

THE STOIC



THE STOIC

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EDITORIAL

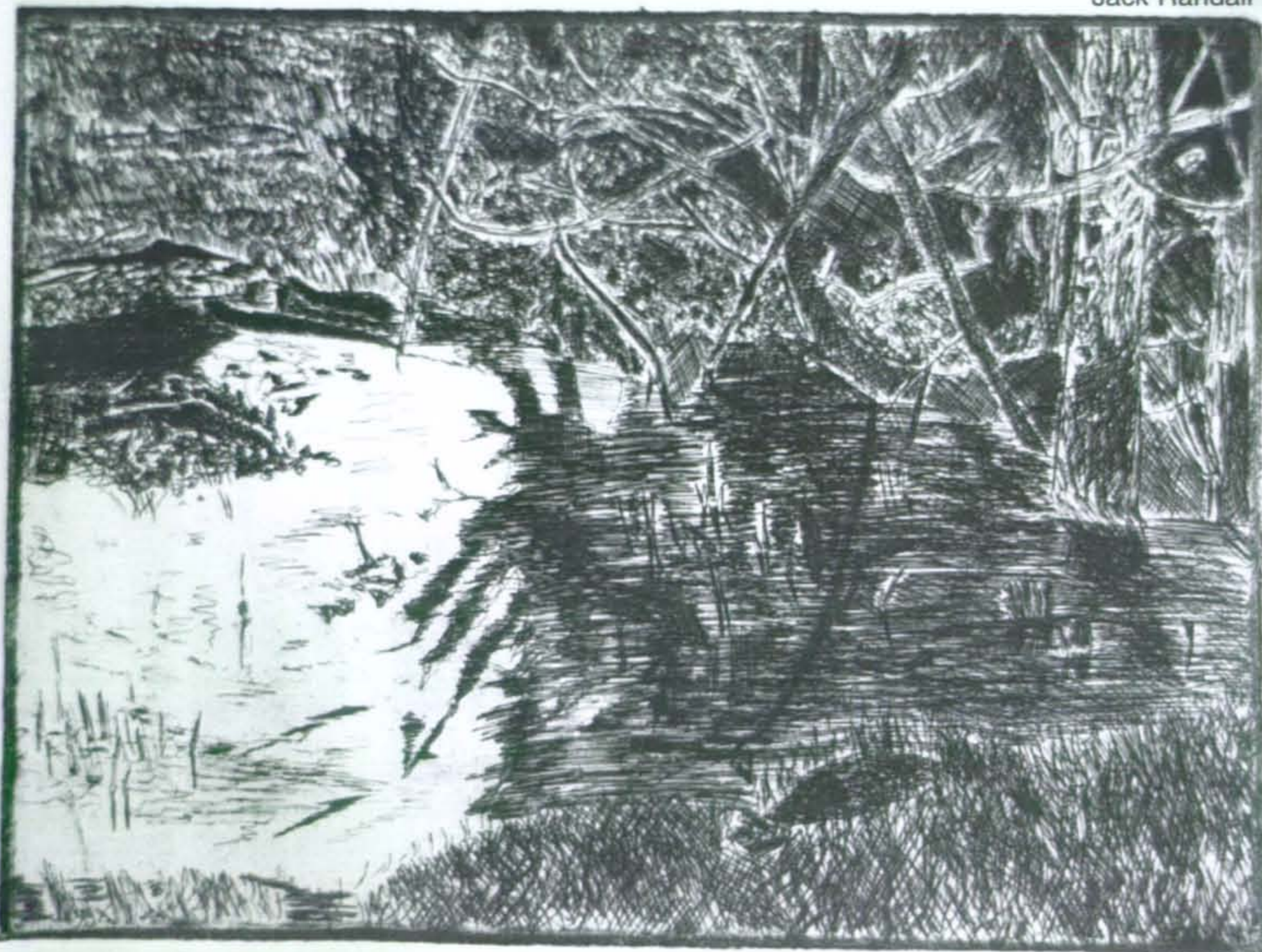


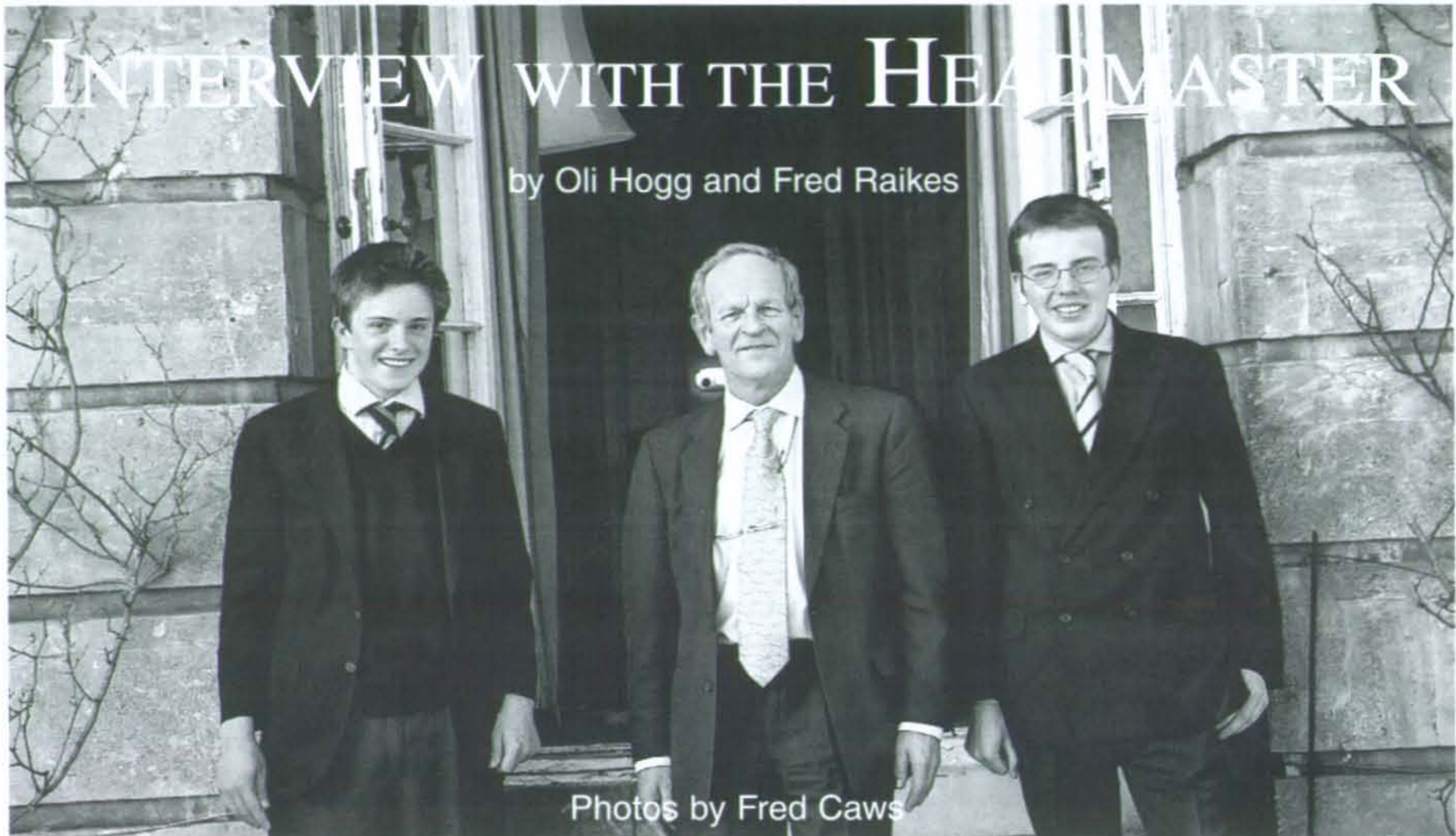
Rollo Weeks

I have a calendar which shows all the World Whatever Days and National Such and Such Weeks, yet I have never felt the need to remind Stoics of what is coming up because they already do so much for charity. From the volunteers carrying out Community Service, via those buying SCCWID clothing (still going strong), to those carrying out charity work in their Gap Years, not forgetting the sterling efforts of Cobham House (who raised thousands of pounds the other week

for Macmillan Nurses and the Biodiversity Trust in Namibia), Stoics and staff are always prepared to put their hands in their pockets and go that extra mile. As ever members of our community ran in the London Marathon, completed sky dives and braved the stage of the Roxy – all in the name of Charity. Surely no-one can claim that boarding schools cut pupils off from the real world when they foster this level of awareness and community spirit?

Jack Randall





Did you ever imagine that when you first began your teaching career, that you would one day end up as a Headmaster?

No not really at all. I think partly because actually I loved teaching, and it is the one terrible tragedy that Headmasters do not teach anymore – no not really. I think I thought about being a Housemaster because you are involved in a more intense way.

Was it ever you plan to be a teacher?

Dare I say it wasn't really my plan to be a teacher originally, I think it is a well enough known story that I was wanting to be a Doctor, but Chemistry 'A' Level found me unequal to the task, not once but a few times and I decided to be a teacher in my last term at Cambridge – loved it, loved my life and why shouldn't I? But I do regret not teaching anymore.

When you first came to Stowe, you had heard lots about it. Out of what you had heard what did you wish was not true?

An interesting question. There was one particular event if I remember thinking said quite harsh things about Stowe and it occurred about six years before I ever even thought about applying to the place. I remember reading an article in a newspaper which was a report of a bomb hoax here on the widow of a very important, impressive man in the government that had been blown up in his car in the House of Commons car park and I remember thinking what a thoughtless, senseless, insensitive, boorish, kind of School that must be and when I came here of course it wasn't, but that was an incident I do remember reading about with a great disdain.

What were your first impressions of Stoics?

Pleasant, charming, naturally untidy, smiley.

Hard working?

Not particular hard working – just that the clever Stoics, the ones that are academically gifted I think have always worked very hard and achieve fine things, but I think they were not particularly hard working at the time – I hope they are more hard working now.

In your first speech you said you wanted to become a Headmaster so you could become more pompous and absurd.

Yes I read this, but in actual fact you miss quote me because I remember exactly what I said it was because I wanted to become even more pompous and absurd because there is an interesting ironic self preservation there – I don't know, you must judge that, but from my own point of view I think I am probably certainly more pompous and factionally more absurd.

Has there ever been a time in your career at Stowe when you thought that you had just had enough?

Not really no, I have always found it very exciting. I remember a question that was asked me at the interview was "what attracted me to the job" and it was the challenge, because in those days the buildings and the grounds were a particular challenge as was the School, so I don't think that, I don't think I have ever felt that. I don't want you to think it has been all plain sailing and serene still waters but I don't think I wanted to chuck it all in.

It has often been said that the hard part of being a Headmaster is expelling a pupil, do you think this is the hardest job?

Yes it is very hard of course, I don't know whether it is the hardest but it is certainly up there because it is a statement of failure. I think it is a failure on the Stoic's

part of not regarding the rules and not understanding what we are here to do, of having the wrong priorities maybe and losing sight of the ball. I think it's a failure from the School's point of view because we haven't actually managed to educate somebody who has been convinced that the other option is probably the right way... I think it may be a failure of parents as well not to correct and direct and show the sign posts, but I think it's a failure all round and I think it's hard and it sort of runs counter to everything I feel young people should be doing particularly at Stowe and particularly here and now – yeah that is tough. I think there are other things as tough as well but you are not going to ask me what those are?

Do you look back on any incident and regret your actions whilst you have been here?

Yeah, I do have a glib answer and say I regret everything and I regret nothing, but there is nothing really that stands out. I think one would be less than human not to look back and think, gosh, you know we make mistakes and that's what experience is called. I liked to think that I have tried to make decisions and then come to a rational judgement, slept on it and so on, but I am not sure, gosh, I think life probably is full of events, but on the other hand I think that living a life of regret i.e. that means living in the past and I think life is meant to be lived and learned from those things. Regret suggests that one doesn't have any regrets, doesn't make mistakes and I think one does, even Headmasters do, even I probably more than most.

In the March 1994 interview you were asked what your intentions were for the following five years. Do you think you have fulfilled everything?

What were my intentions, can you remember?

"To augment the structures, atmosphere and goals in terms of preparing Stoics for later life."

I think we are doing that. I think this is more a constructive School and a more encouraging School to ensure that you guys take responsibility for your lives and decisions and so.

"To do the best by every Stoic in order to enable either him or her to be his or her best."

Yes, how that has happened I don't know whether I have augmented it or not. I think it is a continuous struggle to make sure everybody is encouraged and wants to make the most of themselves and understand that an education at Stowe I hope, rather more than almost anywhere else, is an education for life and not just an eighteen year old's exit line.

There is a lovely story told of a CCF group who went down on a field day and the farmer's grounds whom they were practising this on down in Dorset actually had had a son here and one of the officers said "we didn't know that and how has he turned out, were you pleased"? and he said "I don't know he is only 33 years old you see". I think this is a very wise judgement as to what a School

actually does, it prepares you for the future, so I would hope that the structures and the atmosphere and the emphasis of the place continues to be like that.

You go on to say "to have the possibility of housing more of the staff and community on site".

That's a disappointment – we haven't managed to do that, but that is to do with finances and it remains an unfulfilled goal of mine. I do believe that actually a community is centred around the place and I think it is quite sad that some people have to drive a long way and therefore get back very late because they are involved in the whole enterprise of the School, so no we haven't I'm afraid.

"To develop some of the sporting facilities."

Oh yes, I am happy about that.

"To develop a broader yet vigorous curriculum which can be more encompassing of everyone's time."

Yeah, I think that is true too – for instance we now do subjects we didn't do before like Theatre Studies, History of Art and a broader group of D&T and stuff so yes I think we have responded to the National Curriculum.

The partnership which now exists between Stowe School, the National Trust and the Stowe House Preservation Trust is a wonderful tripod and although one may have concerns about our relationship with the National Trust, they have done brilliantly in the grounds and a lot of people are now seeing them who wouldn't have done and they are glorious for Stoics to go and despoil themselves in and that comes with a bit of a price, but as I think I said in another place it relies upon a similar relationship and like a marriage you have got to give and take and now we have got a third party in it which is the Stowe House Preservation Trust which is taking care of the financing of this wonderful restoration and conservation programme that we are seeing in the Mansion, and they are taking off and it is wonderful to have gone through the pain to receive the status quo of the North Front and Stowe School needs to be solid, healthy and have roots and security because everyone acknowledges that we are the best inhabitants of the site for as far as the eye can see and the place was built to be lived in and we are the most lived in stately home in the world – certainly in Britain, and therefore I think the success of establishing the foundation of the School, being able to fund bursaries, scholarships, attract a variety of people here, which is where I think Stowe is wonderful in its intake, it is broad – we are not just a forcing shed for tomatoes to get 18 year old exams, we hope we celebrate the individual to see that any Stoic has enormous potential talents, abilities, zeal and those are the things that count in a school. It is a better education for the clever ones than the more academically challenged who are living together and acknowledging each other and everybody is achieving, so a foundation is actually crucial to the rightness of the enterprise.

So whether we have fulfilled all those goals, I think the School has moved on and is a very exciting place. A couple of governors recently talked about the renaissance of Stowe, both of in the grounds, in the Mansion and indeed in the School and I don't know if you are aware if it, but there is this terrific feeling of achievement, of going forward and making progress and securing the beauty of the place, which is after all why Stowe is so special.

Where do you see Stowe going in the future?

I would hope that it would always be as eminent as it is currently and that it is seen not as an alternative to anywhere, but actually as a proper, decent, vigorous education for life and the establishment promotes that and I find myself saying to prospective parents "any Headmaster worth his salt will say in singing the praises of his school, we are here to acknowledge the individual and get him to grow within the context of a society or a community". In society I believe that of course I do and more so at Stowe because that is why it was founded in 1923 and more so because when it comes to it, this is not a conforming school, however much you may think that the rules get stricter and cabin and crib people, it is actually for celebrating, encouraging and giving confidence to Stoics to achieve and go on and be somebody.

How big a role do you see in the National Trust?

Well as I said sort of before, I think and I hope they will be in the partnership for a long time to come because they have done miraculous things – marvellous things in the grounds and restoration of several of the garden buildings. I remember having just arrived when the agreement with the National Trust was just agreed and published in gifting the estate and the buildings over to their umbrella and people said "what are we gaining?", but what we gained was invaluable because the burden of the restoration of the buildings would have killed us and so I celebrate – they have done a wonderful job and they have improved the ambience immeasurably, so yes I do, but I think the crucial thing is to make sure that the public and the private will work with the school and the interests of the public are kept in balance so that actually the School is not disturbed and yet the general public can see the benefits in terms of heritage money.

What do you think of the change from the old 'A' levels?

I had a years exchange in America and appreciated their system but criticised it as well – you get credited for all sorts of things and in the Sixth Form you have a maintenance course jostling with classics jostling with Shakespeare and so on and... I thought was good but actually the depth of it I didn't think was much and was celebrated in the old 'A' levels which had a depth of study which meant that our degree courses could be three years instead of four which they are in the States for their first degree, so I would have loved ours to have been somehow super imposed on their's, but I did look at support for breadth because it seemed to me ludicrous that at

15/16 years when you took GCSE's, the old 'O' levels, people wouldn't necessarily do anymore Maths or anymore Modern Languages or History and that is a shame, so the idea is that the broadening should keep those subjects going in a greater breadth.... and I ultimately approved of and voted for in the councils for 'AS' level because at least that kept more subjects in a greater breadth longer, where I disagree violently with the current set up is that 'AS' is worth half an 'A2' level and that probably is not true. In a subject like economics which we happen to take at GCSE but it doesn't get taught at GCSE which is a new subject therefore, the concepts are so strange in one sense and difficult to overcome and absorb at 16 years so you need a whole year or a year and a bit to be able to get your teeth into it to understand it and I think to give 'AS's' the weight of 50% is wrong – I just think it is not right so therefore I think the system was a little bit still born – I agree with the breadth but I think there must be a different way. I suspect there will in time become an English bac, I hope we don't just fold in with the European bac because I don't actually think it necessarily sits very easily with English education.

So do you think it has robbed Lower Sixth Form of their performance?

Oh yes and I regret that enormously. Mark you having said which, I think it was very true in the first year and I think that musicians weren't playing so much music – they didn't want to commit themselves to plays, debating or any of these wonderful 'what's on the menu' in a broad Church School because there was an exam looming or module or whatever it was. I think actually in the second year and subsequent year people were more confident so that they could do that and that the level that they were examined at the end of the summer was perhaps less or considerably less demanding than everybody thought it might be on the experience of the first year and I think that schools particularly like Stowe are incredibly well geared to give.

How would you personally teach the exam system?

I think the breadth needs to be maintained – we should examine less, that is the out shot of it, as we have got into a mindset whereby you should measure everything. We have got this fixation about trying to measure what is valuable and in fact that's what's the real thing – we value what is easily measurable and that is rubbish because it is pragmatic and what we should be doing is trying to give hundreds of things that are valuable and I actually think that debating and plays and the congreve and concerts and the beagles etc. is valuable in terms of growth and learning and experience and demand for exploration is the other things.

What has been your role in the MEP and how have you contributed to its success?

I'm a convinced European – I'm a citizen of the world, what I want all Stoics to be, which is in some ways un-British or conceived to be un-British and I think that actually historically it goes all the way back to the

Commonwealth and so on. I think that the British should be very cosmopolitan. I think that thinking we are an island and therefore little old England, it isn't as simple as that. I think I am a terrific European. I believe in the exchange of cultures and having others here and exchanges with other schools and so on is wonderful. I don't happen to believe in the Euro, but that is by the by, but I can see the pragmatic use of it for tourists, but I am not sure we should go into it and so I wanted to bring that sort of vision, education and experience to Stowe, so I was Chairman, but actually the Chairman of the Governing Body when we started it was Sir Edward Tompkins who was our man in Paris and was a Diplomat and had wonderful ties and so two Dutch ladies came to see me and said 'this is what we want to do' and I said terrific I would be the leader of the British delegation and so forth which is how it started and it has grown and I think it is a magnificent opportunity for people to exchange, interact and make lots of wonderful contacts and understand the workings of the European Parliament and so on and all that it involves and indeed go to wonderful places that one might not have gone to otherwise. This last time because I have retired from the Board, I didn't go but they went to Slovenia and next time they are going to Helsinki, but it is just magnificent and the quality of young people who are in the MEP, delegates and delegations from the 15 member states that now is – wonderful children, wonderful people. So I think it's terrific and I am marvellously happy and rewarded by that.

How have the attitudes of young people changed?

It's difficult. I'm not sure they have changed that much in 40 years – I think there may be a great sense of purpose in that one thing leads to another and it is necessary to go through certain endeavours and achieve certain bench marks to make the most of yourselves and so on and I think there is a kind of planning mechanism which is in much greater focus than it was, but I think by and large the enduring values remain and I think that the aspirations of wanting to do the best that they can, of compassion for other people at least particularly at Stowe.

I think what has changed has been the terrific pressures that you young people have to grow up into from all sorts of areas and I don't know whether I want to take this back to 14 years ago really, only the vast difference in my life time, well for instance there were jobs for life in the old days and once one got a job then it was pretty guaranteed, now it seems to me that a career is built up of a series of appointments and directions and although that is good because it means the variety and flexibility and one of the things I hope that we do at Stowe is to make people absorb change and make people more comfortable with that and accommodating to change because life is going to change and I suppose what that might have done to is to make people a little self centred perhaps and therefore actually think 'what I am going to get out of things' and it is sort of an audit of energy versus reward, but I do think that young people are quite as

sympathetic to others as ever they were, more so actually when I was at school, but I think that there is a little bit of sort of 'what's in it for me' or 'why do I have to do this'. Questioning of oneself is not a bad thing because I think it just makes life more interesting and a bit more energetic perhaps.

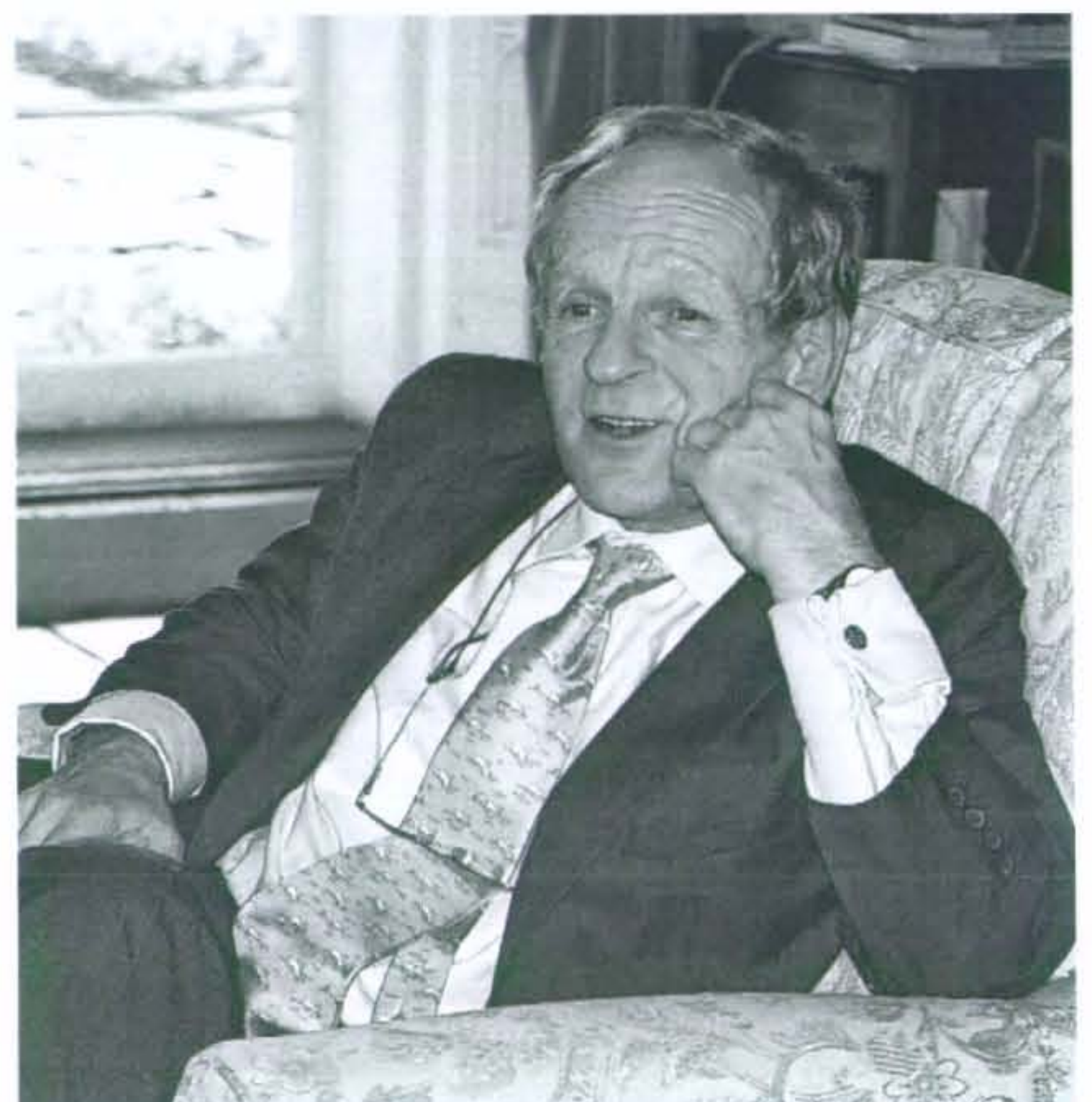
What has been the greatest achievement of a Stoic?

