sector, a Catholic convent and a girls' day school. Initially she tutored in Wyatt until 1999 when she became Deputy Housemistress in New House. In 2002 she took on the role of Head of Sport, stepping down from this post to take over New House in 2004. Both her daughter, Bridie, and son, Jack, attended the School, leaving in 2004 and 2006 respectively.

Having served as Nicola Guise's Deputy for several years, her time as Housemistress of New House began in the most challenging of circumstances. Nicola was the archetypal 'tough act' to follow, but Marianne stepped into her shoes seamlessly, continuing with everything that was already great in the House and adding many brilliant touches of her own. At all times her focus was on the happiness and wellbeing of her girls, but this did not mean

that she was unaware of their failings and foibles: in fact it was her clear awareness and understanding of those occasional weaknesses which made her so brilliant at her job and rapidly gained their admiration, respect and affection. She fostered academic excellent and co-curricular participation in equal measure, ensuring the girls maintained the strong sense of the House's very special identity, not least inspired by its beautiful environment down by the river. One of Marianne's most defining features is her energy which she used creatively to prioritise inclusivity in the House ensuring that everyone – girls, domestic staff, matrons, House listeners, tutors – felt welcome and part of the community. The annual highlights included Mince Pies and Mulled Wine in December and the Pimms Picnic on Speech Day; she also organised barbeques for pupils and their invited guests and arranged yoga classes during exam season.

Marianne's exceptional leadership is most clearly demonstrated by the loyalty and love expressed by former pupils and those who have tutored with her. Caroline Rees writes: 'Marianne's incredible sense of humour, her warmth and openness, and especially her infectious energy have meant that everyone who has worked with her has enjoyed spending time in her company. We will feel her departure keenly; I feel that I have benefitted from Marianne as a patient mentor and a fantastic teammate who has also become a true friend'. Clare Westran, a long serving tutor, reflects upon the way in which Marianne's leadership helped shape the girls in her care: 'New House Girls are special. They are different. They have learnt from Marianne's example, and by the time they leave, they are strong, fair, kind and loyal. They are people who know what it is to give of themselves. And most importantly, they are fierce and unafraid. They leave here and they are ready to live their lives the way they want to – and it is Marianne, who has helped them become like that'.

Marianne's belief in the life-affirming and life-changing value of travel has been clear throughout her time at the School, perhaps most significantly through her seven trips to Kenya. Ian Clark writes: 'Marianne joined the Kenya trips in 2005, and soon became the bedrock of not just future trips but also of fundraising and 'friend raising'. In Kenya, Marianne would charm Kenyan headteachers, mastermind vegetarian extravaganzas from local markets, and mix concrete with the best of them, all with a smile and time for local children. In the UK, she helped us link up with Touraid to bring Ngecho pupils to Oundle in 2010, and New House raised thousands of pounds over the years for bursaries and buildings in Kenyan schools'. Catriona Redding recalls another occasion; 'Marianne co-led an innovative Community Partnership in 2004 with a state school in Wellingborough, creating a project which reflected upon race and class. The project

included a visiting Kenyan school and culminated in a dance performance that crossed racial and class divisions in an energetic and positive way'. Marianne also initiated the Girls' Sport Tour programme with a hockey and netball tour to South Africa in 1999. This was followed in 2002 with a girls' hockey tour to South America which, combined with the boys' rugby teams, which totalled eighty-eight pupils, ten staff and over 250 pieces of luggage; they visited Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, taking seven flights over twenty-one days. Phew! She has taken part in numerous other trips, including Third Form Field Weekends to Bushcraft, cycling, skiing and trekking. Catriona comments that Marianne invariably demonstrates unflagging enthusiasm and energy. She has cycled the length of Britain, Ireland and quite a bit of Europe. She thrives on challenge: the steeper the hill, the faster she goes! Marianne's favourite was a trip led by Paul Clark, to Alaska and the Grand Canyon.

Marianne moved from PE to Geography in 2014, bringing with her her natural energy, enthusiasm for the subject and powerful desire to give the pupils the best possible experience, to challenge them to fulfil their potential. She has been instrumental in the field work provision for junior pupils, and the quality of her teaching has ensured that many of those taught by her in the Third Form continue the subject to IGCSE and beyond. As a teacher she is interested, interesting and engaging, demonstrating to them the immediate relevance of the subject to their day to day lives. Philip Pitcher writes: 'Marianne is a fantastic friend and mentor: wise, caring and genuinely interested in supporting colleagues, never missing an opportunity to support those around her.'

In 2014 Marianne took on the role of Head of PSHE, and in this she has combined her strong teaching skills, her organisational abilities and her firm belief that pupils need to be taken out of their 'comfort zone' to really learn about themselves. She has worked tirelessly to create a stimulating programme of lectures and discussions, bringing in speakers who challenge the pupils on a range of topics, provoking thought and reflection. She believes in the importance of looking beyond the curriculum to ensure that aspects such as wellbeing and happiness are discussed and explored. Leading from the front she has been instrumental in the introduction of the 'Learning for Life' programme which, now in its infancy, will grow and grow – a fitting legacy for a gifted educator and communicator whose starting point for every decision is how it will benefit the pupils in her care.