Do you mean what's made me proudest?

One of the moments that I was most proud of was a recent old boy who came to a reception that we were giving about two years ago in a Gentlemen's Club in London and a variety of people had spoken and then a very distinguished old boy got up and wound up very articulately a kind of criticism of young people but more specifically what we were doing at Stowe and why it had changed and how it had changed I got up to respond to him three times and at the end of it this man came forward and without notes delivered an impressionable defence about what happens at the School, why it happens, what it means – and he said it with such wonderful conviction, and it was totally unrehearsed and he was a lovely boy and I thought if any Stoic could say that, I hope all Stoics could get up and do that because it goes back to me saying about confidence and so on. You want something more sensational don't you, I don't know – somebody climbing a mountain or something – no I'm terribly proud of almost everything that Stowe produces.

What events have given you the biggest occasion to be proud?

I suppose Twickenham, the Daily Mail Cup, was wonderful and it was a sort of sport occasion, actually I suppose the Daily Mail this year was terrific and as I said in assembly, the result was just wrong but on the other hand really seem to me to take any gilt off any gingerbread in that I thought that the team was magnificent and played with such heart.



JGLN AT SPEECH DAY 2003

Retirement seems to come more slowly to Stowe Headmasters than most. They do have a habit of hanging around a bit. I suspect it is because this is such a delightful place to run. In fact, I think there's only been six of us in eighty years at Stowe – so I've done about the average. And as a breed, headmasters certainly seem to have a little more stickability than other more glamorous professions, a little longer shelf life, shall we say, than football managers. We last a little longer than those synthetically manufactured Girl Bands or even contestants in that excruciating TV show, "I'm a celebrity. Get me out of here".

Certainly, with all the coming and going over the years, headmastering has changed. Radically. Fifty years ago Sir Winston Churchill, writing of his boyhood at Harrow, declared frighteningly: "Headmasters have powers at their disposal with which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested". Nota Bene Mr. Tony Blair. Today, I would like to think, Headmasters are no longer like the tinpot dictators of Churchill's youth but more like team managers. And just like Sven, Sir Alec, Arsène, Glenn, Martin O'Neill and poor old Howard Wilkinson, they're only as good or bad as the team around them.

And that, perhaps, is a good moment to pause and make a short diversion, to talk about this year's team. I will be passing on to my successor, Dr. Anthony Wallersteiner, who is himself a class act, a splendid class act in the School Management Team – soon to be bereft of Christopher Edwards after next year. I thank him wholeheartedly for his wise counsel and enthusiasm and for standing in so seamlessly before Christmas and I congratulate Bromsgrove on their wisdom and insight in appointing him as their new Headmaster in 2004. I salute, admire and applaud all of the Team – it's been control by delegation. Before I arrived I went on a Management Inset run by Bob Lohr, a Canadian, on the subject of delegation: "nor will it ever be". No such job-shy people here. It is reassuring when you are in awe of your close colleagues' work ethic, as I have been, and can even, and also, count them as friends. Amidst the mayhem we have had fun and laughter – the best antidote. I thank them one and all.

Amongst many of the highlights of our year have been – 93% of Stoics gaining places at their first choice university – the Senior Congreve production of Camelot – the All that Jazz event organised by Alexander Perry and Christian Roe which raised £20,000 – our Stars in Their Eyes gala organised by Alexandra Kennedy – much wonderful Music – the Rugby team getting to the last 16 of the Daily Mail Cup, the highest placing thus far – our unbeaten Tennis team this season – the Golfers in the Regional Final of the National Foursomes – the Swimming Squad having the highest placing in the Bath Cup for some 20 years. The Hockey squad have a tour to South Africa in August to look forward to – the best of luck to them. A visit from Old Stoics, Sir Nicholas Winton and his brother, Bobby – Bobby is with us today

– and the opportunity to present Sir Nicholas who, you will remember, rescued some 669 children from Prague before the Nazis came, with the first ever Distinguished Old Stoic Award. A memorable and sobering talk by Rudi Oppenheimer on the Holocaust.

We are all thrilled with the new facilities in the Drayson Hall extension – opened this morning by Simon Clegg, Old Stoic, and Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association. The new electronic Cricket scoreboard was also officially taken into commission this morning.

I'd like to conclude by concentrating on a birthday:, not my eldest daughter, Lucy's, significant number this very day, but Stowe's eightieth birthday which took place a couple of weeks ago, on May 11th. Whilst, in the margins, thanking the Stoics for their fine rendering of Happy Birthday to me just four days ago. It was a very touching moment and I thank you all. If Rochester Sneath's son is here today, could he see me afterwards? It would be excellent to share some reminiscences with Old Sneathers and to exchange some tips.

Now there are few of us here today who can go back as far as 1923. The younger ones among us may perhaps be thinking that some of us up on the platform go back even further, but I can assure you we don't.

So what was 1923 like? World War One had ended just five years before and the country was suffering not just from the loss of a whole generation of young men but the perception that a home fit for heroes was something of an illusion. Yet open an atlas and look at a map of the world and much of it was coloured red, the proud colours of the British Empire. In Germany in 1923 a certain Corporal Hitler made an attempted but failed bid for power. He would try again later. In 1923 the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic was officially established. The oppression of Stalin and the terrors of the cold war were still to come. In music Schoenberg was popularising the tuneless Twelve Tone method, in art Paul Klee was painting "At the mount of the Bull". In literature the buzz names were Lawrence, Eliot, Joyce and Galsworthy. In cricket Australia held the Ashes, having beaten England 5-0 in the last Test series, but a swashbuckling left-handed Englishman called Percy Chapman, a public school-boy of course, was about to win them back for us. In football the first Wembley F.A. Cup Winners were West Ham United (how are the mighty fallen!) in the famous 'white horse' final – what startlingly easy crowd control! The twin towers of the newly completed Wembley Stadium were themselves a symbol of British soccer supremacy. Wimbledon Champions, a year after the Challenge round was abandoned, were W.M. Johnston and Susanne Lenglen who was winning her fifth title in a row. It was the age of jazz, Louis Armstrong's Hot Five, gangsters and Al Capone, flappers dancing the Charleston, cocktails at the Savoy, the Great Gatsby, silent movies and wind-up gramophones, motor-racing at Brooklands and world land speed records, the engine and chassis of my red label 3-

litre Bentley were being crafted, Rudolph Valentino's romantic sheikh, Anna Pavlova's Dying Swan and Noel Coward's *The Vortex*.

Such was the exciting, dangerous age when, on 11th May, 1923, my predecessor five times removed, Stowe's founding headmaster, the great J.F Roxburgh, stood on the steps of the North Front greeting the first 99 boys in the school – 44 in Bruce House, 55 in Temple – many of whom arrived by bus and taxi from the special steam train which had chugged its way north to Buckingham railway station. There were just ten members of staff.

And over the succeeding eighty years here one generation after another, both of staff and pupils, have come and gone in the natural ebb and flow of life. But there has, of course, in this long period of steady, and sometimes sudden, change – as one educational theory has succeeded another, one set of exams succeeded another, one list of rules replaced by another, one set of technologies swept away by another, one Secretary of State given way to yet more legions – there has been one thing of permanence, one constant, unifying link between the generations. The place itself, in all its inspiring historical and cultural glory.

And linked to the place come the ideals. Constant, unifying, permanent.

For the past ten years or so, our brochures have borne on the cover the latest marketing sound-bite, encapsulating the Stowe ideal, the determination that here is a place which encourages young people both to think, deeply, for themselves and about others.

To be honest, this is only a new way of dressing up an old Stowe ideal. And it's older even than Roxburgh, older than 1923.

In the grounds, not far away from us, the far side of the Elysian Fields, you will find the Temple of the British Worthies, with its array of inspirational personalities, the kind of people, according to the good Lord Cobham, who had made a big difference to life. The ideals offered by some of these are truly inspirational to a school, no matter if they were put there because they exemplified Cobham's own personal political ideals and agenda.

Among the worthies is John Milton, who said a number of interesting things about education. The reason Cobham chose him is probably because he wrote: "Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live". A base piece of imperialism, some would say dismissively. But most of us, as we have anguished this year over the rights and wrongs of the campaign to free Iraq, would feel it has some modern relevance. And education is surely all about preparing individuals to relate to each other, not just in this country but across the world, in the most productive, compassionate and harmonious manner possible.

Back in 1644 Milton also had this to say, as his definition of education: "I call therefore a complete and generous education one that fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war." If we take out the sexist remark that education is just for men, the rest of it has a peculiarly modern ring about it. Milton, it seems, in talk-

ing of "a complete and generous" education means the same thing as we do today when we talk of a "fully rounded" one. I love the idea that education should produce the "Just, skilful and magnanimous". What wonderful qualities to take out into the world: Justice, Skilfulness (in our own particular fields, whatever they are) and Magnanimity. The first two qualities, justice and skilfulness can only come from thinking deeply, for oneself. For anyone in the third form struggling with the third quality 'magnanimity', let me explain it comes from 2 Latin words – 'magnus', big, and 'animus', heart or mind – so it really means big-heartedness, or compassion, or, as we express it, thinking of others.

Stowe's educational idea, therefore, from the early eighteenth century onwards has been this. A 'complete and generous', fully rounded education, which encourages young people to think for themselves and to think of others – with 'justice, skilfulness and magnanimity' – both in their private and public lives, in times of peace and times of war.

Shortly after the school was founded Roxburgh related Stowe's ideals even further back in time, well past the eighteenth century, back into the days of ancient Greece. Roxburgh based his book on education, *Eleutheros*, published in 1930, on Aristotle's dictum: "There is a form of education which should be given to our sons' – sorry sexist, again, I'm afraid! – 'not because it is useful and not because it is necessary, but because it benefits a free man and because it is noble'.

By being 'useful' I suppose Aristotle meant preparing people for their professional lives and by 'necessary' preparing people for exams. Two ideals which, of course, all fee-paying parents would certainly wish to see scrupulously pursued. But Aristotle, Roxburgh and the Stowe ideal believe that there is something even more important educationally, something encouraging freedom (a buzz word) and a much less well understood word today, nobility: freedom and nobility. In other words, thinking for oneself, perhaps, and thinking of others.

It used to be said of Stowe that it was a young school and therefore lucky enough to be uncluttered by stultifying traditions. It was still being said, I was quite surprised to find, when I arrived, and the school was in its late sixties! Now Stowe is an octogenarian it cannot possibly keep reiterating this claim. Stowe isn't a young school any more. it's definitely getting on a bit! Therefore my successor, whom we all warmly anticipate, Dr Wallersteiner, and all those future headmasters of Stowe, as yet undreamt of and unknown, will be able to say: Stowe is no longer a young school. It has lived in its inspiring historical setting for over eighty years. And, as such, it is lucky enough to be uncluttered by stultifying inexperience and inspired by time-honoured educational ideals. Tested and proven.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will find time before the day is over to toast, first, Stowe's eightieth birthday, secondly, perhaps down at the Worthies, the qualities of justice, skilfulness and magnanimity which the bust of John Milton reminds us of, and thirdly Stowe's hugely exciting future. That sounds a lot of toasts.

THE NICHOLS' YEARS

by The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell QC,
Chairman of Governors

At the Governors' farewell dinner for Jeremy and Annie Nichols on Friday 27th June in the Music Room the whole Nichols family were present. Jeremy and Annie of course, but also Lucy, Rupert, Emma and Victoria and Lucy's husband Simon and Jeremy's mother Muz.

The presence of their whole family epitomised what Jeremy and Annie brought to Stowe; warmth, feet on the ground, the joy of family life, and boundless enthusiasm. It characterised what I noticed so often when visiting the school, how Jeremy seemed to cherish all the pupils individually. Here was someone who really loved his job; who felt and expressed the joy of teaching.

Jeremy Nichols has been Stowe's sixth Headmaster. He has served the school since 1989, for fourteen years. During that period more than 2000 Stoics, and by definition almost twice as many parents have known him as Headmaster, and I have been his fourth Chairman of Governors.

It is not an exaggeration to say that during that time, building on the work of his predecessor, Jeremy Nichols has transformed Stowe. The effect of his personality was visible almost immediately. I was privileged at the end of his first year in 1990 to give the prizes at Speech Day and became a Governor shortly thereafter. Even on that Speech Day a transformation was already evident in the demeanour of Stoics and in the confidence of their parents. What had gone before should not be underestimated, but now suddenly the sun had come out. Jeremy's personality communicated itself rapidly both to parents and to pupils. Stowe was once again an exciting School.

When our younger children came to see Stowe, amongst a selection of other schools, this was where they said they wanted to come. I shall never forget, as I suspect most parents will not forget, Jeremy's lecture to us as new parents, in particular his quotation from a splendid letter written by an Eton predecessor to the mother of a young entrant "...by the time he leaves us he will turn out a charming young man... but meanwhile we are both of us in for one hell of a time!..." Perhaps the secret of his success is summed-up in the fashionable letter "e", not e-mail or e-commerce but energy, enthusiasm and erudition, a wonderful combination.

Over these fourteen years he has built up an excellent staff, great teachers have been cherished, and outstanding new members of staff recruited. Not only Stowe has been the beneficiary. It takes great skill to recruit the best when they are young; to bring them on; to send them out to a wider world; and to bring on others in their place.



There is so much to remember, but when we come to look back, perhaps three things will stand out. First, the Nichols years leave Stowe full, confident and with the Stowe "offer" to do the best by every child, riding high.

Second Jeremy Nichols has presided over the start and implementation of the restoration of the Mansion. We already have before us the outstanding completion of the North Front; and by the time you read this, Phase II, the South Front Portico and Central Pavilion will be wrapped, for a period of 92 weeks, in the largest single-span scaffold in Britain. This will include the restoration of the Marble Hall. These are developments of historic proportions.

Thirdly Jeremy Nichols has been the moving spirit for the plans for the revitalisation of the Academic Zone. He has put in, and continues to put, huge efforts into fundraising. Precise details have yet to be finalised but the Drayson area with its new squash courts, weight-training room and sports science teaching facilities are already in place to pave the way. At the time of writing our overall fundraising stands at some £16.7 million of a total current target of £27.7 million including real progress on the funds for the Academic Zone. It will be a legacy to be proud of.

All this has been done at no little personal cost. We remember Jeremy's heart problems and Angioplasty back in 1995 but, as I said on Speech Day, Jeremy loves motor cars and we know that not only his great Bentley, but its driver, have for fourteen years been firing on all eight cylinders. We also pay tribute to the wonderful support he has had from Annie Nichols and their charming family.

It is not given to many to be counted amongst the great headmasters of their generation. Stowe has been lucky enough in Jeremy Nichols to have had one of those great headmasters. He has, to quote *The Good Schools Guide*, put the school back on its pedestal. Jeremy and Annie, we shall miss you. We salute you and we shall always remember you with deep gratitude.

ANNIE NICHOLS

If, like Dr Johnson, I were to write a dictionary my definition for headmaster's wife would only need two words: Annie Nichols. Annie has been totally involved in all aspects of life here at Stowe, and will certainly prove a hard act to follow. She has been ever present, from Chapel services, to concerts and as a gracious hostess at countless dinners and events, Annie's smile and cheery conversation has involved everybody she has come across. All this inspite of many other interests, four children of her own to bring up, and battling against serious illness. The breadth and depths of Annie's interests are reflected in the number of people I have spoken to in order to discover more about her. Annie is part of a flourishing book club here at Stowe, involving members of staff, wives of housemasters and so on, and they are united in their description of the groups as "Annie's". Apparently there are no arguments as to what the new book will be at the end of each month! Fitness also has a huge role to play in Annie's life. She is always to be seen swimming, bike riding and, until recently, walking the faithful Boffin. All this stood her in good stead for her recent trip to Nepal with the school and on her trek to Kilimanjaro – she was one of the few in the group to make it to the top! Annie has helped in many aspects of the school, from running coffee mornings to flower arranging for the Leavers' Ball. She also served as medic on the Nepal trip. Indeed, recently Annie went on a refresher course for nursing, which involved a stint on the wards in Milton Keynes, and a lot of study. To sum her up in a word, Annie simply is lovely, there can hardly be a person at Stowe over the past fourteen years who she has not touched in some way.

KB



SIR NICHOLAS WINTON

This year Sir Nicholas Winton was presented the 'Distinguished Old Stoics Award' in the Music room, after a showing of the movie 'The Power of Good' telling the story of his efforts to help children within occupied Czechoslovakia. The sixth form were encouraged to attend, and I believe from the silence throughout that most Stoics were in awe at the deeds this humble man carried out. The 'Distinguished Old Stoic Award' is not Sir Nicholas' first recognition. In 1988 Esther Rantzon did a program on Sir Nicholas. Since then three films have been made about his brave adventure. In Prague in 1998 President Havel presented Nicholas Winton with the Tomas Maasaryk Order, and recently he was knighted in the New Years Honours List. This however has not effected Sir Nicholas, who is still very humble, saying that what he did was not that great an exercise, and that there "was no risk to myself". Most importantly he says that people have exaggerated what he did, "I just wish these reporters would be more accurate". When asked about his heroic deeds, Winton replies "Heroic implies that I was in danger. But I never was. I ran the operation from London in my spare time while working in the City. My associate was in a riskier situation: he managed things at the Prague end, organizing the children and the trains, and dealing with the Gestapo."

Sir Nicholas' story is one of great valour, and honour, and may not have happened at all if not for one man, a Mr. Blake, who persuaded Winton not to go on a skiing trip to Switzerland, but to go to Prague instead. In December 1938 Sir Nicholas was planning his skiing trip to Switzerland. Instead, at Blake's suggestion they went to Prague, after witnessing the plight of the persecuted children over there he did "just something I had to do", at twenty-nine years of age devised and organized the transportation of 669 children from Prague to safety. For this he has been praised as the "British Schindler", and today around 5000 people owe their lives to the actions of this man.

After arriving in Prague, Winton went to see some of the refugee camps, and some of the organizations helping the people. Somebody told him that nobody was helping the children "so that is what I did". Sir Nicholas set up an office in a hotel in Prague, and drew up a list of children considered to be most at risk. Having asked his boss for a longer break, to help more in Prague, Winton was forced to return to London where he continued his work. Out of every country Winton wrote to tell the plight of the people, only Sweden, and Britain agreed to allow entrance to the children from Czechoslovakia

When Winton returned to London, he brought with



Photo by Steve Prouse

him many photos, and documents regarding the children. He obtained permission for the children to be brought to England. The children were allowed in on the proviso they all had a home to go to. To be eligible to house the children the sponsor home would need the money to look after the children until they turned 17, and the £50 that would be required to repatriate the children after the trouble had passed. As the home office was so slow, Winton was forced to speed up the process forging documents to "bamboozle the Germans" not the British. He says "We didn't bring in anybody illegally, we just speeded the process up a little".

Eight trains with 699 children on them went from Prague to London between March and August. A Ninth transport, the largest and last, was due to leave Prague on September 1st 1939, but because Hitler declared war on Poland, the borders were shut, and all 250 children aboard the train were sent home. They are thought to have all perished during the war.

After war was declared, Winton was a volunteer for the Red Cross, driving an ambulance. In 1942 Winton joined the RAF, and was successful. After the war he

worked for the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, and in 1948 he joined the International Bank in Paris, this was where he was to meet his future wife Grete. Winton did not tell Grete of the incidents before the war, finding them unimportant, now saying that he had almost forgotten them by the time they met. It was Winton's wife Grete that said in one of the films about Sir Nicholas' experience "It was a very small part of his life, and he had forgotten about it." However it was Grete that stumbled upon the information from the rescue in 1988, and it was also she who convinced Winton to have it officially documented. Winton handed over the information to Elizabeth Maxwell, the widow of the late media magnate Robert Maxwell. Elizabeth being the patron of many Jewish charities helped to locate eighty of the children, who were present for the filming of Esther Rantzen's "That's Life".

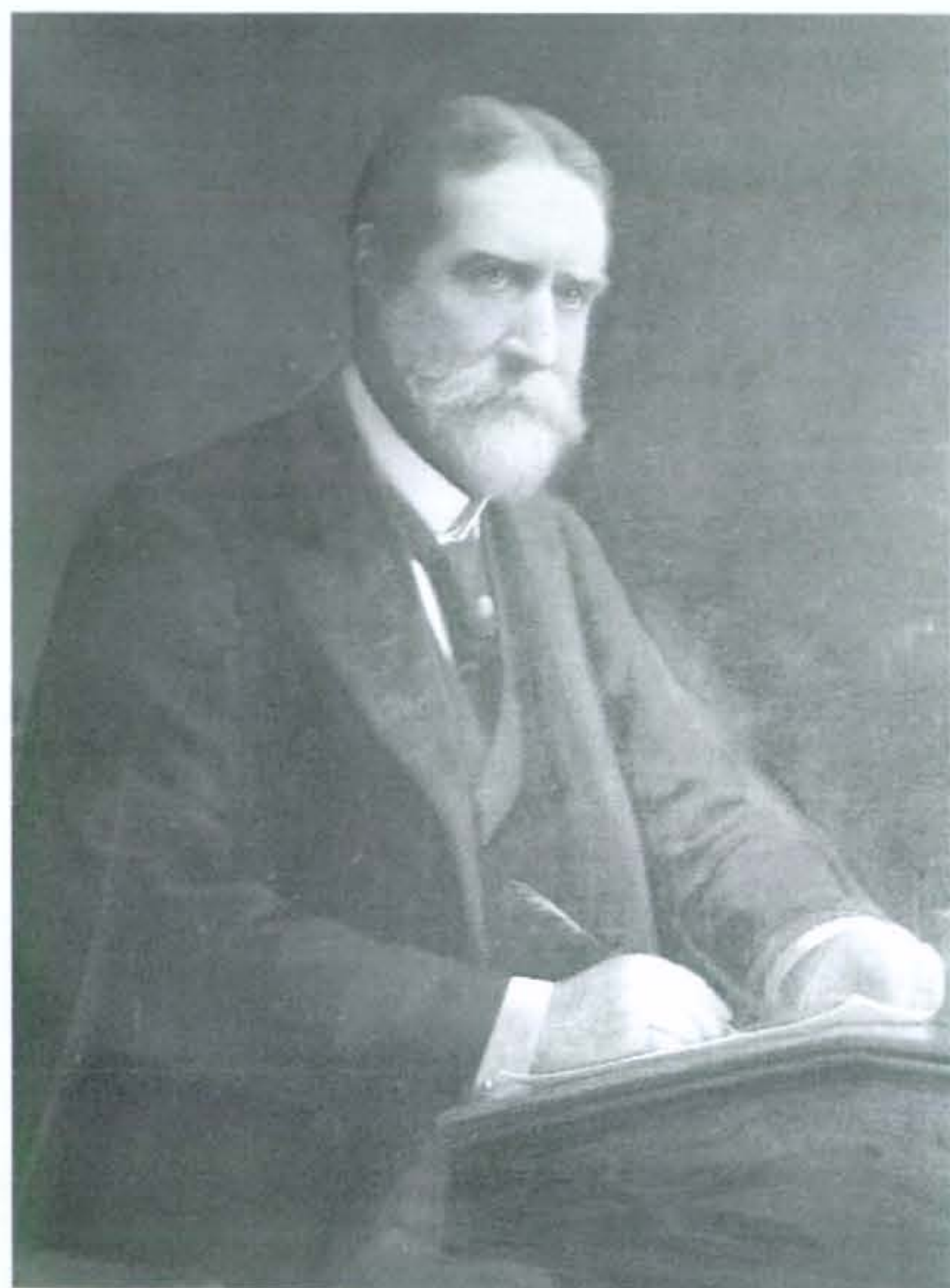
Sir Nicholas has led a charitable life, involved with Mencap, and Abbeyfield, a group helping the elderly, and every Stoic, both present and past should gain some inspiration from this man.