The final words go to Clare Westran who captures all that makes Marianne such an exceptional individual who, with Sheridan, will undoubtedly remain a valued friend to pupils and staff alike:

'Marianne epitomises the characteristics of the bulldog that is the much loved sigil of New House. She is fierce and loyal, she is dogged and direct. She has the happy knack with both pupils and staff of looking them in the eye without saying a word and yet provoking in them a desperate desire to be the best they can be, to prove her faith in them. Through the recent year, her strength and wonderful joie d'vivre here has been an inspiration: she has fought a very hard battle with dignity and tenacity and she deserves now in retirement to do everything that she has always planned to. She will never truly leave Oundle, because she is forever in our hearts and always at the end of a telephone to dispense her sage advice. Not for her any peace and quiet, unless she changes her number!'

Juliette Coles

Genny King



To be an art teacher is to be endlessly patient; one has to encourage, nudge, cajole and sometimes force creativity from pupils. The ability to listen, to demonstrate the same thing over and over again, to encourage pupils to think and to express themselves in ways which are often new to them are qualities that not many possess. Genny possesses all of them in bucket loads. She is exceptionally wise, with

a very dry sense of humour, and is an excellent teacher - one who thinks about the art of teaching alongside the psychology of pupils. She stretches, nurtures, supports and enables pupils to get to their best, and all with a smile and a wry joke.

Arriving in 2007 having completed an MA in Book Arts at Camberwell College of Art and a PGCE from Goldsmiths, she brought to the Art Department an eye for Contemporary Art and digital skills that moved the department nearer to the 21st century. For nearly eleven years she has been a valued and inspirational teacher of Art and more recently History of Art. She built up good relationships with her pupils and would go far beyond the call of duty in putting in the time with them. Fearless in her approach, with an ability instinctively to know what each individual student needs to inspire and draw them out of themselves, Genny is known for being able to engage with those who are lost or floundering. Under her tutelage, masterpieces have been produced in the studios. Only quite recently her Head of Department, Jeremy Oddie, received an email from one of her ex pupils telling him how they are now painting professionally and to pass on his best wishes to her for all of her encouragement as her teacher. But you can't win them all. Genny will never forget the pupil who, despite her very best efforts, insisted on only drawing one platypus after another for his GCSE coursework. To this day, she still cannot look a semiaquatic egg-laying mammal in the eye. Then there was the boy who lifted up his work and asked 'is this expressive, or just s**t?' She will be greatly missed in the department for her kindness and her generosity as well as her sense of humour.

Genny was a tutor in New House when she first arrived at Oundle and it was immediately apparent that she would be a real asset to the Tutor team. Her warmth, sensitivity and quirky sense of humour enabled her to develop a caring and supportive relationship with the girls, who found her easy to talk to and genuine in her desire to provide a strong pastoral presence in their lives when they needed it most. She was a particularly supportive figure in the lives of her tutees, and often the quietest girls would visibly blossom under her guidance as they grew in confidence and learnt valuable life lessons. At the Christmas party Genny enjoyed helping the girls with their skits. One year she provided the piano accompaniment to one of the girls' songs; so engrossed was she that they had to shout at her to stop because the lyrics had run out a verse ago. Genny moved to Kirkeby to become Deputy Hsm in 2010 where she was accompanied by her mischievous and slightly manic terrier Tinker (AKA 'the ginger ninja'). She quickly became an integral part of the house, once again forming close relationships with the girls and bonding with them over a shared love of terrible reality TV. In 2016 Genny went to tutor at Laundimer and she

immediately felt an affinity for the House. The vibe and humour of Laundimer suited her. Once again, the time she invested in her charges, be it through supporting them on a freezing cold touch line or watching a house play, allowed her to know them inside out, something that came across in her very full tutor's reports. The boys quietly knew that Genny had their backs, and she would always promote their qualities and ensure that they were well represented, whatever the context.

During her eleven years at Oundle Genny has taken students all over the world to introduce them to iconic and influential works of art or pieces of architecture: New York, Washington, Amsterdam, Paris, Madrid, Florence, Venice – the list is an impressive one, and she admits she has been spoilt. On two separate trips she was mistaken for Nicole Kidman - by a barman in Amsterdam and by a charity collector in Florence - and on both occasions she had to pick the Head of Art up off the floor because he was laughing so hard. On all trips she has always found Oundelians incredibly resourceful and motivated, although she does remember one individual who didn't bring a sketchbook, camera or money, asserting he had a photographic memory, and who yelled out 'OK, where's the good stuff?!' as he glided through a room of never-before-seen Degas sculptures.