CAMERON SINCLAIR-PARRY

SIR CHARLES KING-HARMAN, KCMG

A portrait of a founding governor has been generously presented to the School on permanent loan by his grandson, Colonel A.L. King-Harman, OBE, DL. It will be hung with other school portraits, probably in the Ante Library or the Grenville Staircase Corridor.

Sir Charles King-Harman (1851-1939) was Stowe's vice-chairman of governors from 1923 to 1934. He was



also a governor of two of Stowe's sister schools, Canford and Westonbirt, as well as a member of the governing council of St Peter's College, Oxford. Like Roxburgh, he attended Trinity College, Cambridge; he then joined the Colonial Service, becoming Colonial Secretary in 1893. In 1879 he became private secretary to General Sir Robert Biddulph, High Commissioner of Cyprus, whose daughter he later married. After being appointed acting governor of Mauritius, administrator of St Lucia and governor of Sierra Leone, he returned to Cyprus as High Commissioner in 1894 before retiring in 1911.

As a governor of Stowe, Sir Charles King-Harman was well known for his Christian views and his wish that all masters should acknowledge the fundamental truth of the Bible. He participated in welcoming many of the distinguished visitors during the first decade of the School, as is evident from the photographs where his fine moustache is easily recognised. He became so involved in the financial restructuring of the School, when the Legal & General took on the mortgage, that his family still uses the firm of solicitors then employed by the School. On 1st June 1933, the visit of the Prince of Wales, Roxburgh presented him with a specially emblazoned copy of *Some Notes on The Early History of Stowe*. This volume, bound with 24 of Roxburgh's photographs, has also been kindly donated to the School.

Sir Charles died on 17th April 1939 aged 88. The Stoic that summer commented: 'Sir Charles had retained his interest in the School until the last, and Stowe has lost in him one of its most loyal as well as one of its earliest friends.' His portrait will be a fitting memorial.

MICHAEL BEVINGTON

CAMPAIGN PROGRESS 2003

The extended Drayson Sports Hall is now very much in use by Stoics and staff. It was formally opened by Simon Clegg OBE (Chatham 78) on Speech Day. Simon has been Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association since 1997 and, in his speech, he described the reasons why London deserves to be the site for the 2012 Olympics and why it will be such good news for Britain if the bid is successful. He also presented the School with framed displays of the British team's track-suits from the Atlanta and Sydney Olympics as depicted right. The Headmaster, in introducing him, described how these new indoor sports facilities had become so essential to the School's provision. They consist of glass-backed squash courts and a well equipped multi-gym and weights room, as well as – for GCSE and A level PE courses – a purpose built sports science teaching room and facilities for sport science laboratory work.

In consultation with the National Trust, the area round the extension has been landscaped and is being planted with shrubs and trees. The new entrance to the building and the high domed roof are now attractively cedar clad. The building is well insulated and will be economical to run. The cost of project was just over £750,000. The Headmaster described this as "the first step in a major development programme for the School's educational facilities which is taking place in parallel with the magnificent restoration of Stowe House."

This is not only a wonderful facility but is the first phase in the lead up to the building of the new heart to the academic area of the School, the Library and Tutorial Centre. It is anticipated that the new Headmaster, Dr Wallersteiner, will take an active role, with the governors, in fine-tuning the detailed plans for the ICT provision for this major project. Fundraising is progressing



The Headmaster with Simon Clegg OBE opening the new Drayson Sports Hall extension on Speech Day

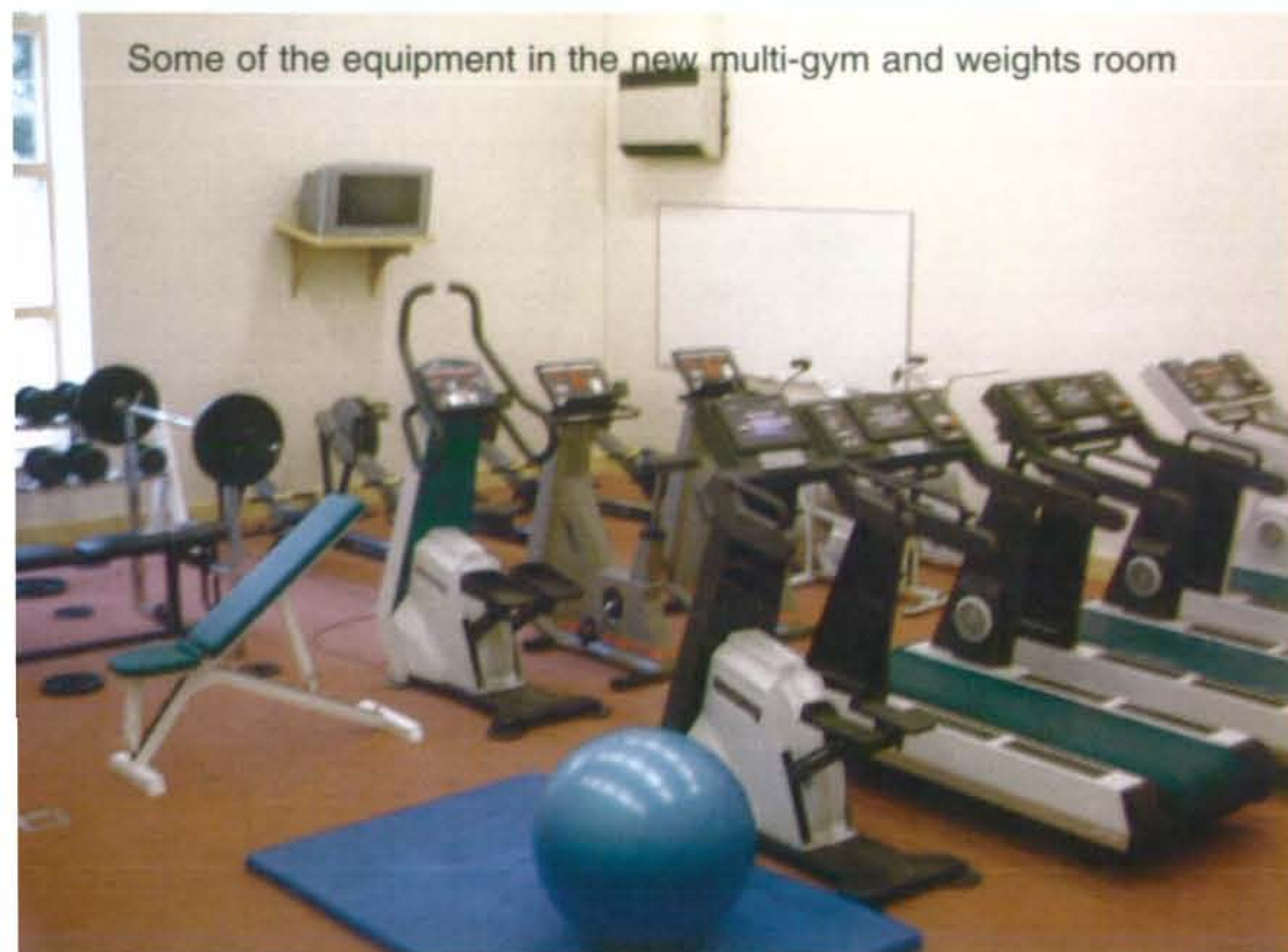
satisfactorily, despite the depressed financial market, and over £3 million has now been raised.

The last finishing touches of work on the North Front and Colonnades are now complete and even the statue of George has now been restored and returned to his rightful place, looking towards the west Leoni Arch and the School. It all looks most impressive as can be seen right. With the successful completion of the first phase, the programme of restoration continues apace and the second phase is now, in July 2003, underway. The removal of the Victorian and 1920s water tanks above the Marble Saloon is the first major project. This will mean that massive cranes will be in evidence on both sides of the House and the largest single span roof scaffold in England will be erected from the North to the South Front.

Phase 2 of the restoration programme will cost £7.3 million – £5.5 million of which has been granted by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The work comprises the reinstatement of the roof and south front of the central pavilion, portico and steps and also includes the installation of a lift for disabled people. The exciting opportunity has now arisen to extend this phase and include the interior of the Marble Hall while the exterior work is being done. This is thanks to a challenge from a generous US philanthropist who is particularly keen that the magnificent Marble Hall should be restored while making safe its supporting structure. He will match, pound for pound, donations received from UK sources.

The interior work, at an additional cost of £750,000, comprises restoration of the marble floor itself from which the Hall derives its name and also the sixteen columns which look like marble but are actually a form of plaster known as scagliola. The sculpture will be conserved and the plasterwork cleaned and expertly repaired and any missing sculpture replaced. Optimal lighting for the room and special heating will be installed to ensure the best environment for the conservation of all of the repairs.

Some of the equipment in the new multi-gym and weights room





The North Front and Colonnades and statue of George – all now fully restored.



Over the years, the Marble Hall has created a magnificent venue for many events and gatherings. Such is its impressiveness that it was chosen for the lying-in state of the Pretender to the French throne, the Comte de Paris in 1894. More recently it thrilled the guests as a superbly resonant concert hall during a reception for His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales. In summary, this project will revitalise one of the most spectacular rooms of its kind in the country. Well under £1 million now remains to be raised to complete the overall funding of this extended second phase and the scheduled completion date is still April 2005.

CHERRY BAKER

Left: The stunning overall effect of the Marble Hall initially disguises the need for expert restoration and conservation cleaning.

Below: Damaged plaster frieze in the North Hall, showing missing faces and limbs.



ROWENA PRATT LOOKS BACK ON 25 YEARS AT STOWE

The pace of school life has been much altered due to the new intensive pressure of exams over the last three years of school life. If this had always been the case I should have missed so many wonderful drama productions put on by Lower VI formers. I well remember John Spicer and Chris Gayford rushing through Cox and Box in the Music Room; Giles Inglis-Jones and Adam Atkinson in *Of Mice and Men* under the cedar tree on the South Front and Arvind David's own adaptation of Douglas Adam's Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency.

House plays that linger in the memory – Lyttelton boys performing Kafka's *Metamorphosis* with David Jones climbing in, out and through a child's climbing frame; Grenville's production of *Dr Faustus* in a pool of scarlet brocade in a darkened Aurelian room; Grafton commanding the Roxburgh stage in the battle between Henry, Eleanor and his vicious sons in *The Lion in Winter*. There were failures, of course, but where can you learn to fail if not in the protective environment of school?

No matron in retirement misses the evils of blocked loos, the sorting of wet and smelly games clothes or the long hours spent in hospital casualty departments but I shall miss the unexpected humour – Tom who aged 13 stated vehemently that he would never marry as it would mean leaving his mother; Dick telling his mother how matron was ill with a woman's complaint – woodworm in the ovaries and Harry's father refusing to collect him for a little recuperation at home in case he passed his flu on to the horses!

In Walpole for the last seven years we have asked all A level art students to donate a painting or photograph. I regret we did not do this sooner but we already have a rich variety of works, the most dramatic being Jaime Zaldua's moving oil painting to the victims of Kosovo. A surprising number of artists, such as Tom Bell and Andy Pearce have also been leading members of the first XV.

I lived for most of my own school years in a part of Wales where they played no rugby, so the last 25 years have been a steep learning curve in the finer points of scoring, tactics, positional play, and the sheer joy of a good game, especially a win! The senior rugby cup is back where it belongs, on Walpole's mantelpiece. But skill, bad luck and weather have all been part of the watching experience – house matches when the fog rolled in from both ends making it hard for the spectators and impossible for the players; my first broken collar bone which left me more shaken than the poor recipient – now I have it mended before they are even off the pitch!

On the sporting theme I vividly recall the hockey

match at Lords (yes Lords) between Stowe and Canford to mark the school's 60th anniversary, and the rugby team at Twickenham for the final of the Daily Mail Vase – we lost but who will forget Jonathan Phipps leading his team out onto the hallowed ground. Polo is another sport I was first introduced to at Stowe by Andrew Hines, now captaining England. Under Mike Carpenter the Stowe team continues to flourish.

Talking of toughness, the parent of a Walpole boy was head of all British Armed forces and came along one baking afternoon (in mufti) to watch his son and the team compete in the Coldstream Cup. He went away very proud and amazed at the determination and stamina of the students running up hills, through lakes, lifting tree trunks like Hercules, inching themselves through mud filled drain pipes and shooting bulls eyes. No, I don't exaggerate, I too thought their dedication was terrific.

I am not completely saying good-bye to Stowe as I shall continue to be a guide to the State Rooms. Earl Temple might have been amused at the delighted reaction of Sir Derek Jacobi to our own Emperor Claudius in North Hall but Lord Cobham would certainly have leapt into speech if he could have shared my trip round the grounds with Sir Peter Ustinov. It was a privilege and a pleasure for me.

I think back to former colleagues now retired, to Anthony Lloyd, the first face I saw at Stowe when I came for my original interview, the instigator of the duckery where I enjoyed helping out during the holidays recalling earlier years spent closely involved with natural history. I also enjoyed counting the birds at Foscoote reservoir with Mike Hornby watching the shimmering goosanders swimming arrogantly through the ice. I can still hear the clamouring of intense small fishermen round Mike Waldman learning to tie their own trout fishing flies down by the Oxford water.

The cookery classes in the old san kitchen, the First Aid lessons in the language block (and setting up mock accidents down those stairs) and accompanying those first female army cadets to distant camps, those were the early energetic years. I have slowed down but still look forward to the excitement of one more September and one more new intake of Third formers and sympathising with the new prefects and Head of house who face with trepidation their new responsibilities. Will they be as good as last year – yes, of course.

However, none of this would have happened if it had not been for Chris and Philippa, Lionel and Maggie and now John and Diana. One chose and trained me, one persuaded me to stay on and one says he regrets my leaving. But I should never have had or enjoyed 25 years at Stowe without three such housemasters who were (are) all dedicated to their jobs, who had such high standards and who cared so much. We have raced from pitch to pitch, applauded at concerts, rejoiced at TWO results but always, always, I have had such support and been made a member of a team that I feel is second to none. I thank them all.

WHIG SPACES INSIDE AND OUT, OR A POLITICAL READING OF THE ESTATES AT HOUGHTON AND STOWE

In the period between 1720 and 1770, an ascendant class of parliamentarians began to carve significant spaces for themselves from English landscapes actual and political. Even as their party began to fragment, the Whigs consolidated their influence in Parliament and virtually eliminated the rival Tory party from the political discourse during the reigns of George I and George II. In the process, two great Whig prime ministers of the era, Robert Walpole and William Pitt the Elder, did much to build the financial and imperial mechanisms that would propel England to the cusp of global dominance in the nineteenth century.

With their fortunes on the rise, many English aristocrats of the period turned to their estates in an attempt to give tangible form to their wealth and station. In the case of Walpole, at Houghton, in Norfolk, a lavish house with sumptuous décor and a world-class picture gallery functioned as a country retreat for political gatherings. Pitt, meanwhile, emerged from under the patronage of Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham, sponsor to a faction of the Whig opposition known as the Boy Patriots, or Cobham's Cubs.

A scion from a long line of dissidents, Cobham was the consummate political outsider. His defining moment came in 1733, when his critique of the proposed excise tax led Walpole to strip him of his rank and his regiment. In condemning Walpole's political cronyism, Cobham emphasized the value of liberty, which found its fullest expression in the landscape gardens at Stowe, in Buckinghamshire. Stowe's gardens were noted not only for their extent, but also for their mixture of formal and informal features, which tended toward a more pastoral, less cultivated style.

Walpole, meanwhile, was the establishment man, the insider nonpareil. As such, at Houghton, he placed the emphasis on the house and its rooms. If Cobham preferred planting, Walpole preferred paintings. Whereas Cobham fashioned a naturalized landscape and an open floor plan, Walpole fashioned a formal landscape and a labyrinthine floor plan. My claim, then, is that Cobham's outside attentions and Walpole's inside attentions reflected their respective standings as political outsider and insider. This difference manifested itself not only at the level of office, but also in terms of political emphasis and political style.

Once Pitt became prime minister in 1757, Cobham's heirs, the Temple-Grenvilles, became political insiders themselves, dominating the discourse in Parliament over the next fifty years. With this shift, succeeding owners of

Stowe, including Earl Temple, the Marquess of Buckingham and the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, turned their attentions at Stowe from the gardens to the house. The outsiders, at long last, had moved inside.

House and Garden

In tracing the origins of what he terms "association" in architectural aesthetics, John Archer observes that the builders of great houses in eighteenth century England wanted their edifices "to communicate a broad range of ideas about personality, heritage, political beliefs, local and national history, and more". On every estate, then, a measure of the owner's identity was encoded into that estate's structure. At some estates, the house spoke more loudly about its owner, while at others, the garden was a stronger marker.

A sumptuous house required a certain amount of capital, but a lavish garden could be cultivated on a smaller budget, provided that care and attention were not wanting. As such, the furor hortensis of the middle eighteenth century spread among patricians and poets alike. Exemplary landscape gardens were to be found not only at grand estates such as the Duke of Marlborough's Blenheim or the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth, but also in more modest proportions, as at Alexander Pope's Twickenham and William Shenstone's Leasowes. Pope himself, along with James Thomson, both set and wrote poems at Stowe, thus implicitly, if not explicitly, aligning themselves with the outsider opposition hostile to Walpole's political reign.

Houghton and Stowe were characteristic of the great estates of the eighteenth century, for both possessed both great houses and extensive garden and parkland. Both estates must have appeared sublime in their grandeur, though Houghton's point of pride was the splendor and richness of its interior, while Stowe's magnificence was a product of its magnificent and unparalleled exterior. Yet, despite the differences between Walpole's inside emphasis at Houghton and Cobham's outdoor efforts at Stowe, the two estates did share significant similarities as spaces of power, prestige and privacy.

Cobham and Walpole alike had inherited their estates, and both attempted to place their distinctive marks upon them by erecting new houses. Both men, in commissioning classically trained architects (including, in common, William Kent and John Vanbrugh), betrayed a desire "to adopt ancient 'airs'" and "to suggest heritage and primacy". Both, in the 1720s, were quick to incor-

porate the new landscape feature created by Charles Bridgeman known as the ha-ha.

The ha-ha, while seemingly erasing the inside/outside distinction, ultimately reinforced it. As such, it served as the ultimate symbol of the insider status that Cobham and Walpole both enjoyed. Simon Schama describes the multivalence of the ha-ha by pointing to “appearance of inclusiveness,” contradicted “through the policing of exclusion”. Meanwhile, Brigitte Weltman-Aron notes that while the ha-ha was “relished as a figure of liberty,” it also transformed the landscape into a “vast panorama. . . of panoptic control”. Cobham and Walpole also asserted their control of the landscape in removing nearby villages in order to allow more ample room for the development of their garden and parkland. As James Rosenheim notes, these forced relocations “allowed for purely aesthetic appreciation of distances unpopulated by workaday folk” and “powerfully expressed the magnates’ separation from local community”.

Such wholesale removals were uncommon in Tudor and Stuart times, and spoke to the rising tide of private enclosure, which would crest at the close of the eighteenth century, dramatically transforming the English countryside from an open landscape to one closed off and divided by stone fences and hedgerows. This transformation, while of a piece with Walpole’s authoritarian, patrician style as prime minister, does not accord well with the Cobham’s emphases on freedom and liberty. Indeed, it would be a grave mistake to deny Cobham’s complicity in the dispossession of the rural English peasantry. In fact, at enclosure’s peak, the manifold Private Acts of Parliament authorizing this dispossession were passed under the watch and ward of a set of first and second-generation Cobham protégés numbering prime ministers such as Pitt the Elder (later Earl Chatham), George Grenville, Pitt the Younger and William Wyndham Grenville.

In all, five men with significant family connections to Cobham served as prime minister during the reign of George III, and many others functioned in important positions within Parliament. But Cobham himself was, relatively speaking, a political outsider in his time. The insider of his day was Walpole, who virtually invented the position of a prime minister and then proceeded to serve for two decades as its first incarnation. Through force of his city connections, Walpole was able to transform his birthplace and boyhood home of Houghton from a prominent Norfolk estate into one of the most lavishly decorated treasure troves in all England, and indeed in all Europe.

The Insider Walpole

Although Houghton did possess a significant garden and considerable parkland, it was ultimately an inside space devoted to opulent interiors and to Walpole’s famous picture collection. That Walpole should be so concerned with interior space is reflective of his own

political career. A clever financier, Walpole relied on an inside knowledge of the economy to improve his private fortunes and to propel his public ambitions. From early positions as Treasurer of the Navy, Secretary of War and Paymaster General up through his 1715 appointment as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Walpole’s was a thorough education in the art of accounting. As Paymaster General, Walpole engaged in the then-common practice of investing the funds available to him and pocketing the interest for his own personal gain before distributing the balance in salaries to the armed forces.

In this way Walpole became rich, but his true fortune was acquired during the South Sea Bubble of 1720. His talent for investment (and his skill as an insider) was nowhere more manifest than in this moment, when, though publicly warning against the vulnerability of the market, he bought heavily in South Sea stock and recouped a significant profit by selling out before the crash. By an amazing admixture of public and private management, Walpole managed to distinguish himself as the harbinger of the crash, even as he extinguished the political dishonor associated with personal gain at the expense of those ruined by the fallout. Within months, by virtue of his improved station (financial and political) and his increasingly close relationship to George II and Caroline, he had set himself up as prime minister. The following year, secure as never before, Walpole broke ground on a new house at Houghton.

In London, as in Norfolk, Walpole was highly conscious of the importance of space. Unlike his father, who during his time in the Commons had lived by himself in a single room above a linen draper, Walpole took up residence at 10 Downing Street, a short walk from Parliament that succeeding prime ministers have retraced down to the present day. Walpole’s close proximity to Parliament helped reinforce his position as an insider, and allowed him to retain a hold on his political influence. By virtue of incessantly being there, as Schama notes, Walpole built “Britain’s (in fact the world’s) first party-political machine”.

Inside Houghton

As ubiquitous as Walpole may have been in London, he also made a point of escaping frequently to Houghton. As he grew more seasoned in his role as prime minister, he began to use Houghton not merely as a domestic space but also as a political space. From the very first, though, as Girouard has noted, “Houghton was not just a great house, it was a hostile move in the power game”.

For Walpole, power was manifest less in exteriors than in interiors. His indifference to the exterior situation of the new house is apparent in his rejection of an architect’s advice to build along “a gradually rising slope, forming at the summit a natural plateau, well suited for a building of large proportions”. Less concerned by the prospect without than the prospect within, Walpole elected to forego the view and erect his new mansion as close-

ly as possible to the site of the earlier house, where he had passed his childhood.

Begun in 1722 and completed in 1735, Houghton was Walpole's avocation during the years in which he learned the vocation of prime minister. During the middle 1720s the house was under construction, but by 1726 it was habitable, and shortly thereafter Houghton's interior was complete enough to entertain visitors. Walpole made the most of the opportunity, hosting his biannual Norfolk Congresses there during his second and third terms as prime minister.

At these country gatherings, influential figures from the local, national, and international political orbits assembled for several weeks of drinking, dining and hunting, all at Walpole's charge, on Walpole's turf. And, as Rosenheim notes, while the local gentlemen "drank, dined, and hunted with the rest, they left the table when high political business was conducted". Ostensibly playing gracious host, but more purposefully crafting his private space for uses of political negotiation, Walpole was able to shape the public affairs of the day in his own mold.

By the time Houghton stood complete in 1735, it must have cast an imposing shadow upon even the most distinguished of visitors. Declared by engraver William Watts in 1770 to be "one of the most celebrated edifices in England", Houghton at its peak was as much—and even more—celebrated for what its interiors concealed than for what its exterior revealed. Though Watts notes that "the entrance was originally to the principal Story, by a grand Flight of Steps in each Front," this was something of a decoy. In fact, the entrance to the inside entertainment at Houghton's Norfolk Congresses was beneath the grand flight of steps, in the form of an unadorned door en route to the ground, or rustic floor.

The principal floor, more conspicuous in scale and trappings, was used only on occasions of state, such as the visit paid by the Duke of Lorraine, husband to Austrian Empress Maria Theresa, in 1731. During Lorraine's visit Walpole employed the saloon as the main dining room. Yet, in succeeding years, when Walpole entertained on the principal floors he hosted dinner in a parlor astride the main hall that was both less apparent in its location and less spacious in its dimensions. While the magnificence of the west front, main hall and saloon could not be overlooked, the mystique of most Walpole dinners, and the political intrigue therein, was more easily missed, occurring as it generally did in the more intimate, inside spaces of the rustic and the parlor.

Houghton's Critics

Though Walpole's dinners could be hidden out of sight, they were rarely out of mind, and provided ample fodder for his political enemies. Contemporaries estimated Walpole's housekeeping bills at Houghton to approach £1500 per week. Such excess generated round condemnation. An early biographer, William Coxe, noted that Walpole's "buildings at Houghton were more

magnificent than suited his circumstances, and drew on him great obloquy". One of Walpole's near contemporaries, the second Lord Oxford, held of Houghton that it was "neither magnificent nor beautiful" and that it displayed "very great expense without either judgment or taste".

If Walpole's extravagance at Houghton was inexcusable to some, his inside aesthetic was insufferable to others. As Girouard notes, Walpole "bought insufficient land to support the house in its new glory", and the burgeoning landscape gardening movement of the day was of little consequence to him. Even a cursory glance at the plans for Houghton's gardens reveals a rather staid and traditional, unimaginative approach to landscape design. In the formal gardens, there is little departure from the rigid, geometrical variety popularized by André Le Nôtre in France. Bridgeman's 1731 scheme to landscape the larger park at Houghton involved plantations of trees in the forms of "clumps and spinneys, to go quite round the park pale and to make straight and oblique lines a mile or two in length". Here again, as in the formal gardens, the outside takes an inside form, patterned and ordered to the point of architecture.

Formally convincing, if dated, Houghton was barely able to function as a working garden beneath its showy veneer. According to Kathleen Mahaffey, "Houghton had its ponds but no source of water to keep them supplied, and they dried up in the summer". For this reason, among others, Mahaffey concludes that Timon's Villa, satirized by Alexander Pope in his "Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington, Of the Use of Riches", was none other than Houghton itself. At Houghton, as at Timon's Villa, per Pope's description, the visitor would "Un-water'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn, / And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn".

Pope's picture of Timon goes some length to suggest Walpole, but his description of Timon's villa goes even further to evoke Houghton. Such is a place where:

No pleasing Intricacies intervene,
No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.

Though not strictly the case at Houghton, the general cast of formality and symmetry evoked in these lines are characteristic of Walpole's garden. But it is Pope's inside description of Timon's Villa that suggests Walpole most strongly as a model. Although Pope was never invited to dine at Houghton, he was certainly attuned, like all the lettered of his day, to the sumptuous events that Walpole so often played host to. As Pope imagined them, given by the fictional Timon, such dinners would be "A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state" in which the dinner hastily moved "From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King".

But if Pope found himself prone to "curse such lavish cost, and little skill" the epithets in his epistle may have sprung from personal vendetta as much as from ideological conviction. Pope himself was feted in fine style

by friends such as Burlington himself, who “sold estates to raise capital to construct Palladian mansions,” as well as by Cobham, who “put down thousands of acres to landscape park”. Although there may have been “no major structural or functional difference between an obviously Timonesque palace like Marlborough’s show-place Blenheim— which Pope described— and Stowe, the Palladianised sign of Cobham’s patriot virtue”, the structural and functional differences between Houghton and Stowe are striking.

Stowe, with its “Parts answ’ring parts,” such that “Spontaneous beauties all around advance” , was much more attuned to what Pope called “the Genius of the Place” than Houghton. In declaring that “Heav’n visits with a Taste the wealthy fool, / And needs no Rod but Ripley with a Rule” , Pope appears to have launched a rather direct attack against Thomas Ripley, Walpole’s untutored architect at Houghton. To Pope, such ignorance was the flower of the “ill got wealth” gained by such as Walpole during the speculation that took place at the time of the South Sea Bubble.

The enmity Pope felt toward Walpole was mutual, though Walpole was much less ceremonious in his distaste. Unlike Burlington and Cobham, Walpole had little use for poets, neglecting and sometimes nakedly opposing the arts during his tenure as prime minister. As such, Pope was made to feel like an outsider during Walpole’s years in office— a position that would have pushed him toward a political identification with Cobham, owner of that “Work to wonder at” in Stowe.

The Outsider Cobham

Cobham and his Cubs, including Pitt the Elder, formed a staunch opposition to Walpole from within the Whig party during the later 1730s. Such was to be expected, for dissent had long been a characteristic of the Cobham clan. And yet, while peppered with outsiders, the Cobhams remained connected enough to retain a presence as a landed, titled, family. The earliest house at Stowe, erected in 1683, may have been a design of Christopher Wren’s, and the gardens in their earliest incarnation were, like Houghton’s, in the formal, traditional Le Nôtre style.

By the time Richard Temple himself came to inherit Stowe, in 1697, he was already well on his way to an established career as a military officer. During the War of Spanish Succession, his rank was elevated to lieutenant-general, and he was created Baron Cobham in 1714 (later, from 1718, Viscount Cobham). He was celebrated for the capture of Vigo in 1719, from which he profited handsomely, and Jonathan Swift declared him to be “the greatest Whig in the Army”. In recognition of his exploits in the field, he was appointed governor of Jersey for a life term in 1723.

Though his military career brought him fame and fortune, the greater part of his wealth came by virtue of his marriage to brewery heiress Anne Halsey in 1715. In this sense— and in others— Cobham himself, though insider

to the world, was undoubtedly an outsider to the insiders. Marrying into money, he established his name abroad, and held colonial— not domestic— office. His outsider orientation served him well in the first decades of the eighteenth century, when 1688 was still in living memory and the Whigs were still populated by the revolutionaries of that era. Upon the ascension of Walpole, however, the Whig party was swiftly transformed into the establishment, providing Cobham a role that he was not comfortable to play for long.

The breaking point came with Walpole’s proposed Excise Tax of 1733, designed to shift the burden of taxation from a customs tax on import/export trade to a sales tax on domestic trade of foreign items, specifically in this case regarding tobacco and wine. Here again, Walpole displayed an interest in infiltrating inside space, more concerned with policing the hinterland than the border. Such focus was characteristic of Walpole’s political style, by which, through “affecting a comparative indifference to foreign policy,” he “in return was left absolute master of home policy.”

But in tinkering with the system of taxation, Walpole raised the ire of Cobham, who viewed the excise tax as the harbinger of further duties to come. Under the banner of liberty, as an outsider who did not stand to gain from the new scheme of taxation, Cobham took a prominent stand against Walpole’s excise scheme. Cobham and fellow opponents such as Henry St. John Bolingbroke and William Pulteney feared that Walpole’s scheme would eventually extend from imports on tobacco and wine to a more general excise on all goods foreign and domestic.

For his prominent role in opposition, Walpole made an example of Cobham, stripping him of his military office in an unprecedented act of ministerial authority. Though Cobham returned to the ranks in 1735, he subsequently resigned his commission in objection to what he felt were the self-interested machinations of George II in Europe. From this point until his death until 1749, Cobham was content to play outsider on his own terms, rallying his Boy Patriots together and quietly building a party-political machine of his own. Whig in name, but scarcely of descent from Walpole, this string of leaders would emerge from Cobham’s care in the wake of his death, coming to dominate Parliament in the later decades of the eighteenth century as Walpole had dominated it in the earlier decades.

Stowe on the Outside

During his political retirement, as he prepared the groundwork for his successors, Cobham turned his focus from the glories of the battlefield to the pleasures of the garden, where he nurtured not only plants and politicians, but also poets. Pope, for one, addressed an “Epistle to Sir Richard Temple, Lord Viscount Cobham, Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men” (1733). James Thomson used Stowe as a setting in a portion of his poem “Autumn” (1731), from the sequence on “The Seasons” (1726-31), and later wrote his ode “Liberty”

(1735-6) while staying at Stowe. In return for these recognitions, the poets were recognized at Stowe with garden memorials to their genius in verse.

If Thomson was prescient in his belief, expressed in "Autumn," that among the "sylvan scenes" of Stowe, Pitt "well shalt merit a distinguish'd name", Cobham was instrumental in seeing that prescience through. His Boy Patriots included, in addition to Pitt, George Lyttelton and George Grenville, both of whom went on to play significant roles in Parliament, with Grenville serving as prime minister from 1763-5, between Pitt the Elder's first and second tenures in that office. These outsider patriots, led by Cobham, believed that "traditional English liberty was being destroyed and the constitutional balance subverted by a cynical policy of corruption on a massive scale." As such, "their campaign was concentrated against Walpole as a subject who had raised himself to the improper position of 'prime' minister for selfish ends". Desiring to expand England's influence around the world, Cobham's Cubs were less interested by intrigue in Europe than by conquest in the colonies.

Pitt's ascension to power occurred in Cobham's very gardens, which were transformed into an allegorical playground for the Whig opposition in the 1730s. Cobham's Boy Patriots were also known as the Country Interest, and Cobham himself invested a great deal of attention into the Buckinghamshire countryside in and around his estate. Cobham himself, along with his nephew, heir and successor Richard Grenville, Earl Temple, "poured their fortunes into the gardens and garden buildings even more enthusiastically than they did into the house".

Over the final two decades of Cobham's life, the gardens at Stowe progressed toward a more experimental and open form, reflecting Cobham's political emphasis on liberty. The Octagon Lake became an Eleven-Acre Lake of less defined boundaries, and the parterre near the south front of the house, along with the greater gardens and the park, grew progressively wilder. By the time Earl Temple assumed ownership at Stowe, in 1749, the landscape was opening radically. More at ease with itself as an outside space, "the great parterre had been swept away, to be replaced by a lawn" and "the boskets and close woodland.... were being thinned," with "gravel paths grassed over" and gaps cut in formal avenues to open prospects.

Under the guidance of head gardener Lancelot "Capability" Brown, the more traditional approaches taken by Bridgeman and Kent were effaced for a more natural style. In this era, which commenced during the 1740s, "all regularity and the last vestiges of formality" were "swept away," with "the tree belt.... broken up, many more trees planted, and all the paths made wandering and serpentine". This stylistic progression from geometrical to natural is illustrated by comparing two competing views of Stowe's south lawn. The first, from 1733, shows Le Nôtre's influence, though fading, still in evidence; the second, from 1753, shows Brown already

shading Stowe toward the type of transitional landscape that would help prepare the English public for the emerging taste in the picturesque.

From an early stage, Cobham's Stowe had welcomed visitors of all types, hoping to lure a royal visit, but also encouraging aristocratic guests from various backgrounds. As the eighteenth century progressed, Stowe developed into something of a tourist attraction, with guidebooks printed by a local Buckingham schoolmaster named Benton Seeley and a largely pirated version by a London entrepreneur named George Bickham going through several editions. But even at that earlier juncture when visitors to Stowe were more strictly of the aristocracy, the use of the landscape was quite democratic in its openness, and thus decisively opposed to the hierarchical organization of the congresses and shooting parties that took place at Walpole's Houghton.

Allegorical Stowe

Stowe, of course, did have its tucked-away spaces, but even these tended to be outside rather than inside. When Cobham developed the Elysian Fields during the 1730s, he elected to make a political allegory of his garden addition. By building temples to Ancient Virtue, British Worthies and Modern Virtue, Cobham created a visual narrative of his own ideology, canonizing his heroes and lampooning his enemies.

The Temple of Ancient Virtue, designed by Kent and based on an Italian design, contained statues of Epaminondas, Lycurgus, Socrates and Homer. By privileging Greek heroes over Roman ones, and by representing statesmen and thinkers alike, Cobham implicitly critiqued the oligarchic imperialism of the Roman Empire, which he felt to be the form of Walpole's rule. A further critique of Walpole came in the Latin inscription above the door of the Temple of Ancient Virtue, which translates: "To be dear to our Country, to deserve well of the Public, to be honoured, revered, loved, is glorious; but to be dreaded and hated is odious, detestable, weak, ruinous." If any doubt remained as to the relevance such allusions possessed, the so-called Temple of Modern Virtue—a nearby ruin with a decapitated statue of a statesman—seems to point even more decidedly to Walpole.

Across the water from the Temple of Ancient Virtue, the Temple of British Worthies continues the political allegory. Aspiring to the station of the ancients, but not yet having crossed the River Styx to the afterlife, the Worthies stand as a monument to Cobham's personal pantheon of political heroes. Like Ancient Virtue, the British Worthies were divided among men of contemplation and men of action. Among the thinkers, Cobham included writers Pope, Milton and Shakespeare, financiers Thomas Gresham and Isaac Newton, architect Inigo Jones, and philosopher Francis Bacon. Among the doers, Cobham selected royals King Alfred, Edward, Prince of Wales, Queen Elizabeth and King William III, along with adventurers Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh

and political dissidents John Barnard and John Hampden.

By selecting these men, Cobham advanced a set of progenitors to his current cause, worthy of standing by the true light of Whig principles. Archer points out that “eight of the so-called Worthies could be associated with the Whig political heritage, and the other eight could be associated with challenges to established authority”. Meanwhile, David Coffin has observed that the inclusion of Edward was “an obvious reference to the contemporary Prince of Wales, whose opposition to his father and Walpole was supported by Cobham.” Furthermore, “the inscription glorifying King Alfred was a subtle jibe at George II, and Raleigh represented a contradiction of Walpole’s policy toward Spain”.

In selecting Alfred, Cobham also hearkened back to England’s Anglo-Saxon past, which he further invoked at the Gothic Temple. Erected between 1741 and 1748 by James Gibbs and constructed of golden Northamptonshire iron-stone, it stood astride Hawkwell Hill and Field. Here was another marker of Cobham’s anti-imperial rhetoric, recalling the fall of Rome with its nativist architectural associations and its inscription, in French, reading “Je rends graces aux Dieux de nestre pas Romain”— “I give thanks to God that I am not a Roman.”

Standing seventy feet in height, the Gothic Temple was a monument to the Cobham family heritage, with various heraldic images graced its walls. In addition, the Gothic Temple played host to the seven Saxon deities that had earlier stood in a circular pattern around an altar in a nearby grove of trees. Though the pagan heritage was thus invoked, by moving the deities from an outside to an inside space, Cobham betrayed the beginnings of a shift at Stowe from an exterior toward a more interior orientation.

The Gothic Temple perhaps possessed the greatest exterior of any garden building at Stowe, but the most significant building was doubtless the Temple of Friendship, erected in 1739 as a meeting space for the Boy Patriots. It was here that Cobham helped groom Pitt into the statesman he became, and the outdoor/indoor setting serves as an analogue to the concerns of these leaders of the Country Interest. Of the Doric Order, the temple emphasized simplicity and virtue, exemplified in its interior by ten busts, including those of Cobham, Grenville, Lyttelton and Pitt, and by a set of history paintings celebrating the reign of Elizabeth and denigrating the present reign of George II.

Beyond the political symbolism, though, there was the architectural symbolism inherent in this most Whiggish of spaces. Unlike Walpole and his associates at Houghton, who dined, drank and talked business within the confines of the great house, Cobham and his Cubs dined in the great house at Stowe and then removed to the Temple of Friendship. Drinking from the temple cellar, making political hay in their garden clubhouse, they were truly a set of outsiders, outside.

Expansion at Stowe

In the decade following Cobham’s death, Pitt ascended to prime minister, and soon led England to its greatest imperial heights. He spared no expense in raising sufficient capital to sponsor the victories over France that secured the Seven Years’ War for England: Robert Clive’s at Plassy, on 23 January 1757, Robert Wolfe’s at Quebec, on 13 September 1759, and Eyre Coote’s at Wandewash in January 1760. At Stowe, success was consecrated with the completion of a new temple overlooking the Grecian Valley, a pastoral (though artificial) vista completed under the watch of Capability Brown.

This temple, begun in 1749 and originally to be called simply the Grecian Temple, was renamed the Temple of Concord and Victory upon its completion in the wake of the Seven Years’ War. Without, it was graced by twenty-eight fluted ionic columns (considerably more elaborate than the design of the Temple of Friendship) and within it showcased fourteen medallions, each one representing a significant imperial victory. Among those colonies taken were Quebec, Martinico (Martinique), Louisburg, Guadalupe, Montreal, Pondicherry, Lagos (by naval victory), Crevelt and Minden, Felinghausen, Gorce and Senegal, Crown Point, Niagara and Duquense (Pittsburgh), Havana and Manilla, Beau Sejour, Cherburgh and Belize. In all, significant colonies had been established under Pitt’s rule, in the space of a few short years, in North America, the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Asia.

The British Empire was moving outside, but the Cobhamites at Stowe were no longer outsiders. Earl Temple, designer of the Temple of Concord and Victory, was refused the order of the garter in 1759, but nevertheless held significant connections at the highest levels of Parliament, a perquisite his uncle had never enjoyed in his lifetime. An outsider by birth, if not by station, Temple continued Cobham’s outside attentions in the Stowe gardens, constructing the Corinthian and Doric Arches and continuing to “naturalize” the landscape. Nevertheless, he may also have found the “political satire” of the Elysian Fields to have “become embarrassing”.

In the end, Temple’s most significant mark upon Stowe was an outside mark, but less for any innovation to the gardens themselves than for his innovative plan to renovate the exterior of Stowe house. Whereas Cobham had employed mainly English architects, Temple looked to the continent, commissioning work from a series of French and Italian architects in his effort to redesign the south front portico of Stowe house. When plans from Giambattista Borra (1753) and Jacques François Blondel (1765) were rejected, Temple turned to the renowned Robert Adam (1770). His proposal was also rejected. Eventually, Temple decided to take up the redesign himself, along with assistance from his cousin, Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford. Cobham’s street-front entrance was too plain for Temple’s tastes, and yet, as Gibbon wrote,

Adam's plan "imprisoned his inhabitants, allowing them no way down into the garden. This was put right by a flight of steps the full width of the portico", which suggested grandeur both within and without.

During this period, Temple also planned for the redesign of Stowe's interior. Both Cobham's design and the later redesign, unlike Walpole's hermetic Houghton, were open plans emphasizing sight lines through the house, from inside to outside. This axial space within the Stowe house opened its interior to the outside, while its highly embellished, thoroughly varied garden circuit, though predicated on axial underpinnings, emphasized the significance of outside space to the garden visitor. Meanwhile, Houghton's indoor space existed as a closed circuit that allowed for no outsider to unfold it, and its garden was organized along a set of undifferentiated axes that shaped the outdoors into an indoor design.

The Estate in Ruins

For all the differences between Houghton and Stowe, the two estates came to resemble each other in time, first as bastions of unembarrassed privilege, and later as relics of vanished power. In each case, privilege and power found their fullest aesthetic form through world-class picture collections, which served as formidable reminders of the status enjoyed by the owners of Houghton and Stowe. But the pictures came down in time, and it wasn't long before the walls began to crumble and the gardens started to outgrow themselves.

Though three hundred of the paintings in the First Duke's collection were dispersed upon his death at a thirty days' sale held in London in 1839, the Second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos still inherited a significant gallery. This, along with all else, he squandered through profligate spending, and was forced to cover his debts at a forty days' sale at auction in 1848, which included china and furniture from Stowe along with some four hundred paintings. On this occasion, the Times spared no quarter in condemning him as "an absolutely ruined and destitute man" who "has reduced his honors to the tinsel of a pauper and the baubles of a fool". Thus, in the span of a century, Stowe was reduced from an outsider's bastion of liberty and upright virtue to an insider's laughingstock of excess and recumbent dissolution. The outsiders had come inside, only to be kicked out again.

At Houghton, the transformation from great house to ruin of tinsel and baubles took half that time. Less than sixty years after Robert Walpole's rise, and less than forty after his death, his renowned picture collection, among other treasures, was sold to Czarina Catherine of Russia by his extravagant and indebted nephew George. Though the house remained in the family, passing through Walpole's daughter Mary on to the Cholmondeleys, little trace of Houghton's earlier grandeur was passed on with it.

Nearing the close of a prolific age, Walpole's son Horace could reflect that he had "lived long enough to see Houghton and England emerge, the one from a coun-

try gentleman's house to a palace, the other from an island to an empire, and to behold both stripped of their acquisitions, and lamentable in their ruins." Such rhetoric was partially occasioned by the impending loss of the American colonies, but even as early as 1773 Horace Walpole had lamented the "half-a-ruin" of Houghton, which he characterized by "destruction and desolation." Among the fallout he found "the garden a common, the park half covered in nettles and weeds, the walls and pales in ruin" and notes that "a crew of banditti were harbored in the house, stables, town and every adjacent tenement."

Thus, even as the outsiders at Stowe were moving inside, a truer set of outsiders in Norfolk had finally broken down the door to Houghton. The empire had crested, and the barbarians were literally at the Houghton gate. Yet such "banditti" were unlikely to happen upon Robert Walpole, even then, for his remains were interred at Houghton "without commemorative monument or name". There they remain to this day, concealed from outsiders for all eternity.

ARCHITECTURAL CONFERENCES

Following the success of the conference in May 2002 on 'Stowe: the forgotten Treasure House', two further events have been organised by the Stowe Education Group, a partnership of the Stowe House Preservation Trust, the National Trust and Stowe School. Last November some 30 members of the Society of Architectural Historians spent a weekend staying at Stowe and investigating all that they could of the interior and exterior of the building. It took them a full day to work up through all four floors of the main pavilion, seeing rooms, cupboards and even voids, all guided by the man with the bucket of a hundred keys.

This May saw a two-day conference on the eighteenth-century painter, architect and landscape-gardener, William Kent. The Saturday was devoted to lectures on and tours of his work at Stowe and the Sunday started with more lectures and then progressed to Rousham in Oxfordshire, with its wonderful garden, delightful despite the rain.

Plans for further conferences include an archaeological study day in November involving the Whittlebury project, and aspects of restoration in both the house and garden next May. The conferences are open to everyone interested. Details can be found on the school website or from the Commercial Office.

MJB

George Irvine's account of his

FLORA LONDON MARATHON 13 APRIL 2003

I will always clearly remember the telephone conversation I had with my friend, Ru Hodson on a Sunday night just after Christmas 2002. Ru told me that while lounging on a sun bed in St Lucia sipping cool beer he had decided to do the London Marathon. He then said that Simon Koe, chairman of PSP Association had one spare golden ticket. "Okay, I'll do it too". The thought of it had both of us crying with laughter.

So back to Stowe for what was going to be an extremely busy Spring Term, which included the school inspection. On top of which I had taken on a commitment way beyond anything (physically) I had experienced. The training began and it was a matter of forcing myself to step out of the fug of the Art School and into the darkness of the Stowe grounds five nights a week after a busy day. After a few weeks I began to rather get into it and thought that being able to run one loop of the grounds meant that I was well on target.

Buying my pair of trainers for the Marathon brought me back to earth. I went into a big shop in Milton Keynes, which was dedicated to running. The manager who had an intense stare and looked too fit for his own good, made me run up and down the shop in various uncomfortable shoes. He asked me how many miles I was running a week; I did some maths in my head and came to a generous fifteen and with a bit of artist license, said twenty-two. There was a silence and he then said I was not doing nearly enough and should withdraw to enter in 2004. He said in a Jack Straw kind of way, "With all due respect, you are carrying too much weight around". Bloody rude I thought! That put things into perspective.