Not a natural sportswoman, Genny found her niche in Athletics. Braving the British summer weather, and equipped with factor 70 sunblock, golfing umbrella and thermal underwear, she has wielded her rake expertly as Queen of the long jump. Sports Day will not be the same without Genny in the commentator's box, fending off numerous ladybird attacks, her dulcet tones a firm fixture of many an athletics' event.

Despite starting at the same time as her husband Matt, it was to be six years of 'will they, won't they?' before they finally stopped being coy with each other, and the whole of the Oundle Common Room was delighted when Matt and Genny finally made it official. Having been such central parts of the Oundle School Community for so many years, it was only fitting that Genny and Matt got married in the Chapel and that they held their wedding reception in the Common Room: a December wedding with a Caribbean twist that aptly reflected their fun-loving and adventurous natures.

As Genny moves to Ardingly College to start a new chapter with Matt and their daughter Lilac, the Common Room feels a shade duller and the Ardingly community will be all the brighter for her presence.

Hattie Hopper

Matt King



Matt moved to Ardingly at Easter to take on a Housemaster role with his wife Genny and daughter Lilac. He joined Oundle as a sports fellow in 2007 when he had yet to lose his 'puppy fat' but fitted in well with Gareth Terrett and his colleagues in The Sports Department. He rapidly built strong relationships and connections with pupils and staff alike. Right up until his departure, he was always happy to get involved, and was a true all rounder on the sports field. For many years, he led the Badgers (staff cricket team) and always knew exactly where to place colleagues for the best outcome – I will of course never know why I ended up as slip for several games. The list of sporting commitments include Head of football, rugby, cricket, international sport tours, Ramblers cricket tours, staff football and inter-house football. Matt had a real passion for football, and how the boys performed was of great significance to him. He always maintained they must enjoy both the game and the experience. As master in charge he genuinely cared about progress and results across the whole club: all abilities, all levels and all age groups.

Matt was quite reserved socially and was renowned for avoiding the night out. Nonetheless, he did manage a night out in Peterborough in his early days dressed as a Nun, with the costume being borrowed from the housemistress Viv Nunn (now Gascoine), for whom Matt worked under in Dryden for his first year. Matt spent the remainder of his time (9 years) in School House, firstly as a deputy housemaster and finally as a tutor. I know Matt

hugely benefitted from, and enjoyed working with, Adam and Viv. His Third Form Field Weekends are famous in School House - including a walk, theme park trip and watching a game of football, normally up north somewhere.

Matt was a strong supporter of the Common Room, becoming a member of the committee for several years, running the squash ladder and playing an important part as an informal mentor for new colleagues. It is of course worth mentioning his time spent in the Talbot Hotel, where he knew all the staff, and his coffee and toast order (with jam) was almost ready waiting on his arrival. I loved receiving the email with just the words 'P3, Talbot?' and the fact we had shared timetables to enable maximum use of our free time.

Academically, Matt has dabbled in several subjects during his time at Oundle. Initially Geography and R.S., then, on the departure of Douglas Robb, he moved on to Politics. He worked under the watchful eye of John Gillings, and I think secretly supported his trench building project; on his departure Matt took over as Head of Politics. During this time he has enhanced the results of the Department and the uptake has rocketed. I always used to love working next door to his classroom, and the several colouring in jokes he would inflict on me each teaching day, dragging me in to discuss environmentalism, or telling the pupils I support the Green Party – his humour and approach to teaching were fantastically engaging. He was a master of his subject and passionate in what he taught. Mind you, his handwriting was terrible and I am genuinely surprised pupils did as well as they did being unable to read any feedback he wrote.

Matt was destined to be a bachelor, with a set of crinkled shirts, no kitchen washing up routine, a 'faulty iron' (which even got a mention from BJE at one of his reviews) and it was Genny that managed to shape and mould this excellent teacher into a family man. They 'got together' in April of 2013, getting engaged just six months later and marrying in the Christmas of 2014. Many of us have enjoyed watching Lilac grow up and seeing close knit family they have become. They have been a true Oundle couple.

Mat's sense of humour will be much missed, but a few highlights include: playing catch with, and then losing, his wedding ring on the 1st team football pitch and getting the whole team to search for it; his use of the Pinocchio growing nose gesture when he felt someone was telling a fib and his many one liners in his (long) speeches at team dinners.

Matt is patient, calm, considered, articulate, popular, caring, decent and importantly for the boarding school world - a true school master. I know he has a long and strong career ahead of

him and we all wish him the greatest of success at Ardingly and beyond.

Philip Pitcher

Robin Banerjee



It is early 2008, the Headmaster's Office, CMPB is interviewing an applicant for the position of Academic Fellow. The Headmaster looks to the nervous young man sitting opposite him and says, completely deadpan, 'the last time I saw you, you were wearing a pink rabbit costume'. This was not due to the fact that both men were members of a secretive gentlemen's club, but rather because Robin Banerjee, the said applicant, had been a volunteer for Oundle School Mencap that summer, and had clearly made an impression.