The day dawned and Ru and I made our way to Greenwich Park by train. It was hot and sunny and there were crowds and crowds of very muscular, fit looking people. We were near a Rhino, a man dressed in tails and an RNLI lifeboat with 10 men under it. The atmosphere was buzzing and the crowds totally inspiring and supportive. It amazed us how there were thousands of



people willing to give up their Sunday to come and cheer on people they did not even know.

The run was brilliant until fourteen miles, just after Tower Bridge. Here you have to turn right down towards Canary Wharf and away from Central London. Sadly I had to tell Ru to go on and leave me. I needed to walk for a bit. It was my lowest point; I suppose I had hit the wall that everyone talks about. I had to face up to the fact that I was not a natural long distance runner. The people that I was now running with were more my shape and I took their advice and walked at the Vittel water areas on route. Eventually I got into a rhythmical plod and found another George who was 50yrs old. The cheers changed to "Come on the 2 Georges".

The crowds were getting thicker, we were nearing the end and the runners were becoming fewer. As I came round the corner at Buckingham Palace I knew that this was the only time in my life that I was near to being a sporting hero. I took advantage and got close to the roaring crowd. "Nearly there, Well Done, Good on You." I crossed the finishing line in 5 hours and 17 minutes feeling hugely emotional. After a lonely half hour I eventually found my family and supporters. It was an emotional moment to see Victoria and Archie again. A pint was definitely called for. What a great feeling to have cool lager with some cool people and it was over. Never again!! I raised a total of £2119.90 for PSP association.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Rupert Hodson: For inspiring me into thinking that it was ever possible

Victoria Irvine: For buying the plasters, making pasta lunches to take to school everyday and listening to my boring training stories

Archie Irvine: For being there and smiling at his Daddy when the chips were down

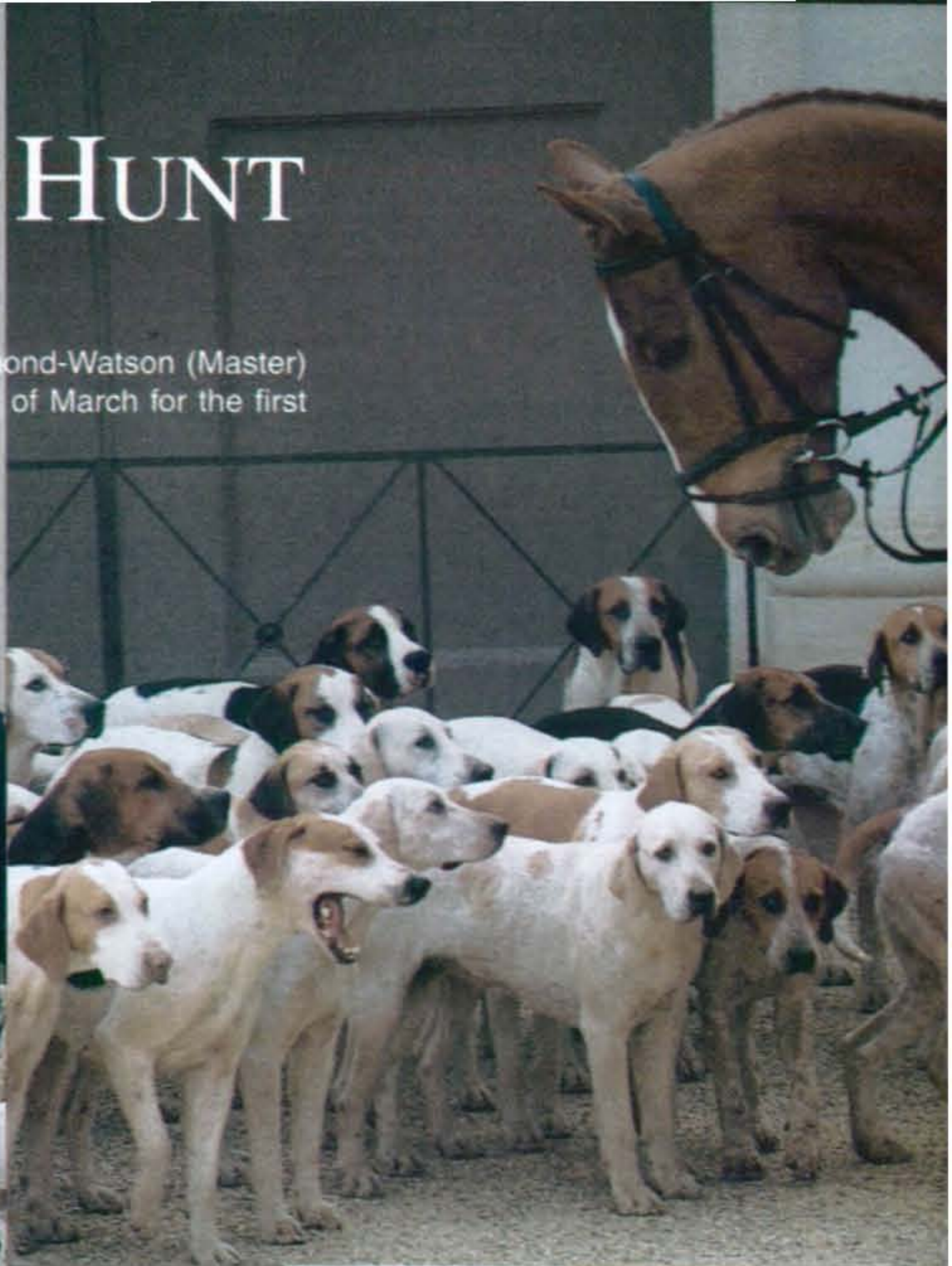
Tony McDaid: For his training tips and organising all the sponsorship from Stoics and staff

All Stoics and Staff: For their support and contributions

THE GRAFTON HUNT

Photos by Fred Caws

Jeremy Nichols and John Fretwell with Colin Richmond-Watson (Master) and the Grafton Hunt who met at Stowa at the end of March for the first time in over 20 years



THE CASIMIR EFFECT

– A VACUUM IS STUFFED FULL OF VIRTUAL PHOTONS!

The second in a series of articles describing some of his favourite physics ideas and experiments by Simon Collins from the Physics Department at Stowe.

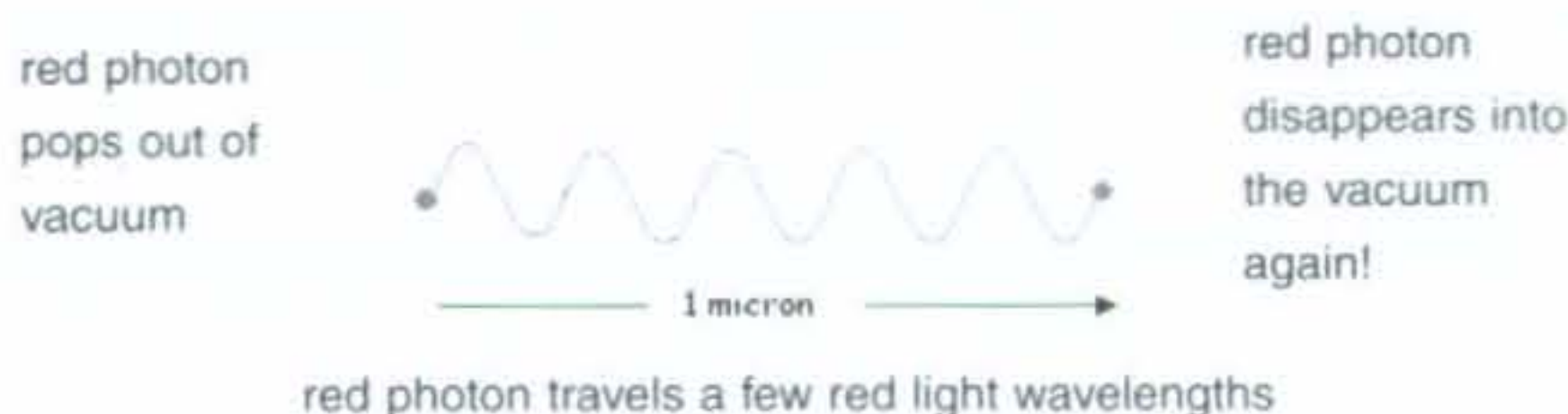
In the 1930s, the English physicist Paul Dirac proposed using the theory of quantum mechanics, that a vacuum really isn't just empty space, but is actually filled with electromagnetic waves called 'zero point energy'. This energy would be contained in 'virtual photons', or photons that constantly flash in and out of existence. Because we are immersed in this sea of virtual photons it is difficult for us to detect them or be aware of them, under normal circumstances. These photons appear out of nothing at all, as the vacuum fluctuates, the energy to create them is 'borrowed' from the vacuum until the virtual photon disappears and the energy borrowed gets paid back, thankfully with no interest required!

The energy needed to make these photons or particles of light is very small and can therefore pop out of nothing for a relatively long time on the atomic scale. The time is relatively long due to the quantum rules between the uncertainty in time Δt and the uncertainty in energy ΔE :

$$\Delta E \cdot \Delta t \approx h$$

where h is Planck's quantum constant $\approx 10^{-33}$ J s.

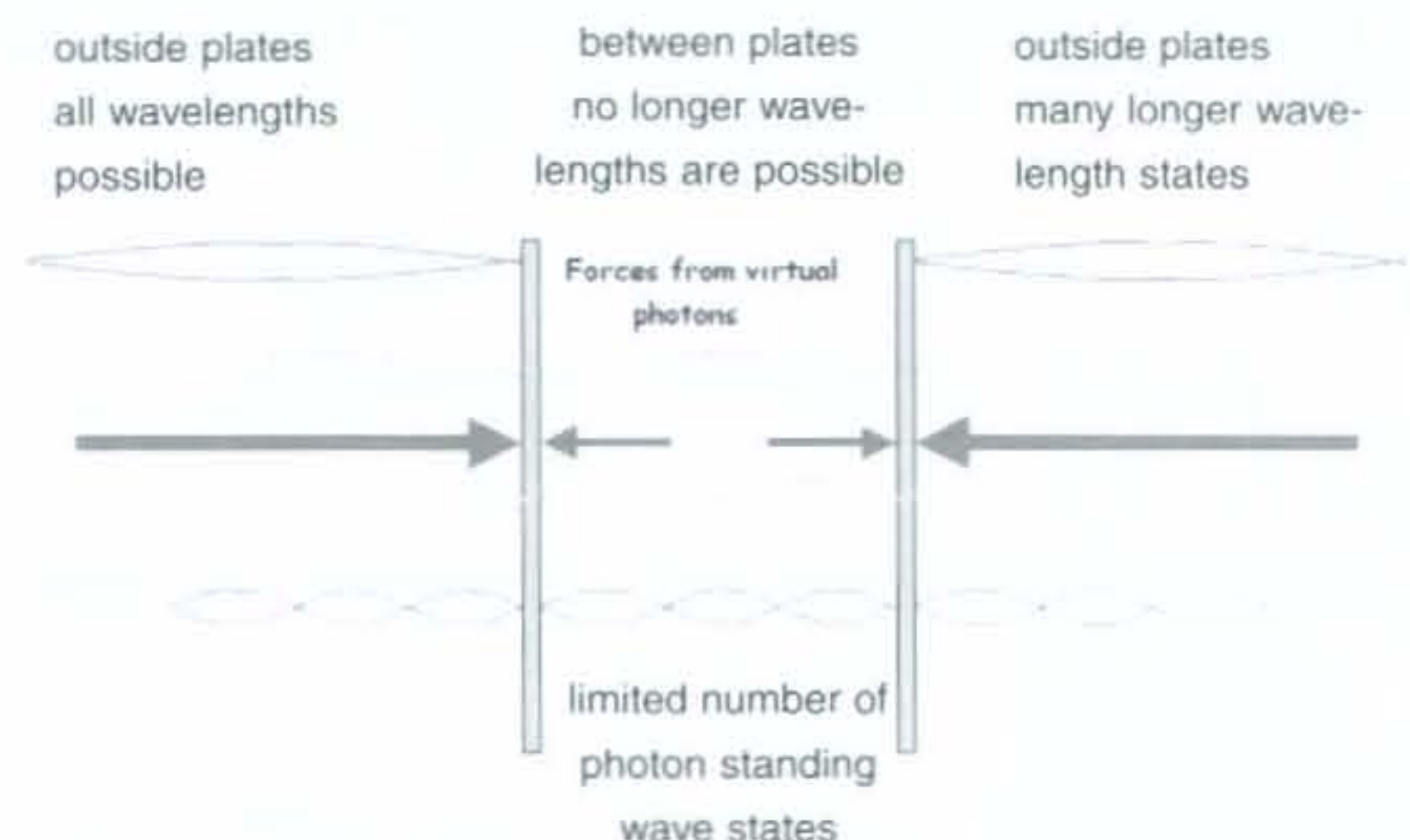
The tiny value of this constant in our units belies the tiny scale of quantum physics. A photon of red light has energy around 10^{-19} J. So it can pop up out of the vacuum for about 10^{-14} s. Not very long on our time-scale, but travelling at light speed, it will cover a distance of around 10^{-6} m. This is a few wavelengths of the red light! This is true for any virtual photon. A microwave photon has energy around 10^{-24} J, but we can borrow this smaller energy for longer, about 10^{-9} s. In this time the photon can travel about 10^{-1} m (10 cm) a few microwave wavelengths!



A vacuum is therefore not simply 'nothing at all', but is best pictured as a superposition of many different states of the electromagnetic field, or virtual photons. At first sight this all seems slightly daft – "weird physics", but in 1948 Hendrik Casimir a Dutch physicist predicted that two parallel conducting plates in a vacuum would experience an attractive force due to their influence on the virtual photons in the vacuum!

Casimir theorised this, because near an electrically conducting surface the electric field component parallel to the surface of the conductor must be zero. This means the plates are reflective and there will be a node at the conducting surface. So only those virtual photons whose half-wavelengths fit a whole number of times into the gap (similar to standing waves) will fit in between the plates, and there will be an upper limit to the possible wavelengths.

The density of virtual photons therefore decreases in the gap as the plates are moved closer, where as outside the gap there will still be virtual photons of all possible wavelengths. The reflecting virtual photons exert a force on the plates! but there are fewer reflecting on the inside than on the outside of the plates. This implies that there will be a small force pushing them together (like external air pressure tending to collapse a slightly evacuated vessel). The force was detected in experiments 10 years later in 1958, to become known as the Casimir effect.



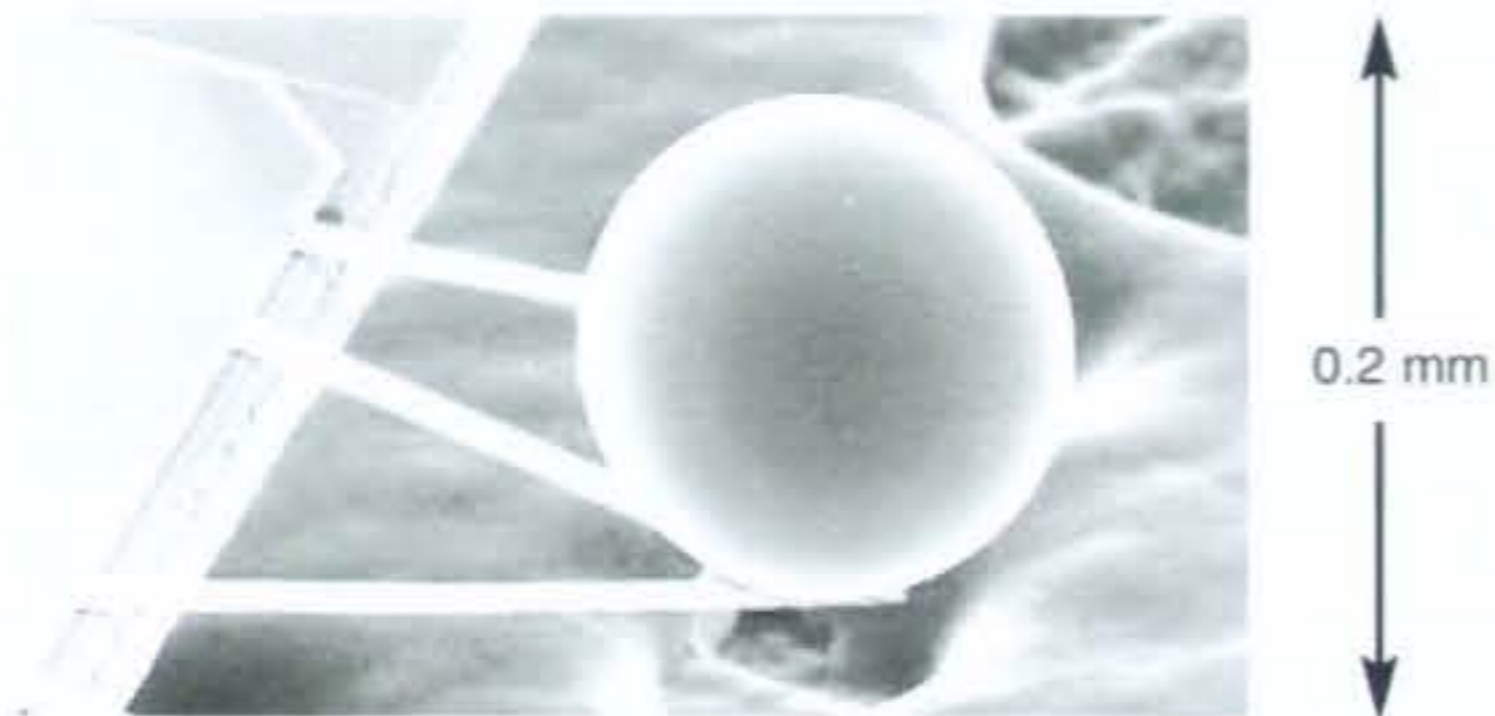
Casimir showed that the attractive force between the two plates of area A separated by a distance d can be calculated to be:

$$F = \frac{\pi h c A}{480 d^2}$$

where h is Planck's quantum constant again and c is the speed of light.

This predicts a force of 10^{-17} N (about the weight of a tiny speck of dust!) for plates of area 1 mm^2 separated by a distance of 10 nm which is about 100 atomic diameters!

Physicists cannot yet align two flat plates precisely enough to test Casimir's original idea, but they can do it with a single plate and a ball.



aluminised sphere

The most accurate experiment carried out so far was in 1998 by Mohideen and Roy, of the University of California, their results verify the theory to within 1%. They used an atomic force microscope (AFM), which can detect forces as small as 10^{-18} N. The AFM works using a microscopic cantilever whose deflections are detected by a laser system. In the experiment an aluminium-plated, 0.2 mm diameter sphere was affixed to the cantilever. The deflection was recorded as it approached a flat, aluminium-plated surface to within 10 nm .

An interesting paradox is thrown up by this confirmation of the Casimir effect. According to the theory the total zero point energy in the vacuum is infinite when summed over all the possible photon modes! The Casimir effect comes from a difference of photon forces in which the infinities cancel. The energy of the vacuum is a puzzle in theories of quantum gravity since it should act gravitationally and produce a large cosmological constant, which would cause space-time to curl up, and the universe to collapse! The solution to this paradox is expected to be found in a theory of quantum gravity, which many theoretical physicists are racing to develop, but it is proving a hard nut to crack!

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This article looks at the species of tree that are growing at Stowe, particularly with regard to the current restoration program, and then describes in greater detail some of those that the author finds of particular interest.

The landscape at Stowe is best known for its large array of temples and garden buildings. The rest of the composition is made up of the lakes and the open areas of grassland, the whole being tied together and framed by the plantings of trees and shrubs to create the classic vistas. Whilst the temples need periodic repairs and the lakes, being man made, need dredging at intervals, trees come and trees go.

Historically we are looking at an area of rural Buckinghamshire that would have been populated with native trees, then cleared in the late 17th century when the first house was built and the formal gardens were laid out. During the 18th century these gave way to the landscape gardens we know today, most of the change being in the 1740's when Capability Brown was working at Stowe. Even the great Cedar of Lebanon on the south front, a trade mark of Capability Brown, is unlikely to be part of his planting, probably being around 200 years old. It thankfully has not suffered from gale damage as have the cedars near the Gothic Temple.

Over the last two thousand years man has gradually introduced more species of trees into Britain and the 18th and 19th centuries were a very active period for plant collectors. The "native" woodland trees at Stowe include oak, sycamore, ash, poplar and alder, these would have been present in the area before the house was built. There are a number of trees present that are very typical of the parkland planting in the 18th and 19th centuries and include yew, holm oak, and sweet chestnut. Various species have been used to create avenues including sequoias, now sadly gone, limes and the London plane.

The holm oak, holly oak or evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*) was introduced from the mediterranean region in the mid 16th century, and is a typical parkland tree, seldom being grown under forest conditions. It produces the hardest timber to be found in Britain. The leaves are variable in shape and unlike those of the native oak but the small acorns that take two years to ripen, are easily recognised.

The sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) was probably introduced in Roman times for the food value of its nuts, even though they do not grow to an appreciable size in Britain. As the timber is easily riven, its main use is for fencing. The tree grows fairly quickly and is mainly found in southern England where there are fewer late frosts.

Tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) have been planted at various places around the grounds, but are best seen at either end of the South Front. They are a member of the magnolia family and have an impressive array of greenish-yellow flowers from late May to early July, unfortunately, at their best near the top of the tree. The tree is a native of eastern North America and was introduced in the mid 17th century.



Ginkgo biloba

A LOOK AT THE TREES

Some observations
from Nic Hawley (OS)

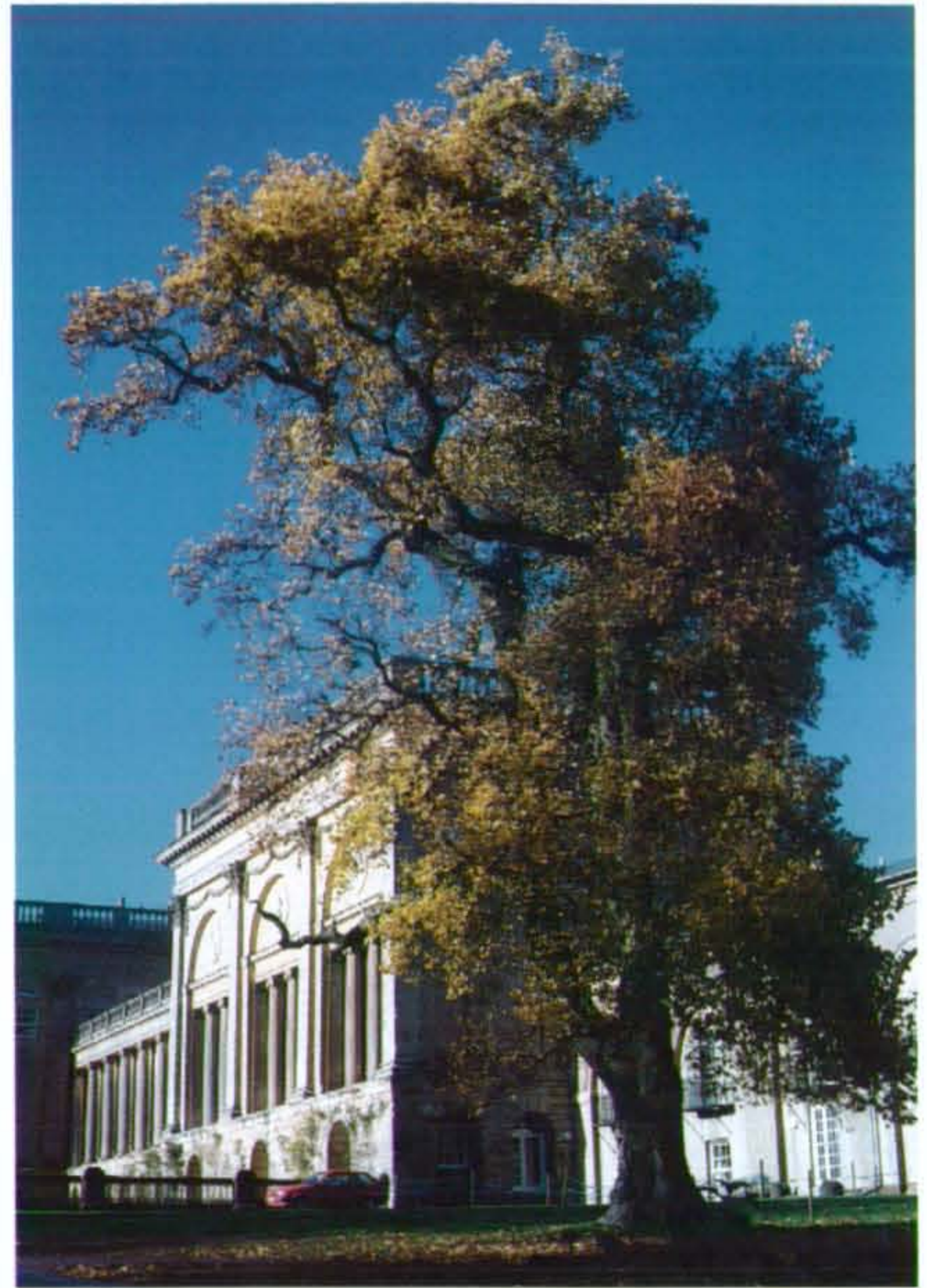
Pinus wallichiana



Near the Chapel is a "handkerchief" tree (*Davidia involucrata*), so called because of its large white flower bracts. Walpole Court hosts an Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*); coming from the south-eastern U.S.A, it is not very frost tolerant and thus it is mainly found in urban environments.