During his ten years at Oundle, Robin has been involved in all manner of School activities. After his fellowship he became a permanent teacher and joined the Psychology department for eight years, four of them as Head of Department. For three years he was Deputy Housemaster of Sidney, and alongside these two main roles he has been SACOS chairperson, rowing coach, ski instructor, diving instructor, Child Protection Officer, cross-country coach, commissioned officer in the CCF, and Adventure Training. This list of activities gives only a glimpse of the areas of the School Robin has touched. If he were a cub-scout his jumper would have run out of space on which to sew badges long

ago. With each of these he has shown a deep and sincere level of commitment, involving for example giving up weeks of holiday to lead and accompany School trips. Fellow teachers recognise the value of asking someone of Robin's experience to help with the burden of leading a trip, as well as his seeming inability to say no. His support has been especially valuable on the multiple Berlin trips he has assisted, an endless amount of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, ski trips, rowing camps, and the Red Sea diving trips where he has carefully helped to bring on the confidence of inexperienced divers.

Robin works with dedication for his pupils who see him as a kind and personable teacher. Although teaching the whole range of abilities, including the first Oundelian to be offered a place at Oxbridge to read Psychology, he is particularly strong at bringing on pupils who have found academic life difficult. Time spent with such pupils in gentle encouragement, often accompanied by humour, brought many on to achieve more than they had previously managed. This approach is reflected in his tutoring style which is sincere and genuine. He has established strong relationships with tutees over the years and has kept in touch with many once they have left. His sense of duty is exemplified by an occasion in Sidney when sickness had meant that many of the dining-room staff had not arrived at work, with the result that at 19.30 the pot-wash room was filled with the supper detritus from all of the boys of Sidney and Grafton, and no-one to wash it. Robin, together with Stuart Clayton, manfully reached for the marigolds and two hours later every plate, mug, bowl, spoon, knife and fork was sparkling like a new pin.

Robin is an Old Oundelian (Laxton 2000) and is therefore one of a small group of people who have seen the School from both sides. If a school can be best judged by the quality of the pupils it produces then Robin is a superb advertisement, and this

is perhaps illustrated best by his continued role in Oundle School Mencap holidays. Robin first joined as a volunteer during his Fifth Form and has returned to help in each of the twenty years since, gradually taking on more and more responsibility, such that he is now one of the trustees and is involved in setting up similar holidays in other boarding schools. He has always insisted that the young guests are the focus of the holidays, but one also acknowledges the deep and lasting effect that Robin's example and commitment has on the Oundelians who volunteer their time to help. I have witnessed the passion and care that they demonstrate year on year as they return and can vouch for the selflessness and effort that each person makes. Robin's legacy will be felt in many parts of School life, but perhaps here it is felt most.

On returning to Oundle to teach in 2008 after life in the Big Smoke Robin often opined that the typical Oundle teacher was too conservative, too traditional, too rural and in essence far removed from the urban existence of those working in London from where he had come. He would mock our chinos, our wellies, our dogs, our Volvos, our 2.4 children and claimed he would never conform to such a lifestyle. In one sense Robin has become the thing he mocks, but in doing so I know he feels that life is richer. Much of this is down to Louise, who Robin married in 2011 and who currently divides her time between being Hsm of Kirkeby and managing Robin. With their two children they will continue to live in Kirkeby whilst Robin embarks on a new career with the Police. His friends in the Common Room will miss him of course but we hope that he finds the next chapter of his career challenging and rewarding. In the meantime Robin will be reporting for duty as usual at the end of July for Mencap. You'll recognise him by his pink rabbit costume.

Brendan Deane



Louisa Jinks (2nd)



Tilly Ashby (2nd)



Emma Hall (U6)

Hattie Hopper



It is a truth universally acknowledged that an English Department in possession of a spare classroom must be in want of an HKH. Oundle was. Norwich Girls now is. Our loss. Their gain. Hattie arrived in 2009 from Coloma Convent School - a world away from Oundle -day, state and a religious foundation. Her signature florals must have burst upon that sober ambience even more vividly than they did upon ours but she was soon firmly planted. In the past a Jill-of-all-Trades and an 'accomplisher of a myriad of tedious office jobs', Hattie brought to us both her organisational skills and her newly burgeoning teaching expertise, vigour and verve. With delicacy and vision, she set about nurturing pupils and tutees alike, making herself an indispensable cog in the machineries of both the English Department and of Dryden where she tutored until 2016 when she moved to Laxton. For what will we remember Hattie? What will we celebrate? What will we miss as she turns this new page? The question really is – what will we not and there is neither world enough, nor time, nor pages in the Oundelian to do her justice.

Perhaps bees ... It is not everyone who considers the humble bee, goes on a beekeeping course eschewing inset training with turgid grammarians in favour of the language of speaking to these most indispensable of creatures. Perhaps shades of her university specialisation in Anglo Saxon, Celtic and

Norse led her into this most historic of traditional pursuits? Be that as it may, so began Dryden's Bee Keepers and later the wider Wednesday Activity group. Hives went from one to three with alarms and excursions in between as bees, like the weather, are temperamental creatures. Honey, lip balm, forays into medieval honey cakes, soaps and candles all followed. Each year the bee keeping coterie designed new labels for their produce and pored over their hives with anxious solicitude under Hattie's supervision, for, in these days of 'bee scarcity', colonies command a premium and theft is not, alas, unknown. So ours remain hidden – I am told- buzzing in happy seclusion and, like an Italian fraternity, the secret is vouchsafed but to the initiates. For the rest of us, a jar bought in the annual honey sales must suffice wherein we are joined even by that august body, The Worshipful Company of Grocers, who too have dipped their spoons into this elixir of Oundle life, or so I am told.

Perhaps trips...energy, enthusiasm and a vibrantly 'can do' approach have defined Hattie nowhere more clearly than in the realm of trips, trips and more trips. She has enriched the Department and her teaching groups with numerous expeditions to theatres and film showings of key texts. 'Literary London' days with Tim Hipperson and a cohort of Pre U students were notable events, as were her two recent pilgrimages to Canterbury in the footsteps of Chaucer. The sun shone, the 'shoures soote' held off and those brief sojourns in 'straunge strondes' lent the text a fresh immediacy for novice readers. She combined with Religious Studies to take a Dublin Trip; Religion and Literature happily coalescing in exhibitions of manuscripts and a viewing of the Book of Kells. She has supported Gold D of E expeditions too over recent years. Travelling further afield, she managed, despite being in her own words 'deeply unsporty', to cling to the tracksuits of those who were and get herself on to the Australia/ New Zealand Hockey Tour as photographer, emotional pit prop, lost luggage impresario and as she put it 'general comic relief'. She accompanied one of Andrew Martens' charity ventures to Mozambique and is due to join another this time to South Africa. As an honorary Geographer, she toured the rock formations and landscape features of Bulgaria. As an honorary Art Historian, she contemplated the 'landscapes' of artistic expression in New York. This trip was memorable not only, she tells me, for the extraordinary exhibitions but also for the city's 'High Line' - the reclaimed aerial train track over which she jogged, pre pupils and the day's itinerary, as the sun rose over Manhattan; a moment of contemplation when that city too did '... like a garment, wear/ The beauty of the morning;...'. Never dull of soul, these are a fragment of the many trips Hattie has been pleased to share with her charges, igniting in the process their interests and enthusiasms and bringing the curriculum alive...and her charges safely home, despite the

best endeavours of churlish border guards or inconsiderately erupting volcanoes.

Perhaps the Department... Here Hattie has been a mainstay. Creative and rigorous in equal measure, Hattie's classroom bespeaks its inhabitant. Walls, windows, boards are alike coerced into educational tools; this is the place to be! By dint of her own drive and enthusiasm and her infectious delight in literature, she has encouraged, inspired, cajoled and shoe-horned her charges into achievements of which she, they and the department are deservedly proud. Committed Second in Department and Acting Head on occasion, Hattie has over-seen competitions, invited speakers, taken minutes, set papers, sustained World Book Day, reigned Queen of the display boards and generally been integral to making Old Dryden a special and vibrant place. She has mentored and coached the potential University Entrants, laboured over Personal Statements, encouraged the faint hearted and had no truck with the laggards. In Mrs Hopper's class deadlines are deadlines and what a fine lesson will her graduates take to the world outside. Above all, Hattie shares books, develops interests and makes her students believe in themselves and the power to express their own ideas, not just hers, with confidence in the written and spoken word. She teaches with imagination and empathy- rare gifts - informed always by that twinkle of mischief and of not seeming to take it all too seriously.

And then again, perhaps drama ...where Hattie has been no less active. She has brought her own unique twist to enliven the tradition of 'Shakespeare Day' breaking ranks to script *A Day in the Life of a Bard* and *Shakespeare on Trial*, both lightly irreverent takes on the great man and his art, and then putting on *Hamlet Backwards* – possibly an improvement on forwards but certainly no more and possibly less, baffling. She trod the boards herself in the memorable staff performance of Ayckbourn's *Confusions* acting across John Arkell whose ad lib and ad hoc variations presented plenty of entertaining confusion in themselves. Most often, however, she has been found directing and polishing the board-treading of others. Joining with Tim Hipperson and Naomi Jones for a selection of Tennessee Williams' *Shorts* with a senior cast, she directed *Portrait of a Madonna*. She has also directed three other major school productions with the first and second forms: *Robin Hood*, *The Wind in the Willows* – Toad's armour currently graces her sitting room in the manner of a Manorial Hall - and now *Bugsy Malone*, although I think the key note brooms with which I have seen her rushing about will not be similarly given post-performance house room. This latter is by far the most ambitious production yet to be attempted with junior years at the Stahl and for this Hattie must take significant credit. Co-directing with Jo Henderson, with whom she also worked on *The Wind in the Willows*, she has produced and

choreographed a full-scale musical complete with band and cast of forty-three, for many of whom this is a debut into the world of theatre. Her unending good humour and support of these young actors has brought out the best in them and her passion and vision is being realised as I write, for the curtain goes up tonight. Hattie's wit, energy and directorial prowess will be surely and sorely missed by all at the Stahl.