The fern-leaved beech (*Fagus sylvatica*, 'Asplenifolia') can be found at Stowe. A large specimen used to stand near the Grenville Column but was destroyed by gale damage: one of the best survivors overlooks the main pond in the Japanese Gardens. Biologically it is a *chimaera*: although the form of the tree is markedly different from the common beech, as are its serrated leaves, inside it is just an ordinary beech tree. Careful inspection of the small shoots emanating directly from the trunk, (epicormic growth), will reveal some damaged ones that have reverted, and are carrying normal beech leaves. Note that the fruit are very similar to those of the common beech.

Near by the running track stands Stowe's ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*): it is a fine specimen and has reached the age when the tschi-tschis are beginning to develop. These are pendulous breast-like growths on the trunk that can eventually hang down several feet. It is deciduous and the leaves are unusual in not having a central spine. The tree, which can live for over 1000 years, comes from China where it is grown for its edible fruit. Its existence is well known from fossil remains and it has been around



Liriodendron tulipifera

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on this planet for some 150 million years. At one time it was widespread, but is now rarely found in nature. It was introduced to Britain in the middle of the 18th century and became popular as a specimen tree. The species is dioecious (comes in two sexes) and the one at Stowe, being male, will not bear fruit. It is not a true conifer, but, along with yews and nutmegs, is usually included with them for classification purposes.

During the 70 years when the grounds have been under the control of the school, a number of "exotic" species have been introduced, species that would not have been in the original planting scheme. Most of these exotic trees are to be found either in the Japanese Gardens or in Chatham Field. The Japanese Gardens still contain some of the trees planted as part of the pinetum in the 1940's. Access is difficult unless one is fully protected against nettles. That so few of the original trees survive demonstrates the need for subsequent maintenance and weeding after a tree has been planted. Further information on these trees can be found in Michael Bevington's fascicule "Templa Quam Dilecta" Number IX.

The avenue of Dawyck beeches at the top of Hawkwell Field represents one of the newer introductions. Planted at Stowe in 1940, the tree originated in the 1860's at Dawyck House which lies in the upper Tweed valley. Although the present house is Victorian (c.1830 by Wm Burn), the grounds go back a lot further and contain a splendid collection of mature specimen trees which have been successfully maintained through several changes in ownership. In 1992 the house was sold off and the grounds passed into the care of the Royal Botanical Gardens (Edinburgh).

Towards the Rotunda stands an ancient Acacia, which displays great character although not much life. Next to it is a Himalayan Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*). It is a fine tree but marred by having a bifurcated trunk, a quick snip when it was young would have cured this problem. It bears many attractive cones and has fine needles in bunches of five.

In Chatham Field two examples of *Nothofagus* can be found. This is a genus native to the southern hemisphere. They are not common in Britain but are occasionally grown commercially for timber. There are about 17 species of *Nothofagus* including some that are evergreen. The larger tree, near Lyttelton House, is a Roble Beech (*Nothofagus obliqua*): the smaller tree nearer the middle of the field, a poor specimen, has the very small leaves characteristic of *Nothofagus* species and is probably *Nothofagus antarctica*.

Towards the XI Acre Lake is an attractive group of three deciduous conifers, one of these is a Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) and the other two are Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). The Dawn Redwood is dedicated to the memory of R.G.Gilbert, one time master at Stowe. The species was long known as an extinct plant, found only in fossil remains, but in 1941 a living specimen was discovered in

the garden of a Chinese temple. The Swamp Cypress is a native of the south-eastern United States, and can be found in the Florida Everglades. It will happily grow in standing water and the roots throw up unusual woody "knees" which are thought to help with breathing. The compound leaves, which these two species bear, are superficially very alike but while the leaflets of *T.distichum* occur alternately on either side of the midrib, those of *M.glyptostroboides* are in opposed pairs.

Another one of the trees to be found in Chatham Field is a Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*). The leaves are longer, narrower and slightly darker than our native oak and the acorn cups are covered in moss-like protuberances. Introduced from eastern Europe around 1740, it grows faster than the native oak but the timber is not so durable.

In nature seed is the primary method of propagation, although some trees such as elm and blackthorn will spread readily using suckers. The modern nurseryman will use cuttings for trees such as poplars and willows and many of the small conifers seen in garden centres are grafted. Stowe has a number of grafted trees, some probably planted about 100 years ago. Between the Palladian Bridge and the Temple of Friendship there is a buck-eye grafted onto a horse chestnut root stock: note the sudden change in the character of the bark about 3ft up the trunk. The shoots at root level display regular horse chestnut leaves while those on the main tree are much more pointed. Chatham Field hosts a narrow-leaved ash where the tree has a greater girth than the rootstock. There are two cork oaks to be found near the Grenville Column, and a flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) to the east of the Doric Arch, all the latter have well matched grafts quite close to ground level.

The current National Trust policy is that, when an area of landscape is considered for restoration, the trees are assessed according to their individual merits. Some trees have been felled, including some of the red oaks at the head of the Grecian Valley, and a few of the Dawyck beeches.

This action was taken to restore vistas and not because the trees were the "wrong" species.

A landscape with a secure future is one that contains trees of all ages. At Stowe the National Trust is currently planting large numbers of young trees, that will grow up to maintain the landscape for future generations. Although most of these plantings are of traditional trees, there are areas where more exotic species may be found including Catalpa, Oriental Plane and Sweet Gum (*Liquidamber*).

A final word of thanks must go to those members of the National Trust staff who have given me assistance in my search for trees.

Further reading:-

Michael Bevington : Templa Quam Dilecta, number IX.

A.Mitchell : Trees of Britain & Northern Europe.

Graham Stuart Thomas : Trees in the Landscape.

THE THREE GRACES

No, not the sculpture, but J F Roxburgh, W E Capel Cure and Leslie Huggins, who did so much to grace my time at Stowe.

All that has been written about J F is absolutely right. Yes, he did wish me "Many happy returns, Humphrey" during my first three years, particularly cheering to me because, year after year, my birthday (9th May) fell right at the beginning of each Summer Term. Yes, he was invariably elegant, a tall distinguished figure, never more so than when leading in the masters at Sunday morning chapel. Yes, he did sit at the back of an empty chapel, showing me how to read the lesson ("it will be Easter when the chapel is full"). Probably my fondest memory is in assembly (now called the Marble Saloon, I believe) after "stance" (another Stowe pun) when we would hear his sonorous "Shall we go in?" from the North Hall. He stood alone in the middle, the masters all ranged behind him at the back. Prepared by "Gentlemen", he would say what he had to say, holding us all in the palm of his hands. Yet, on his own, he seemed a curiously solitary figure, with very little actual gaiety. Looking back, by that stage in his life he must have been weary beyond belief with them all and possibly even depressed. After all, he had witnessed the slaughter of his friends in the Great War and then the decimation of his "boys" in the Second. But to me he was truly the greatest of men.

Capel, my Housemaster, was in many ways a junior version of J F, dressed in well-cut tweeds. He was my inspiring first form master and I can still visualise him striding across the lawn in front of the class rooms from the school shop, which he ran with "Moss", and slipping on his gown as he came in. He used to take us around the grounds, trying to interest us in trees. He rarely interrupted in the running of Temple. We juniors were allowed to mill around in our beautiful house room much as we pleased under the aegis of the "settlers", yet discipline was good. We saw him most lunch times (Temple at that time had its own separate dining room in what is now

the Temple house room), sometimes in the dormitories and always at Sunday evening prayer in the house room. When I was moved to one of the upstairs dormitories, I would frequently hear his gramophone playing the Cesar Franck Symphony through the ceiling from his study below; it seemed to be all that he ever played! He owned a smart Sunbeam Talbot sports car which, to our envy, he replaced with a brand new model after the war. As a first-class wicket keeper, he spent hours in his spare time trying to teach me how, by throwing cricket balls at me. I look back on him as a model Housemaster and teacher.

Leslie Huggins came back from the war and galvanised Stowe music. By that time, I had managed more or less to teach myself to play the oboe, in the depth of our grand temple. LH was really inspirational, bringing us on with his enthusiasm and kindness ("C sharp, no C natural, please Humphrey" to the nervous beginner). He never shouted to anyone, rehearsing and renditioning quietly confidently and sometime humorously ("Please stop there and wait for the clock" which was busily away above our heads in assembly). During my time, he paid out of his own pocket for distinguished soloists to come and play for us, for concerts at Oxford (Beecham and even Furthanger on his first post-war visit with the Berlin P.O.) and for the L.P.O. to play for the school in the old gymnasium. But above all, he gave me the run of his own gramophone and record collection, allowing me to spend many happy evenings (when I should have been doing other things) listening to recordings of the basic classical repertoire alone in his room. He was such an outstanding musician and teacher to us all that I particularly bitterly resent the scandalous subsequent misappropriation of his legacy to the school of £5000 for the "Erection of a new and adequate Music School", which was subsumed into the Roxburgh Hall instead.

J F Capel and Huggins; they all were dead within a few years of my leaving... I wonder why?

HUMPHREY BOWLES (OS)

ALL THAT JAZZ



Valete

ME



Michael Edwards is one of a breed of teachers who accomplish a great deal behind the scenes but rarely receive recognition. During his 23 years at Stowe he has fulfilled

diverse roles, many of them innovative. Appointed to teach Mathematics and Information Technology in 1980, Michael soon became interested in links with other schools and with industry. He became a founder member of the Industry Committee as soon as he arrived and remained a vital member of that team as it evolved into the Enterprise Committee. Not many members of staff can boast that they have served on one committee for 23 years!

In 1986, together with Michael Manisty, he persuaded IBM to invest in one of the country's first school networks at Stowe, a pioneering trend which, through Apollo, continues today. In 1989 he was appointed Head of Information Technology as IT flourished and mushroomed in both administrative and educational parts of the school. By 1998 he was project manager for the installation of the new voice and data network, an immense task on a site the size of Stowe.

Throughout his time here Michael has been involved in the activities of the Careers Department. His contact with local schools and industry through the North Buckinghamshire Education/Industry Partnership saw the successful introduction of the first Industry and then Enterprise conferences. For twenty years he was responsible for recruiting advisers, liaising with local state and independent schools, and co-ordinating their activities during the conferences on up to four sites. This sometimes proved to be a logistical nightmare, but through telephone, fax and IT Michael collected the decisions being made, collated them and fed the results back. When it became apparent that the new national examining system might make these conferences impossible, Michael began to think about alternatives, and the Luffield Group was born. The name Luffield comes from a tiny village more or less geographically central to the area where all the participating schools lie. Immediately successful, this group now collaborates on a number of projects ranging from creative writing, drama, design and art to mathematics.

The operation of essential administrative systems has also featured in Michael's brief over the years. The Blue



Book, calendar and, with Michael Jahn, the TWO systems were his responsibility and in 1987 he took over the administration of the various IQ tests given to new members of the

school. For a while he also found time to head the General Studies and Business Studies programmes and he promoted inter-house general knowledge quizzes, and twice coached school teams which were national finalists in the Young Consumer of the Year competition. Each year Michael himself has always achieved one of the top three scores amongst staff in the annual school general knowledge quiz. Another of his interests is chess and for many years he has helped Steven Thompson to coach boys, some of whom have even been rumoured to have beaten him!

Michael is a brilliant proof reader and this skill became invaluable as he joined the publications committee which first produced a new version of the school prospectus and then added a marketing brochure and a Sixth Form Courses Guide to our literature. Michael was also instrumental in installing the Plug Street news monitor and he took on the onerous task of updating it each day.

It would be easy to believe that all Michael's work has been cerebral but in his earlier years here Michael was heavily involved in cricket, mainly at the 2nd and 3rd XI levels. A brief trawl through our photographic archives revealed that he also represented the staff rugby team, though we did have to go back quite a long way! Before the National Trust arrived he also ran the Monday afternoon activity called Forestry. In those days, with none of the financial backing or machinery available to the Estate now, he, Frank Thompson and the Reverend Stanton-Saringer gathered a group of keen boy lumberjacks together to tackle the worst of the broken boughs, fallen trunks and consuming shrubs in what was then a naturalists wonderland.

Michael is unlikely to put his feet up in retirement but at the time of writing even he does not know in which direction he will go! If he really does crave some rest he will need to move away from Water Stratford which is but a stones throw from Stowe. We wish him and his wife Sara a very long, well earned and happy retirement.

DWJ

AGM

Tony arrived at Stowe in 1973 from Prestonville, a former prep. school in Brighton, and Brentwood School. He immediately stood out as a gifted teacher, with two of the key qualities which make for inspiring and effective lessons. He has enormous enthusiasm for his subject. In the classics he reveled in numerous areas, from decadent Roman emperors and the glories of Latin poetry to the delights of Greek art and Attic tragedy. Above all he wanted his pupils to enjoy the subject as much as he did, so lessons started with football (another passion, so long as it was Spurs) team tests; other groups he took to museums or Verulamium, aided by worksheets and prizes. Frequently projects would usurp set texts (before the pressures of AS and A2) and produce such acclaimed results as his 52-page booklet, *Michael Ventris Remembered*. Two of the three sixth-formers who helped to write it were inspired to become classics teachers themselves. He also started an excellent series of Classical magazines, at first named *Cyclops*, allowing the editor to keep at least one eye on suitably punning jokes, and then taking off with *Pegasus*.

Secondly, he insisted on the highest possible standards. Usually he was full of praise for a pupil surprising himself by being inspired to rise above his previous level. Tony's shared enthusiasm and genuine interest in the views of the least prepossessing member of a set would raise further the achievements of even the weakest. Nevertheless, he could effectively reprehend a sloppy third-former who dared to have the impudence to call 'that' a prep; or, with a quasi-Medean frenzy descending into an almost unheard whisper, he could leave some idle sixth-former to realise that he or she didn't deserve the privilege of his teaching.

Tony must hold a record among Stowe teachers for changing subjects. After Classics and English came the Visual Education programme which he wrote during a sabbatical term in 1998. It has generated great interest from both within and outside Stowe. His ground-breaking approach to appreciating visually the environment in which Stoics are so fortunate to be educated culminated in a magnificent series of 'interactive' booklets. These cover most parts of Stowe House and Garden, all attractively printed in colour and full of Tony's eye for the significant and fascinating, blended with the cultivation of accurate description, observant drawing and purposeful imagination.

Drama has always been one of his deep loves. Tony is an accomplished producer and actor who could easily have shone in this career alone. He never put on a play at Stowe; it was always *the* play, and by the time he had finished with it, *the* play had often become the most memorable performance of it one had ever seen, such was his utmost attention to detail and atmosphere. In the tradition of the Wednesday Drama Group of the late 1970's, he was not afraid to be creative in his re-interpretation of the

classics, from his memorable *The Merchant of Venice* in 1979, to his two versions of *Hippolytus*, the 1981 performance outside the Queen's Temple and the 2002 adaptation in traditional Japanese idiom, while for his Euripides' *Electra* of 1999 he wrote his own translation. He took on the elements with other outside productions such as *King Oedipus* in his Greek Drama week in 1977 and his Junior Congreve *Romanoff and Juliet* in front of the Temple of Friendship in 1974. His first senior Congreve production was *Twelfth Night* in 1977, described at the time as 'one of the best for many years'; indeed the prophetic statement of the reviewer rightly predicted: 'it is clear that under his guidance the school's drama will go from strength to strength.' Some of his memorable productions were *The Merchant of Venice* in 1979, *Peer Gynt* in 1982 with Christopher Haslam, *The Boy Friend* in 1988, *Cabaret* in 1994, and two of *Ring Round the Moon*, in 1985 and 2001. *Camelot* in 2002 was a magnificent final triumph.

Tony did not restrict his love of drama to directing. In 1980 he initiated the New Boys' plays, a great way of keeping third-formers fully occupied during their first few weeks in a new environment. In his last few years he taught Drama Studies, finishing as Head of Department this year. He even had to endure an inspection in his penultimate term with its insistence on detailed paperwork. Nevertheless he came through with flying colours, despite his innate aversion to anything redolent of interfering bureaucracy.

As an actor Tony rarely appeared in plays, but when he did he was unforgettable. His Jud in *Oklahoma* in 1987 and Shalford in *Half-a-Sixpence* in 1992 were acclaimed and Brian Stephan considered his 1989 performance as Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* as not inferior to Rex Harrison's and more of what Shaw intended.

In 1980 Tony took over from Roger Rawcliffe as housemaster of Chatham, following three years as under-housemaster in Grenville. During fifteen years he built Chatham into a very strong, effective and popular house with tremendous dedication and hard work, ably supported by Heather. He was fiercely loyal to members of his house but expected an equal response from them. House music became very strong in his time and there were some notable House plays, including Shakespeare, suitably cut, such as *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Much physically was done to Chatham in his time, including the provision of study bedrooms, appropriate indoor lavatories and the development of the house library. Even while still housemaster, he found time to become Director of Admissions in 1994 for two years.

Tony and cricket have long been inseparable. He has coached and umpired many schools teams over his thirty years at Stowe, including long spells with the 2nd XI

and the Junior Colts. In addition he has become a noted cricket author. After a sabbatical term, in 1987 he published *The Demon and the Lobster*, improving on the style of Plutarch's parallel lives by intertwining his pair; it also allowed him to indulge his loyalty to Essex. His next book, *Summers in winter: Four England tours of Australia*, came out in 1990. He has also been a regular contributor to *The Cricketer*, becoming an expert on county grounds and their gastronomic offerings.

Tony's wide interest in people and his tireless hard work helped him to edit a splendid series of eight editions of *The Stoic*. He elicited a vast range of articles and also wrote many himself, contributing numerous photographs: check out the prolific 'Al Bianco' and 'Classic Snaps'! The impressive result was a bursar-grieving length of up to 200 pages.

Tony is a man of many other passions too. Cars are one: in the 1970's he helped found a Motor Sport Club and Stowe Karting Club; in the 1990's he was the proud owner of an ancient Austin Allegro, by then an motoring icon. He also holds strong views, sometimes vigorously expounded, on a variety of school issues, including plans for the future.

In almost all this he has been helped by Heather, always smiling and ever patient. They married in 1976 and he thus acquired many Stoic relatives, not least the Rev. Jos Nicholl, formerly housemaster of Cobham. Heather has been drawn into many of his activities, often acting as Mistress of the Wardrobe, and happily will continue her role in the Admissions Office at Stowe. Meanwhile we wish Tony all the best for his next publishing ventures, fortunately from nearby in Akeley. Over a period of some thirty years the eighteenth-century Earl of Chatham read and wrote Latin at Stowe, doubtless played cricket at Stowe, helped to plan its buildings and garden, and found his bride at Stowe. Modern Stowe has much for which to thank its modern Chatham, another renaissance all-rounder.

MJB



AMLS

Alistair Lockhart-Smith's conscientious enthusiasm, meticulous attention to detail, humane serenity, gracious good will, unflinching tact and total dependability had been his hallmarks as a Stoic and these qualities immediately became apparent again as he returned to work on the other side of the desk and the Common Room doors. In the early days, Alistair's mild manner might have concealed his grasp of intricate detail and his familiarity with Stowe and Stoics, to the sudden discomfiture of a few of the latter, but classes quickly adapted to the rigorous demands which lurked behind the pleasant and gentle demeanour of their new teacher. He showed mental agility and tenacity in mastering the complexities of the

GCSE syllabus during the Christmas holidays and we are profoundly grateful to him for the help which he has given us. He provided a welcome addition to Bruce House, clearly relishing his evening duties amongst the Stoics there. His formidable reputation on the squash courts in the past again surfaced as colleagues and boys were alike vanquished.

Alistair has been a predictably civilised colleague and a fine example to Stoics passing through the school a few years behind him. We shall continue to keep very much in touch.

PASF

GAC

One Cambridge Double Blue, one sojourn in South Africa (Grahamstown, appropriately), a few successful insurance sales and some teaching at Cranleigh (TMH-S among his pupils somewhere) all pasted into his cv, Graham was about to become a housemaster in Norfolk when fate led him suddenly to Stowe, where we have been lucky to have held him ever since.

Graham quickly established himself as a precise teacher of French and master of the sportsfield. The likes of 5C were ever alert to his bonhomie spiced with the occasional bark and sundry references to their preferences for sporting rather than linguistic pursuits, and one always tends to think of Graham as a good, old-fashioned didactic teacher, naturally and forcefully holding the attention of many a group of reluctant linguists, despite the fact that he actually evolved and embraced new methods and techniques quite easily and willingly. The image of Graham proclaiming that he's too old a dog to be taught new tricks while simultaneously learning them without fuss or bother remains a defining one for me. Not that he stopped using the old ones, of course, and a sudden outburst from GAC often crushed the class next door, who would remain tentative and cowering fully ten minutes after he had moved his own class on with a joke and quick easing of the atmosphere. In the sixth form he taught and became a senior examiner for the "French for Professional Use" A level, or "Business French" as it was often called by those who mischievously felt they'd discovered an oxymoron as good as French Cricket.

Despite hockey being his game, really, it was as Head of Cricket that Graham was a member of the triumvirate that pretty well ran Stowe competitive sport through several successful seasons in the late eighties; and his own breadth of sporting talents and achievements made his an influential voice, with a finely-tuned understanding of the needs and motivations of schoolboy sportsmen. He was also a superb apologist, and could produce immaculately crafted and articulated arguments in defence of the apparently indefensible, more or less without notice, and was clear-sighted and convincing in explaining the role of sport in a young person's education well before the subject was taken over by a new generation of sport scientists. In latter years he has continued to coach, running girls' hockey for a few seasons, and most recently taking over the golf.

Graham was also housemaster of Cobham, which he ran with his familiar jovial abruptness. The general idea among Cobhamites seemed to be that matron Sara Drew was warm, comforting and sympathetic albeit inclined to be firm about the sorts of things matrons get exercised



about, housemaster's wife Carolyn was ever-kindly and friendly, and Graham was fair but strict, could always be relied upon 100% to stick up for you when necessary, and would let you do what you liked in the Upper Sixth – so they reckoned they had it all. Needless to say, the Upper Sixth bit wasn't true, but the fact that they thought that it might be in their younger years illustrated the way that Graham handled the transition from schoolboy to adulthood and outside world: in the last year the theory of give and take has to become practice, and it's time for them to be their own men. Inevitably, Cobham was an athletic house much given to the

winning of cups, but as ever, Graham was a good deal more flexible than firstly obvious. The House play, for example, and all things dramatic were, Graham insisted, specialist areas of expertise into which he did not stray. He inherited a house tradition of smoking room farces featuring enormous second-row forwards prancing in tutus as elephantine nymphs and saw nought wrong with that as a *modus operandi* – yet when he found himself with a Cobhamite with a particular dramatic and musical talent, there promptly blossomed as showcase a fully-fledged musical such as *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* apparently from nowhere. Several fine classical musicians went through his Cobham, well-nurtured, understood and supported. And then, largely as a result of one particular Cobhamite who thought he was Eric Clapton and could play the guitar to prove it, Graham reinvented himself in yet another role as Cobham court's answer to Harvey Goldsmith, and began promoting open air rock concerts around the place. Demonstrating a general technical expertise that had lain dormant since the REME section of the CCF had stopped rebuilding cars under his tutelage, Graham oversaw the building of stages, wiring of PA systems and all that roadie-stuff as well as the impresario skills needed to bring the whole thing off. Several Cobham Court events and one massive North Front spectacular succeeded.