Caring tutor, critical thinker, passionate director, forthright speaker, loyal colleague, generous friend- all these and more are Hattie. We will miss the breath of fresh air, the twirl of that vintage full skirted coat, music in the office, chocolate, pink tea, amazing high heels ...and fun. The chapter ends and our book goes back upon the shelf in the great library of life. But, Hattie is on to another. There are quilts to make, a new house to benefit from her inimitable creative sense of style, dancing to resume and the endless expanses of the Norfolk Broads for Bailey to explore ...and when time affords, some more pupils with whom to share her love of literature.

*It is all I have to bring today,
This and my heart beside,
This, and my heart and all the fields.
And all the meadows wide.
Be sure you count, should I forget-
Someone the sum could tell-
This, and my heart, and all the bees
Which in the clover dwell.
Emily Dickinson*

Helen Wells



Sophie Rouwenhorst (5th)

Ollie Butterworth



Ollie Butterworth readily admits that he cultivates the persona of ‘grumpy old man’, but anyone who has known him in his relatively short time at Oundle will remember him as a loyal and supportive colleague with a dry sense of humour, who genuinely cares about the pupils in his charge.

Ollie arrived from King’s Taunton in Sept 2015 as Head of Economics. He had big shoes to fill, but he quickly established himself as a highly efficient and popular Head of Department. He always sets very high standards for himself, he expects the same from pupils, and the department has continued to prosper under his watch. He is a dedicated teacher and Economist, and has arranged a highly successful series of Economics Society talks.

After a year of tutoring in Sidney House, Ollie was quickly snapped up to fill the role of Assistant Housemaster in Bramston, which he has done with distinction. Once again, after the departure of Michael Case, he had big shoes to fill, but quickly won the Bramston boys round, and they know and respect him as a firm but fair hand. He has always given very generously of his time and has thrown himself into the life of the House, leading and accompanying several House trips. In the words of Alistair Sherwin, his Housemaster, Ollie ‘has been a loyal supporter of the Bramston boys and there is a sense of calm and order when he is on duty, the boys appreciating that he has the ability to spot that someone is about to do something wrong even

before they know it themselves. His direct, unfussy approach sits very well with them, as does his generous sharing of his variety of interests, from cricket to chess.’

Ollie is a man of many talents, and his own sporting ability - he was an especially talented cricketer - has made him a real asset to that side of the School’s life. Generous as ever with his time, he has coached A and B teams in cricket and rugby with some distinction. He ran the recent ‘development squad’ cricket tour to South Africa Easter 2018, in which he successfully brought together a group of the School’s most promising players from across four year groups. Not only that but he also, very valiantly, gave up time during the Easter break in 2017 to go on a reconnaissance trip to Sri Lanka, for a tour that he was not even going to accompany. Five minutes on a bus travelling to an away match would be enough to convince anyone how passionate he is about cricket, and he is equally passionate about helping keen players to improve their game. More than that, though, he insists that the game should be played in the right way, and he prioritises proper, gentlemanly conduct over everything else.

Ollie is quite the overseas adventurer, and after organising a trip to climb Mount Kilimanjaro at his previous school, he ran a highly successful trip to Machu Picchu in Peru July 2017. In spite of the challenges that such overseas expeditions can present, Ollie always managed to remain remarkably sanguine and level-headed – well, almost always. Having kept calm throughout - even when stuck in a road-block for nine hours due to striking teachers, and again when the final departure was almost delayed when the aforementioned teachers tried to storm the runway of the local airport - he finally lost the plot when they tried to serve him a medium rare beef-burger in a very upmarket restaurant. After a couple of mouthfuls, enough was enough and he sat there with his arms folded and a face like thunder as the burger was then cremated to within an inch of its life.

A man of many parts, Ollie is a highly talented double bass player, although his natural modesty has meant that he has kept this talent largely under wraps during his time at the School.

Ollie married Jo in December 2015, their daughter Darcy was born in December 2016, and Ollie is above all else a devoted family man. The Butterworths are all looking forward to the next chapter of their life in Hampshire, where Ollie has been appointed Housemaster of School House at Lord Wandsworth College. Amongst all the other things he is looking forward to, he fully expects that he will continue to be mistaken for either the

ex-England rugby captain, Chris Robshaw or Chris Martin of *Coldplay*, as he assures me has frequently been the case during his time at Oundle.

A grumpy old man he may be, but he will be warmly remembered and sadly missed, and we wish him all the very best in his new challenges.

Andrew Ireson

Samah Naga



Originally from Tunisia, Samah Naga joined the language department as Teacher of Arabic and French Assistant back in 2014. She had previously worked at a school in Peterborough teaching French and running an Arabic Club and had also been coming into Oundle to work with our Fifth Form giving them Arabic speaking practice on the run up to their exams.

Samah is leaving us to teach Arabic at Doha College but has really left her mark on the Arabic Department here. Oundle is one of very few schools to offer Arabic to non-native speakers, and Arabic teaching methodology is quite under-developed and good resources are scarce, but in the four years that Samah has been here at Oundle, she has become one of the 'go to' people within Arabic teaching circles. This is because of the huge amount of networking she has done. She has been approached for advice from other teachers, has got involved with British Council Arabic programmes, has delivered taster classes at prep schools and an Arabic club at LJS, and became an examiner for CIE and Edexcel. Many

teachers from other schools have asked to come and visit the department to see how she does things.

As an extremely conscientious member of the language department team, she spent a huge amount of time on her lesson planning and went to great lengths creating her own resources, always spending a lot of time thinking about how best to teach certain structures or skills. She has been a fantastic colleague: co-operative, caring, good-humoured and flexible, always open to new ideas and very reflective concerning her own practice. Sometimes she has been so hard-working, that she has fallen asleep at home after work and then does not turn up to a dinner party where everyone is hungry and she is the only one yet to arrive.

Samah has a determined, energetic and focused approach, although she has been known to cheat when playing board games, blaming it on the fact that she does not know the rules, but really because she wants to win! Her expectations of her pupils, her colleagues and herself are very high – she even kept me as her HoD on my toes! She is ambitious for her pupils, and the first of her concerns when offered her new job was the provision that would be made for her current pupils.

Aside from her teaching Samah is considered one of the most classy and elegant teachers on the modern languages team. Whether going out to a special event or having a quiet get-together at home, she will always show up in the most beautiful dress, leaving everyone wowed. She has a love of nice clothes, cars, sunglasses and handbags so we know that she will enjoy herself in life in the Gulf. Doha College is extremely lucky. As well as my regular supply of harissa fresh out of Tunisia, we will miss her for all that she has brought to the department and the teaching of Arabic at Oundle. We just hope she won't forget us once she gets immersed in her new 5 star lifestyle!

Sara Davidson and Karen Paone



Isabelle Ramsay (5th)

Chris Davison



It is exceptionally sad to see Dr Chris Davison leave Oundle after four years to take up a post at Wellington College. Arriving, fresh from a PhD in Organic Chemistry at Nottingham University, he settled naturally into his teaching. Chris has brought a real flare and passion to the subject, and with his exceptional understanding of the subject has been a real asset in growing the reputation of the subject, across all year groups. Chris is hugely respected by his Chemistry colleagues, and well renowned for being able to stretch and challenge those most able – even his co-workers at times.

Chris took on the running of the Fire and Rescue section of the CCF in September 2014 and took to playing fireman Sam very quickly indeed. Those involved in the activity have gained much from his leadership, and his considered, calm and patient manner has been an asset to the CCF.

Chris has been a patient, caring and wise tutor in Laxton. He is described as a cheery presence, and one who naturally commands and has earned respect from his tutees. The Laxton team will miss him immensely.

Oundle Hockey, both town school, have benefitted from having Chris on side. He has coached U15 and U16 A teams – taking extra sessions and supporting teams as they face national competitions. He is

also a keen cyclist and has supported the cycling squad during the Summer term. He is exceptionally streamlined and fast, and would often cycle what sounded like a 1000 miles on a Sunday afternoon without blinking. He even managed to get me on a road bike once or twice; where I truly saw his patient and caring side in action.

Chris, has enjoyed a number of trips during his time here, notably to Berlin, Sicily, The Somme, The Peak District and the Yorkshire cricket tour. He has contributed a lot to the wider extra-curricular life of the School and Common Room, even playing for the staff cricket team too, and it is here I must confess that he was probably not out the time I gave him LBW two years ago, I hope he will forgive me.

Ultimately Chris has been an excellent teacher, sportsman, coach, tutor and friend during his stint at Oundle. Always a happy and steady colleague: and the whole Common Room wish him the very best with his teaching career ahead.

Philip Pitcher



Olga Carmarda (5th)

Salvete

Mark Probert

Teacher of Drama, maternity cover

Mark Probert joins Oundle after being Head of Drama at St John's Leatherhead and studying for a MA in Scriptwriting at the University of East Anglia. He has worked as a performer and technician for a variety of theatre companies – most notably for the RSC back in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon – and is an expert in Commedia dell'Arte. He now lives in Norwich with his wife, son, two cats and a labrador

Elizabeth Furber

Teacher of Chemistry

Elizabeth graduated from the University of York with a Masters in Chemistry in 2017 before completing her teacher training. During her degree she completed an exchange year at the University of Sydney where she completed a research project aimed at the synthesis of new microtubule targeting agents for Gliosarcoma treatment. This experience encouraged her love of travelling. She is a keen sportswoman, enjoying both playing and coaching hockey, cricket and futsal, recently playing in the Futsal FA cup. Alongside sport she also has a strong musical background as an ex-chorister at Worcester Cathedral.