Graham was an assured, warm and generous host – invitations to Cobham wine-and-cheese Saturday evenings were always welcome – a supportive colleague, especially to younger members of the languages department, an accomplished sportsman, and a successful academic. He has the kind of practical intelligence that can turn itself to anything, remains distinctively his own man while always able to adapt, could always shift a formidable workload, and is generally the kind of all-round public schoolmaster that people remember. We wish him and Christine well in their retirement.

SGAH

CHJ

A pupil from a local comprehensive school stood on the south Front with a member of our Common Room during a recent Luffield Festival. 'You know', she said, 'I didn't realise how normal a place like this could be. It's not a bit like what I thought it would be.' At that moment, a figure loomed into view at the top of the steps. Wielding a tennis racquet, resplendent in his St Edward's blazer, and (of course) sporting his gown, he yelled at the top of his voice with plenty of pretend irritation and not a little pride... "Hobbes!" It was CHJ.

Charles wants to be remembered primarily as the hero of the Great Goose Incident. And rightly so. Having made the decision to take up running, Charles, of course, took it very seriously and in his own way developed quite an effective style of padding through the grounds – to the horror of his long-suffering and aged dog who seemed to lag behind. One day, as he tells it, he saw in the distance a group of boys attacking a defenceless goose. He shouted; they ran; he gave pursuit. He gained on them, they sped up; he took short-cuts, still they evaded. Dogged in his task, he cornered them in a wood, commandeering a passing car (as the chase reached the highways and byways) in order to cut off retreat. Finally realising the futility of their opposition to the driving force of Johnsonian purpose, the wretched criminals gave in. CHJ had landed his greatest prey... and the extended version is freely available on a phone-call to Shiplake.

There is a theory about Charles Johnson that his eccentricity was largely a self-made creation that got out of hand; far from being natural, he developed a persona only to wake up one day and find that it was permanent. I subscribe to this theory tentatively – I only arrived late in the sixteen glorious years and find it difficult to imagine anything different. But whatever the truth, it suited him. I remember one glorious occasion when the Housemasters went out for a meal in a local. Being typically raucous, we annoyed a few locals, one of whom burst out with some invective including the charge that we were little more than 'bloody townies'. Unable to stomach this most heinous of suggestions, CHJ launched into a counter-attack, suggesting that he was nothing of the sort. Having played the ace card of being Master-in-charge of Beagles (though technically he no longer was), he retired blusteringly hot and bothered to a corner as we prevented the otherwise inevitable fight. If truth be known, the local was probably right. But anyone seeing him rallying the cause of the countryside would never have known.

Whether in the years as Under-Housemaster (six) or as Housemaster (ten), generations of Grafton boys know exactly what I mean when I say that here was a man who lived for his house, took immense pride in all that they did and set the highest of standards. Not for nothing was Grafton the rival to Chatham as the most popular house in recent years. It developed a distinctively CHJ charac-



ter: never allowing day-boys, always having the most beagles (for whose rights Charles was always to champion even to the controversial extent of gaining Director's Cup Points for them in latter years), always discovering fives players; always having a smattering of the aristocracy and above all, always having a fierce loyalty and immense determination. Never would a Grafton team lie down and die. I know Charles was always sad never to win the Senior Rugby; he certainly never forgave Walpole for several close and controversial defeats. But they won most other things, and often. And much of the motive for such victories was the bellowing tones from the side as 'Come on Grafton' echoed round the grounds. Of course, no one doubts the level of Charles' commitment to his house; I would guess that Vanessa took some persuading to allow him to include Graftonia as the middle name of their first daughter, Camilla. And no-one doubts, whatever the wisdom of his Christening habits, his commitment to his family: he would be the first, with all of us close behind, to pay tribute to the tremendous work of Vanessa in supporting him and complementing him in his role. He was a towering Housemaster; his family a towering example.

Charles was a great colleague, too. He had many close friends but beyond that, and perhaps equally importantly, a whole raft of acquaintances. And behind the bluff exterior there was a real kindness and thoughtfulness. I remember at 11pm on the first night of my Housemastering life, there was a phone call. It was Charles: 'How's it all going?' He taught me much about how to do the job but never more than in that moment. Of course, he could be irritable. He tended to repeat himself. He made even the rest of us look positive at times when commenting on SMT – how ironic that he should spend the last few years of his time here on it! He developed to an art form the avoidance of activities towards the end; Beagles went, Swimming (albeit after many years) went... and he ended up, wholly appropriately, sitting watching the external coach taking Clay Pigeon Shooting. Another remarkable penchant was that for attracting generous gifts though the encouragement to parents was at times a little blatant. And no-one ever

quite knew how good he had been in the city or whether he really was as successful on the Stock Market as he claimed. Somehow, with anyone else, these things could have grated; somehow with Charles, they all made up part of the loveable package.

Charles loved his History. He pretended not to but he often read deeply and knew his beloved Mid-Tudor Crisis documents inside out. He loved his teaching, from his little jokes about 'Cobb the Horse' and 'The 95 Faeces' to the affectionate way in which he stuffed his marking into his quaint old shopping bag. Between us we developed the Stowe History Test: put the following countries in prioritised order of awfulness – America, France and Germany, that, of course, being the answer in descending order. There was a touch of the imperialist about CHJ.

But of course, there genuinely was a touch of the imperialist. Born the son of a diplomat, he travelled wide-

ly. And there was a genuine awareness of politics and understanding of complex issues as a result. It was well worth waiting for in conversation. And that perhaps is the measure of the man; not ever easily pigeon-holed, he was the archetypal ex-pat, the one at ease with his slight eccentricity and lord of much that he surveyed and yet beneath the surface, so much more than that. I miss him.

The most important aspect of Stowe for him was the grounds. He loved them with a passion and knew them. I suggest, better than almost anyone. Our memories of him will certainly feature a tennis racquet, battered wellies, and his loyal hound, and a purposeful stride. And of course, a goose...

The girl turned again to the teacher. "Well, it's mostly normal anyway." But since when has Stowe gone for conformity? We'd rather have had – indeed we are sorry not still to have – the legend that was CHJ.

JSM

CJAT

There is little doubt that the proprietor of The Queen's Head in Chackmore must have needed a stiff measure of his best whisky when the dreadful news broke. 'Fridge' is leaving. Opinions differ as to what percentage of the pub's profits are down to the custom of Chris but few would doubt the size – in every sense – of the loss.

The huge sums of money spent at the Pub do tell us something of CJAT's notoriously poor financial management (a story is told of the time when he gave up drinking beer or cider and decided that shorts were better only to be surprised that his chosen drink of several vodkas and various mixers cost over £10). Perhaps they give an indication of why he gave up a burgeoning Accountancy career to take up teaching. More importantly, however, they tell us something of the sincere and extensive generosity of the man. Few people in the local area have not heard of him. Even fewer have not had him buy them a drink.

And it is the same generosity that characterises CJAT as a teacher and as an Under-Housemaster. He is always willing to give up time for extra lessons, to photocopy ridiculously detailed revision booklets, to give lifts in his famous Landrover to the Bourbon, to take a few Walpole Juniors on an illicit trip to McDonald's. He has always been willing to accommodate the late and often anti-social demands made on him by a disorganised Housemaster and done so uncomplainingly. He has been a diligent tutor, caring about the boys more than many might realise. The sadness in Walpole is palpable as he leaves; that is tribute enough.

And yet perhaps it isn't. In many ways, Chris is hugely unknown as a character by the majority of Stoics. Not only was he a star of early Fairy Liquid adverts (a fact



that to his embarrassment is increasingly well known) but he is also a man of many other hidden and more useful talents. He is a closet musician. He is an impressive and voracious reader. He has wonderful fondness for his rescued greyhounds. He has a huge sense of justice and will often care about misbehaviour to the point, ironically, of saying things he shouldn't. But that is not the brashness of the usual rugger-bugger; that is the sensitive high standards of an impressive schoolmaster.

Of course, there was the rugby as well.

The tours to Cornwall and beyond; the complicated yet effective lineout routines; the frustration with occasionally defeatist Stoics. He was master-in-charge for a while and always a committed coach. But you see the Prop from a mile off; it is the other side that remains hidden all too often.

CJAT could be reassuringly blunt, perhaps too much so at times. Few will forget the epic public confrontation with the Bursar over his shower; his relationship with the ex-Kennel Huntsman was explosive and his occasional spats with the National Trust famous. Many will have had some sort of run-in with him at some time or other. But all who know him well will salute him for his contribution, be delighted that he has been able to make the move he has (though we are sceptical of Harrow!) and wish him all the best.

Chris has two classic cars. The Landrover is perhaps more obviously suited and it is likely – and appropriate – that many will remember him in that, bouncing off to a rugby practice. But I will remember the Citroen; far more stylish, far more sensitive, and comfortably, if quietly, impressive.

JSM

WEHV

When Will came for interview at Stowe some thirteen years ago he was not the most obvious candidate for the vacancy in the Biology Department. Working in the 'City' at the time he had no teaching qualifications and he hadn't even studied Chemistry at A level, seemingly a pre-requisite for the modern Biologist. He does, however, have a degree in Biological Sciences from Exeter! A canny man he played his trump card early by bringing his delightful wife Emma to the interview with him. Charmed by this lovely lady we had no option but to offer Will the job and he was soon trying his hand in the noble profession. Not that he needed much guidance as he had been steeped in schools all his life as his father was Headmaster of a prep school throughout Will's formative years. After a bit of pedagogical tinkering Will quickly took to his new role and it was not long before he was setting the standards of preparation and marking within the department.

It was immediately apparent that Will is a true schoolmaster rather than simply a teacher and during his twelve years here he became involved in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. He has been 'admiral' of the Naval section of the CCF, in charge of sculling and coached sailing, 4th XV rugby, 2nd XI hockey and cross-country. He was also a Fourth Form tutor of some distinction and a GCSE and A level practical moderator. He fulfilled all these roles with passion and enthusiasm and even found time to qualify formally as a teacher!

In 1995 Will decided, somewhat bizarrely, that he wanted to look after some sixty or so pubescent youths and accepted the Headmaster's invitation to become housemaster of Chatham. So that he could immerse himself fully in his new 'caring' role he and Emma began their own intensive breeding programme and had four lovely children in alarmingly quick succession. So it was that for seven and a half years he and Emma brought up their family as well as a host of Chathamites. Will ran Chatham in a charismatic and individualist style managing to cope with the lively antics of a house full of mischievous teenagers whilst gaining their trust and respect. Following Tony Meredith was no easy task but his relaxed approach created a homely atmosphere and Chatham continues to be the house of first choice for many, spawning more than its fair share of Heads of School. His waiting list became the envy of all other housemasters.

Throughout his time as a housemaster Will remained a dedicated teacher and the Biology department especially appreciated his continued presence as a friend and front-line teacher. Admittedly he did have his days – known affectionately as 'three technician days' – usually after some Chatham crisis or other, when the full might of the Biology department support team had to swing into action. All the technicians, the photocopier, coffee machine, cocktail shaker and a host of practical demon-

stration equipment were needed to get the WEHV roadshow going, though mercifully those days were few.

Will is leaving us to follow in his father's footsteps as he takes up the Headship of St. Ronan's preparatory school in Kent. We understand that major renovations are afoot there which will keep both Will and Emma busy, but it will surely be easier than running Chatham – no patter of elephantine feet to keep you awake at night, no weekend duties and no housemasterly 'in' statements like 'thank God it's Monday'. Will, of course, has many of the attributes of a good Headmaster already – dedication (obviously), height, grey hair and a tendency to become quite chatty after a glass or two!

Emma too has had her part to play at Stowe, not as a paid employee, but willingly and charmingly as host to numerous boys and their parents. Before moving to Chatham Emma gave us the benefit of her professional experience by leading seminars on 'Careers in the City' for many years. Conscious of the needs of universities and employers and the importance of interviews Emma helped first with relatively informal interview training and then with the more structured video interview programme. We hope that she may agree to continue to give us the benefit of her expertise for many years yet.

We thank Will and Emma for all they have done for Stowe and its occupants for the past twelve years and we wish them, Lizzie, Tom, Harry and Jago every success and happiness at St. Ronan's.

RRA/DWJ



ROWENA PRATT

All Rowena's pre-Stowe experience has stood her in good stead during her 25 years as Walpole matron. Her childhood in a remote corner of Wales without mains water or electricity has helped her cope with Duke of Edinburgh camps as well as occasional failures in the Stowe heating system. Her primary school teaching expertise has been invaluable in dealing with recalcitrant Stoics, who at their worst can be like 8 year olds, and also useful for the years of teaching First Aid. She spent time cooking for the Outward Bound which is obvious when seeing her prowess at cooking up meals in no time and with few ingredients and officiating at barbecues. Next in her curriculum vitae were the years she spent teaching in Bhutan which developed in her a real curiosity for and sympathy with other cultures – evident in her relish for the cultural diversity Stowe now represents. Also her brief sojourn at Kensington Palace ensures that no Stowe visitor, however esteemed, will find Rowena at a loss for words of welcome.

Her many interests provide more clues as to why Rowena and Stowe dovetailed so well. A deep love and knowledge of wildlife in general but birds in particular was satisfied in the rich environment of Stowe, although less so since the National Trust opened up the vistas and wildlife retreated before visiting throngs. Many will be aware of her love of music which has made her such a keen supporter of all musical events at Stowe, from helping with a house music club in the early days to organising the making of a CD of Walpudlian musicians' achievements.

A voracious appetite for reading and especially history has made her a stimulating conversationalist for boys visiting her ever-open flat as well as ensuring she is one of Stowe's most enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides. Even an early career as school hockey goalie has been useful for giving her an understanding of the key role sport, and in particular team games, play in the life of a school. She is a never-failing supporter of teams and individuals whether First XV or Junior Colts C and she has been time keeper for both swimming and athletics matches. Her support can always be counted on at debates, art exhibitions and drama productions, both house and school and for many years she organised the post production parties in the Roxy.

Over the years her influence has spread from the house to the school and she has served on Health and Safety and Leavers' Ball committees. Rowena has always stood for high standards and will never allow Walpole (or the girls' houses when she was briefly matroning there as well) to look anything but its best. She has been much valued as a key figure in the Walpole pastoral team; a figure whose qualities, not least her sense of humour, have contributed to the success and happiness of the House over the past 25 years. She is deeply loyal to pupils, staff and school and cannot understand how anyone could not care as passionately and selflessly about Stowe as she does herself.

CHRIS ATKINSON

PAT REILLY

Pat Reilly has been an unfailingly cheerful and wonderfully patient Matron of Temple who has contributed whole heartedly to all things Temple and Stowe. Having "learnt the business" at Bradfield Pat joined Temple in November 1997 when Jamie Henderson had the very good sense to appoint her. Since then Pat has been extraordinary in the warmth and care she has extended to both the boys and two Housemasters both of whom have benefited from the occasional mopped brow but more especially her own special brand of "Matron's Medicine". The boys for their part gained pounds in weight thanks to Mrs Reilly's special chocolate brownie recipe. Pat has been a familiar sight at pool-side for galas and at the finishing line for the athletics. She has braved all weathers not just around the sports fields but also on D of E expeditions. Pat has always been a family person and the boys have enjoyed this. She has 4 of her own children and is beginning to lose count of the grandchildren! Living in her penthouse Pat has nurtured her roof top garden to wonderful effect – a great setting for the occasional 6th form BBQ. Whilst it is unlikely that retirement will enable her to rekindle her enjoyment of sailing, having her own garden will keep her out of mischief. Perhaps she might even get to enjoy some jazz or even the company of a traditional Irish band. Pat is not moving far from Stowe and for all the boys of Temple and all her friends here that is wonderful news.

AL

DAPHNE BENNETT

The Stowe community was sorry to see Daphne Bennett leave this year after her having given three and a half years of greatly appreciated service to the School. It was not simply as Chandos matron that Daphne was known to all, but, for a time, as the matron's representative and as one of the most enthusiastic and effective members of staff in the CCF. High profile, busy and always ready with a smile, Daphne contributed enormously to many areas of School life. Chandos, the RAF, matrons and the wider community will miss Daphne, and we wish her every success for the future.

Rowena was my house matron for thirteen years and was a pillar of experience all through that period. Had I been a boy at Stowe, I know I would have loved to have had Rowena as my house matron. I would have known that without my mother or father being on hand I had a lady who was prepared to look after me, to watch me play or perform, to organise my birthday parties with cakes and goodies and to be stern with me when I needed it.

As a Housemaster, however, I was totally secure in the knowledge that the boys in my care had this protective encouragement all day and every day. Whatever problems the boys may have had, homesickness, disappointments, coping with Ramadan, losing their possessions, being picked on, Rowena always seemed to have a remedy. Her refrigerator and freezer was always fully laden to cope with the boys hunger pains as well.

Taking over a successfully run house is not straightforward and Rowena provided me with help, encouragement, advice and support for which I will always hold her in the highest esteem. During the thirteen years we spent together, thirteen very happy years on my part, we had some very difficult incidents to deal with and some extremely exciting times. Throughout everything Rowena always remained focussed on what was needed and how best to cope with the situation.

I can't begin to list the many and varied activities outside the house that Rowena was involved with. I know that over the many years she has been at Stowe, many people, staff, parents and boys have been touched by Rowena's warmth and generosity and we will sadly miss her when she retires.

LEW

I am not really qualified to speak about Rowena as much as either Chris or Lionel are. I can only say that I was truly horrified when Rowena thought of retiring at the same time as LEW and truly delighted when she decided to carry on for a few more years. I am now truly horrified again at the prospect of trying to run a House without her. She still maintains marvellous enthusiasm, whether with prospective parents; at concerts; on the touch-line; at birthday celebrations (which she still arranges with relish); or simply in the humdrum monotony of laundry, medical queues and cleaning. 'The extra mile' is a phrase designed for her; she virtually refuses to take time off and will do all that is asked of her and

then more. I suggest that there are few better than her at her job. Few would disagree.

How to remember her? Miss P insisting on the collection of cricket whites after a school match so that she can wash them in advance of the House Match the following day. Her pride on them looking smart. Her support during the match. Her delight if they win. Her ready provision of squash and biscuits and a lift back regardless. Her rushing off to the next thing.

Diana and I have appreciated Rowena's advice, her years of experience, her conversation on matters artistic, cultural and literary, her expertise on 18th Century England and Stowe in particular. I will miss her companionship. She has been wonderful with my children who will miss her greatly. And as the phone-calls double in number after Christmas, I will be tempted to ring through to Brackley and invite her back, perhaps with the challenge that one of her predecessors, Ma Johnson, did thirty-three years to her 'mere' twenty-five. But what a twenty-five they have been.

JSM



Rowena Pratt with her three former Housemasters, Chris Atkinson (seated), Lionel Weston (standing right) and John Moule.

DGB

Dan Brandt has been lured away by the bright lights of London to become a Housemaster at Highgate School. He leaves after five years of teaching Geography and being



Under Housemaster of Grenville.

Dan's energy and enthusiasm have been displayed throughout Stowe life and his list of achievements and responsibilities is impressive.

Stoics lucky enough to have been taught by him will recall the Hawaiian days, stories and his famous one-liners, but he has always managed to combine this with continued professional development that culminated in marking GCSE papers for AQA. Dan clearly enjoys the subject and is always happy to research fieldtrips in his spare time. His particular favourites being the tourism provision in Salcombe and the spatial distribution of nightclubs on the Kings Road.

The Leaver's Ball has become an outstanding event to rival many University functions and much of this has been completed in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee. His commitment is shown even further when you realise that he has had to remain sober for the last three years (although this is probably why he always wins the laser clay pigeon shooting)! His relationships with the Stoics also made him the obvious candidate for running the Sixth Form Centre and he has continually campaigned for their enhanced facilities.

The strength of the CCF continues to grow and Dan has steadily progressed through the ranks. His thoughtful and time-consuming field day preparations, as Head of the Advanced Infantry Section, have led to some enjoyable nights on exercise and he is always willing to take early morning Coldstream Cup practises during the Christmas term. The CCF will lose an energetic leader but his trousers were never really short enough to make Colonel.

No resume of Dan would be complete without doffing the cap to sport. He has been involved heavily in the Rugby at Stowe, attending pre-season camps in the holidays, and coaching a number of teams from Yearlings to 1st XV squad. This is clearly one of his strengths but he has also been happy to help out in other sports such as cricket and he has enjoyed his role as Head of the Girls Tennis team. He is also an enthusiastic golfer, squash player, runner and a dab hand at the frisbee.

Dan is the archetypal 'young blade' involved in everything and always willing to give up his time to help Stoics with their work. His jokes in class and ability to drive minibuses will be missed and will undoubtedly be Highgate's gain. We wish him all the best and expect to see him throwing the welly boot with his new group on the sand dunes at Harlech.

BGD

JCHG

Jonathan Gruber arrived at Stowe, cheerful and smiling, and, when met at the South Front steps as he disembarked from his taxi having survived the difficult welcome of the UK immigration authorities



(almost refused entry), the

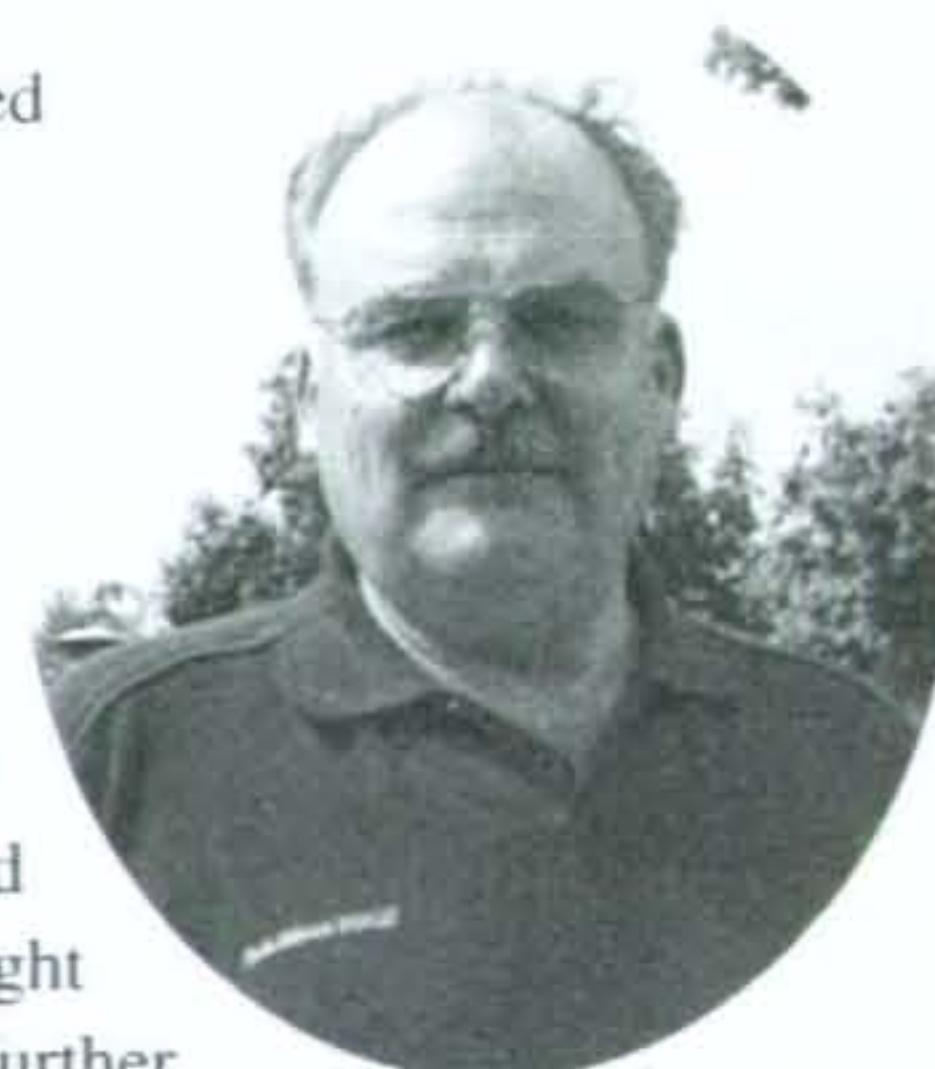
first items to appear were his tennis racquet and golf clubs – we knew immediately that he was right for Temple! As Under-Housemaster of Temple, he has been both effective and sympathetic and his satchel has almost achieved iconic status with fashion-conscious Templars. Thrown into the deep end in the History and Politics Departments he has cautiously introduced Stoics to the intricacies of the European warfare and the American Constitution, and, despite those Stoics who have yet to forgive the American colonies for belligerently achieving undeserved independence, his good humour and endless patience have won him many friends. Such a talent also endeared him to the ways of Stoics abroad when in Rome with the History of Art trip where his unforgettable 'night on the tiles' was to earn him an ovation from the U6. More seriously, he organised for a Holocaust survivor to speak of his wartime experiences to a large gathering of stunned and, at times, even amused Stoics. We shall miss his quiet humour and we wish him all the best in his future at Law School in America. No doubt Stowe's English grandeur and idiosyncratic ways will remain with him for the remainder of his life.