Elizabeth Bull

Teacher of DET, maternity cover

As a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Elizabeth brings with her experience of working as a wardrobe mistress in the West End and a costumier at Disneyland Paris. A degree in Interior Architecture from the University of Kent led to Elizabeth retraining as a Design and Technology teacher while running her Interior Design business.

Since moving back to Northamptonshire with her partner and daughter in 2014, she has worked at a number of schools within the state and independent sectors, and has just spent a year teaching at an international English school in Hässleholm, Sweden. In her spare time, Elizabeth is a keen skier and saxophonist and is currently renovating a house in France.

Antony Bounds

Registrar

Antony joins Oundle following a successful career in the Higher Education sector with a number of senior roles in admissions and recruitment. He is currently Head of Partnerships for The NDA Foundation in Nottingham, having held senior positions at universities in Birmingham, Northampton and Warwick. Antony also spent time teaching at university where he was a seminar tutor and associate lecturer. He graduated from King's College London with a MA in Imperial and Commonwealth History and has a BA in History from the University of Reading. Antony is currently working on a part-time PhD in Caribbean History.

Always a proud Northamptonian, having lived across the world in New Zealand and the Caribbean, Antony is moving to Oundle in the summer with his wife and two young children. In what little spare time he has, Antony enjoys reading, music and going to the cinema.

Samuel Janes

Head of Economics

After studying during the financial crisis, Samuel knew that he wanted to teach Economics and help pupils understand how the global economy that provides so much prosperity, could also bring such misery to millions worldwide. He achieved a 1st class Economics degree at the University of Leicester and has taught A-Level and IB economics at Oakham School.

He is a keen rugby and cricket coach and still likes to get out for the odd game where possible. He married his wife, Jennifer, in August 2017.

Ellie Talbot

Teacher of English

After six years at Oakham School, Ellie is looking forward to joining her husband David at Oundle. Ellie read English at Exeter and completed a PGCE at Sussex University. Ellie and David have two children, Rosie, four and William, one, and ambitions to adopt a dog in the future.

Neil Salvi

Teacher of Mathematics

Neil joins Oundle from Highgate School, after studying Mathematics at Oxford and a successful career in the technology sector. Over the last 20 years he has enjoyed applying mathematics in cutting edge technology areas including client-server computing, mobile video, graphics and data analytics and has founded start-ups spanning USA, Europe and India. He has an MBA from INSEAD and part-time lectures on start-ups, innovation and entrepreneurship at some of the top MBA schools globally. Neil is a keen sportsman, playing hockey and cricket, and he arrives at Oundle with his family, wife Priya and daughters Keya, fourteen and Ella, seven.

Peter Liston

Bramston Housemaster

Peter is returning to Oundle after a year away at Fettes College in Edinburgh. He was a member of the Classics Dept at Oundle for six years and a tutor in Laundimer House. He is hoping that the Bramston boys will not hold that against him! He first moved to Oundle after five years in Wiltshire at St Mary's, Calne, teaching Classics. Before that, he spent time teaching English literature at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany and a season playing Rugby in the North East of Italy. Peter studied Classics at St Andrews and trained as a teacher at King's College, London.

Paul Batterbury

Teacher of Biology

Paul has been teaching for over thirty years with a varied career including many seasons as a Housemaster, in schools north and south of Oundle. More recently he has been a Headteacher in Nepal and Saudi Arabia and with his love of travelling, he will spend this summer with the British Exploring Society as their Chief Leader in the Peruvian Amazon. To keep fit, he participates in ultra marathons having spent his early years as a swimmer and then triathlete.

Amy Lynch

Teacher of Mathematics

Amy is joining Oundle after having taught at Boston College for four years, where she was the GCSE Maths Coordinator. She grew up near Oundle, attending Prince William School, and gained a Masters in Mathematics from Lancaster University. She currently lives in a village near Thorney with her husband Rob and eight-year-old step-son, Riley, an aspiring footballer.

She has achieved grade 6 in Piano and has always enjoyed playing netball and rounders as well as football, spending a lot of her spare time either playing football with Riley or watching him play for his local teams.

Jerome Broun

Head of Woodwind

Jerome studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh. For the last 7 years he has been the full-time woodwind teacher for The British School Al Khubairat in Abu Dhabi and the UAE National Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed with the Hallé Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Opera North, Orchestra do Algarve, Andrea Bocelli, The Jacksons, Jaz Coleman of Killing Joke and the BBC Blue Planet Live with George Fenton in Abu Dhabi. Jerome is married to Katherine and has a 5 year old son Louis.



Holly Telfer (U6)



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