CCR

ACT

Alan Tydeman arrived at Stowe in March 2000, having taught in New Zealand and Australia for the previous 27 years. He joined the maths department and immediately started to offer welcome advice and helpful ideas. He has taught

all age groups up to further maths A-level and he has a good relationship with the pupils. Alan has been responsible for the smooth running of the 3rd form maths curriculum and he has also produced exam timetables for whole school internal examinations. He has been a great asset to the department and he will be missed by all.



Alan is best known for his role as master in charge of Defaulters and Sanctions, which he has been doing now for three years. This involves getting up early every morning to meet those on punishments at 7a.m. It is a thankless task and he will be very hard to replace. He has also taken over the running of the common room bar for the past year which has been successful as well as organising the common room dinners.

Alan spends most afternoons coaching Rugby and his enthusiasm for the sport is certainly evident. He coaches the Junior Colts A squad and the Yearlings B & C squads and he gives up every Saturday to travel to matches with the teams to give his support. As master in charge of swimming for the past two years, Alan has organised galas at Stowe which have been a great success and it has been good to see the swimming team make such headway in their sport.

Alan will also be greatly missed by Cobham House and Housemaster David James in particular. He lends his wholehearted support to each and every house event, is on hand night and day, and he can always be relied upon to step in at the last minute to do extra duties. Alan has been an invaluable house tutor to the 4th and 5th form over the past three years and he is well-liked and respected amongst the boys.

Alan has given his all to Stowe School and he is certainly an all-rounder when it comes to his achievements within this community. We wish him every success and happiness for the future.

KJS

CFPA



Charlie Aird has breathed life into every facet of Stowe life that he has come in contact with. When we employed him as a hockey pro we knew we were getting a good guy but I don't think we realised quite how good a package we had purchased.

Despite a flirtation with a school just outside Abingdon it is very hard to dislike Charlie. He is the most positive, enthusiastic and smiley bloke in the world.

He has made a huge impression on the hockey, particularly the Goal Keepers. Last year we conceded more than five times the number of goals than this year, the most important factor in this turn around has been Mr. Aird. Charlie has braved the long, bitter February evenings on the Astro and was still musters the energy to vivify a fading practice or enthuse a player who's attention was waning. He is a vastly talented player himself and I hope he never loses sight of that and continues to play the game.

Charlie has also taught languages with vigour and confidence in a class room situation. He looked, acted and performed like a professional who had been doing the job for years. As an academic linguist his scholarship has impressed and surprised his colleagues. The only problem has been holding him back from all the things he has been prepared to throw himself into in order to keep his work load manageable.

He leaves behind many Chandosians who have appreciated his manner with them. He has provided quiet support behind the scenes for AD that has helped keep the house running so smoothly.

My abiding memory of Charlie will be of him with a grin wider than the Cheshire Cat having won the Headmaster's golf tankard. Not only had the handicapper underestimated his ability but he installed such positive belief in his partner that Olly Howe played out of his skin as well.

Thank you very much Charlie

BJLS

JJWB

Jonathan Burden came to Stowe at short notice from Bedford School to fill in for a year in the Classics Department. It now seems difficult to imagine life without him, so much has he contributed both to the department and to wider school activities. Within



the department he has taught both Latin and Greek as well as Classical Civilisation at every level with a genuine scholastic interest and concern for individual pupils. He will especially be remembered for running the junior Greek Club so enthusiastically each week in his eyrie in Room 1a. On top of his large classics timetable he has also taught English to a lower school set; he has given talks to both the English and Classical Societies and brought in Oxford colleagues from Christchurch as speakers.

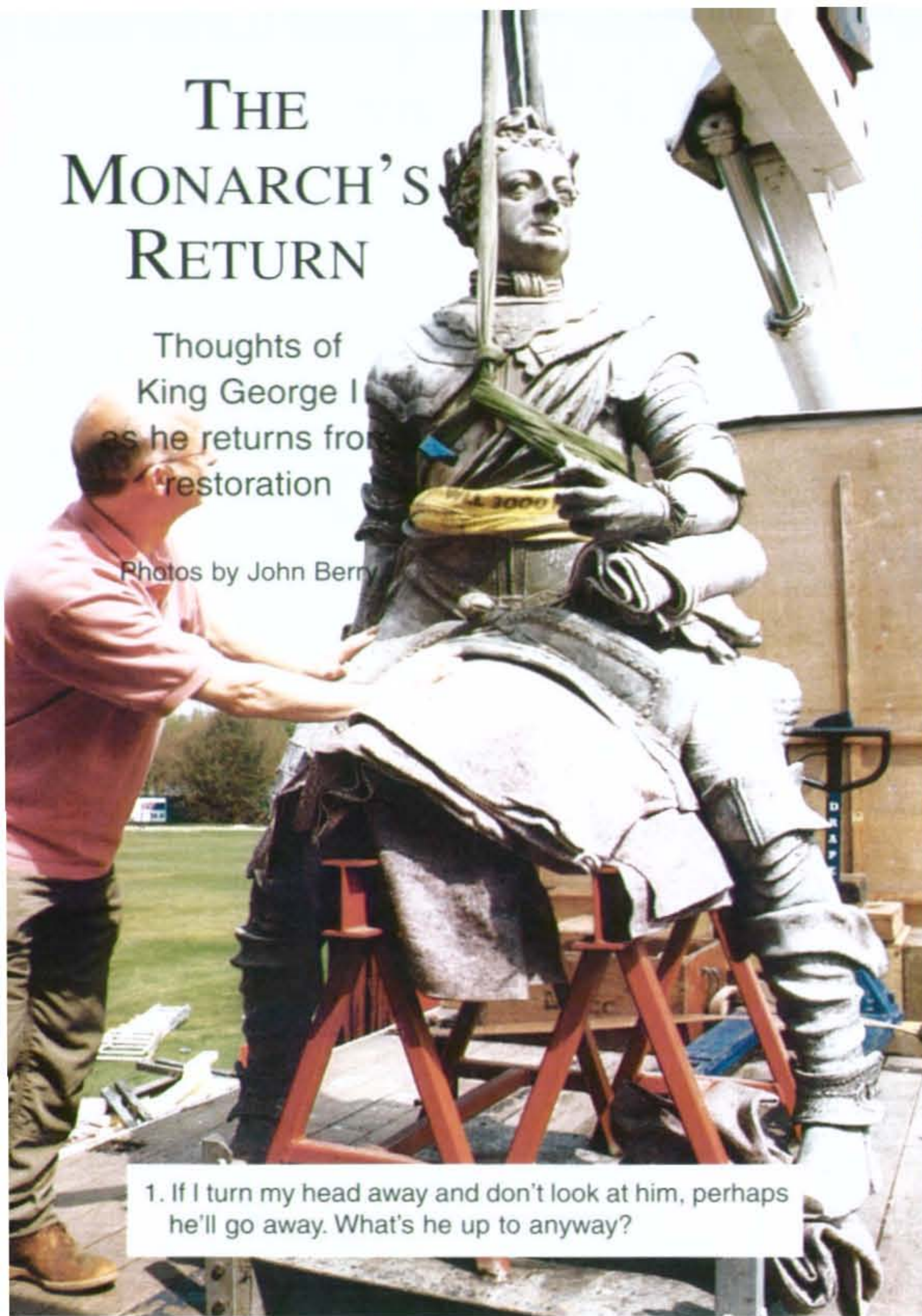
Outside the department he stepped into the role of resident under-housemaster of Cobham at short notice in January and was soon noted for the time-consuming care he took over each member of the house. He found time to help with cross-country running and athletics and ran the sculling for much of the summer term. In addition he has contributed to Crossfire and to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, helping on Field Days. We shall be sorry to miss his friendly presence around Stowe but are delighted for him that he will be going to teach Classics and Religious Studies not too far away at Rugby.

MJB

THE MONARCH'S RETURN

Thoughts of King George I as he returns from restoration

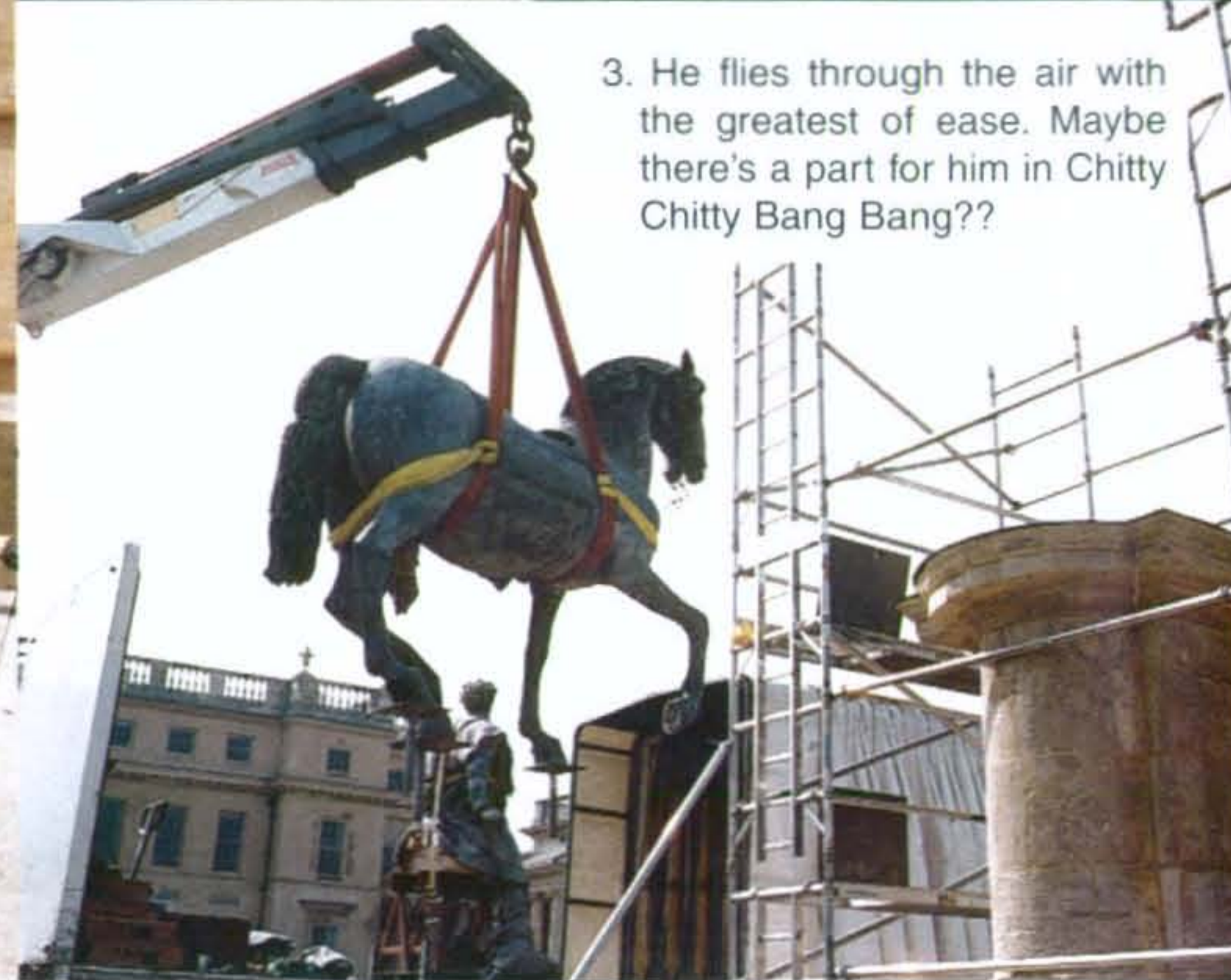
Photos by John Berry



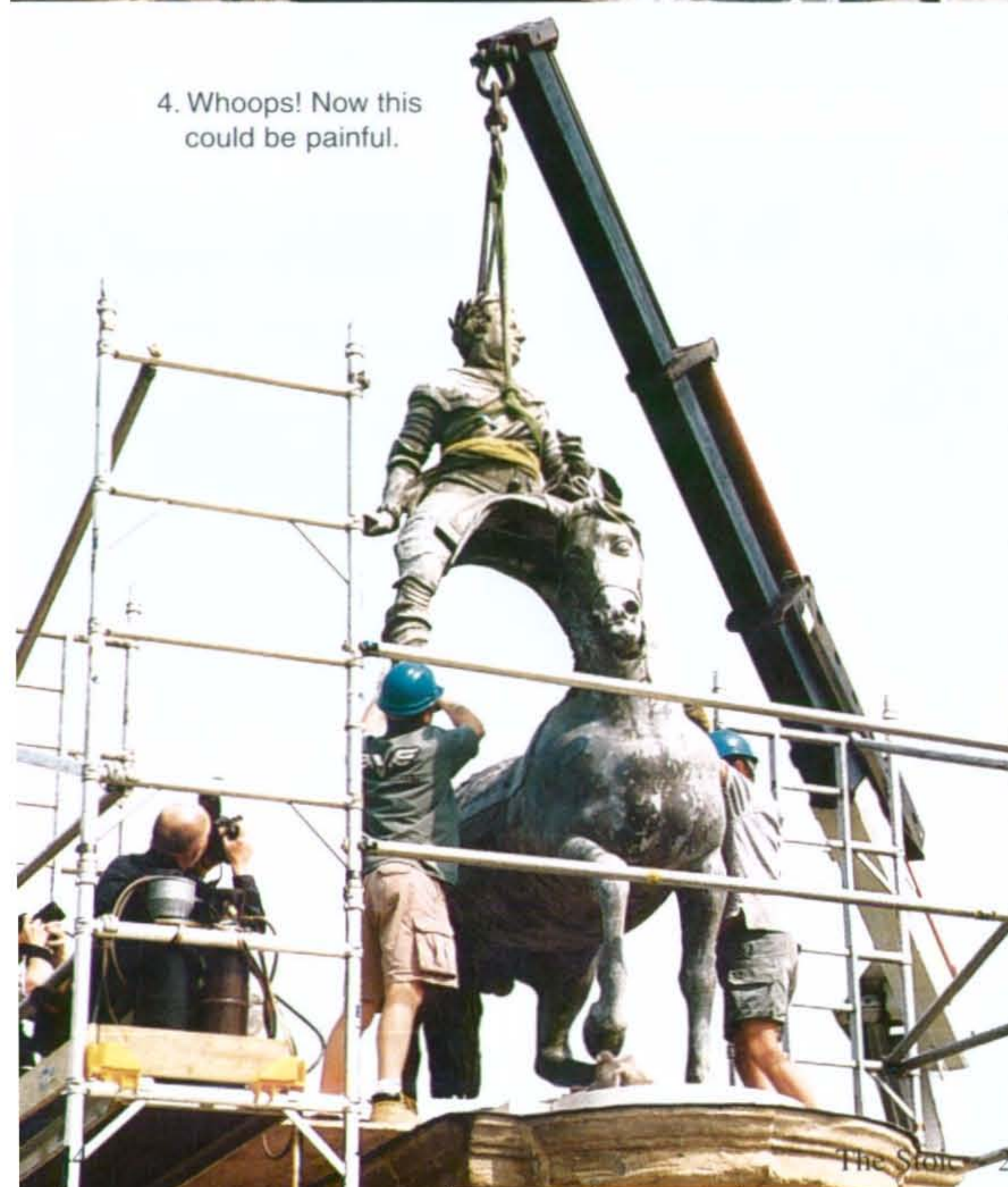
1. If I turn my head away and don't look at him, perhaps he'll go away. What's he up to anyway?



2. Crikey! Now he's trying to mount my faithful steed.



3. He flies through the air with the greatest of ease. Maybe there's a part for him in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang??



4. Whoops! Now this could be painful.



5. I wouldn't have come back if I thought I was going to have my feet tickled.

HOLOCAUST TALK BY RUDI OPPENHEIMER

"Time is running out. Memory will soon become history. Now we can talk together. Soon, even that luxury will be gone."

As the holocaust recedes into history the chance to hear accounts from the survivors such as Rudi become all the more important. The story of Rudi's life is the story of how the Nazi years of occupation almost destroyed his family and can be clearly related to the similar effects on countless millions of other people.

Born on the 1 October 1931, Rudi lived with his Jewish parents, Hans and Rita, and his brother Paul in Berlin. However when Hitler was appointed Chancellor in 1933, the persecution of the Jews and other ethnic minorities increased culminating with the Nuremberg laws of 1935. After deliberating long and hard the family left Germany for London in March 1936 to stay with relatives whilst Hans stayed in Berlin. During their 6 month stay in London, Rita gave birth to Eve with a British birth certificate which would prove to be crucial later on.

From September 1939 to October 1940, the family moved to Heemstede, a small town about 15 miles out of Amsterdam bringing new challenges mainly the change in language. The family lived happily in Heemstede until sadly out of the beautiful blue morning sky on the 10th May hundreds of white parachutes glided out of the sky signalling the start of the German invasion. By this time, Rudi was 11 and as the Dutch troops surrendered, occupation began. A Jewish council was set up in Amsterdam and the family was forced to move to Naarden and then on to the Jewish sector in Amsterdam itself. During this time restrictions and less freedom became the norm; Jews had a J stamped on their passports and had to wear the Jewish star, only Jewish schools, radios were confiscated and finally Jews were sent to Amsterdam and then effectively outlawed from Holland being deported to the east from 1942. The family remained in Amsterdam and managed to stay there until June 1943 when they were moved to the holding camp Westerbrook on the German Holland border before being transported to Bergen-Belsen in North West Germany in February 1944.

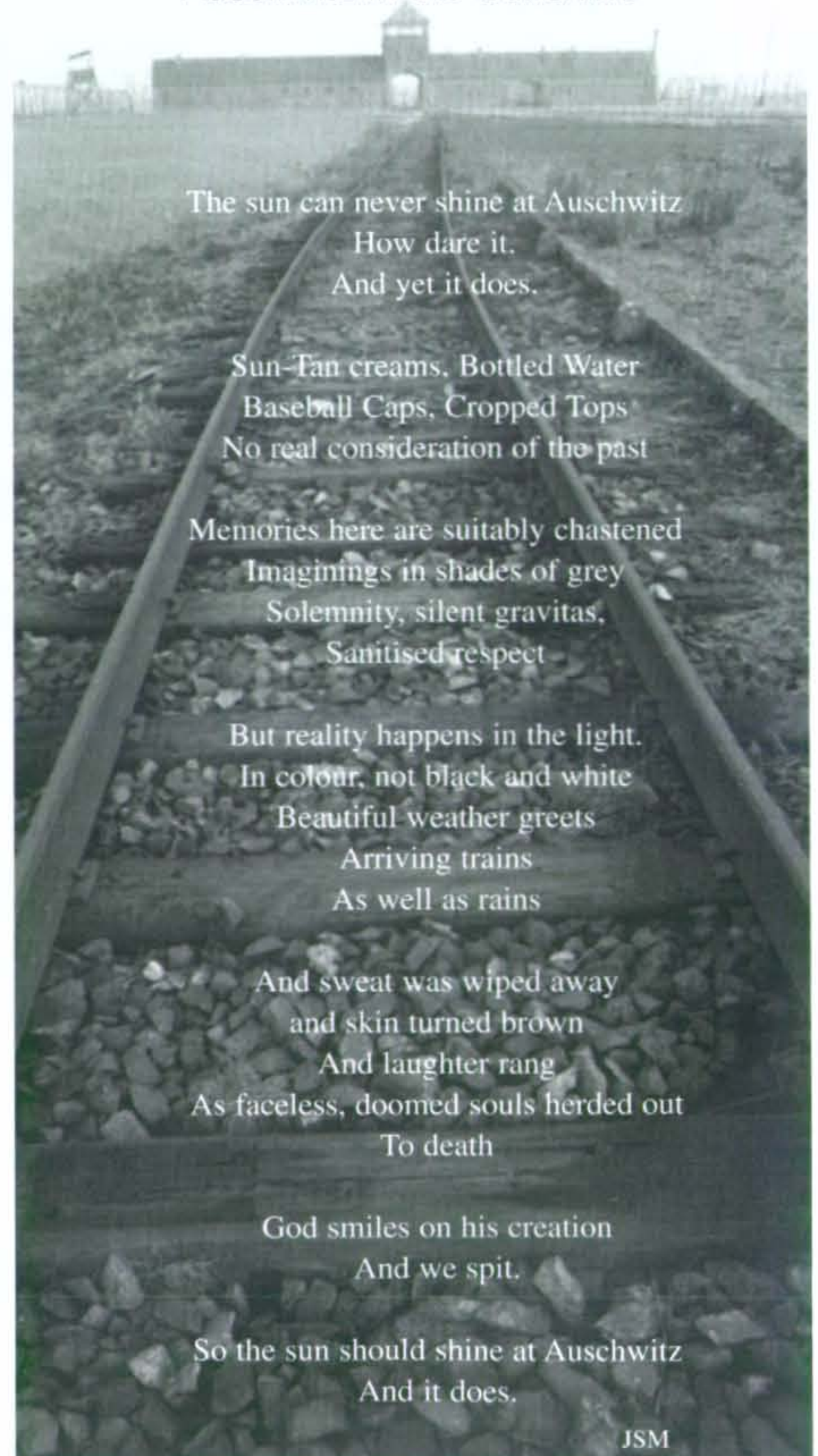
Bergen-Belsen was a much higher security affair than Westerbrook with high barbed wire fences, machine gun outputs and ferocious guard dogs. Due to the British birth certificate of Eve, the Oppenhiemers were classed as exchange Jews, to be exchanged for German POWs held by the British; being exchange Jews meant better treatment and accommodation than other prisoners. Although the conditions in the camp were bearable at the start, as the Germans were pushed back, the camp was a lower priority and thus the conditions rapidly decreased quickly becoming totally horrific. There was starvation, malnutrition, lice and diseases such as typhoid were endemic. It was terrible for Rudi, his brother and sister when in January 1945 their mother died and two months

later their father. This was their lowest point in Belsen and things were to get more desperate. As the Russians advanced in the east, prisoners from Auschwitz were transferred to Belsen creating further overcrowding and starvation, in the last couple of weeks at Belsen, of the 40,000 prisoners at the camp, 600 were dying each day.

They were evacuated from the camp by the Germans as the British advanced and travelled North for 5 days before being liberated by the British army. At last they were safe from the Germans after the years of persecution. Soon after liberation Rudi, Paul and Eve gained entry visas into Britain. Since then they have returned to Belsen to lay a memorial stone for their lost parents; subsequently Paul has been presented with a MBE for services to industry.

MICHAEL FRENCH

Auschwitz in the Sunshine



The sun can never shine at Auschwitz
How dare it,
And yet it does.

Sun-Tan creams, Bottled Water
Baseball Caps, Cropped Tops
No real consideration of the past

Memories here are suitably chastened
Imaginings in shades of grey
Solemnity, silent gravitas,
Sanitised respect

But reality happens in the light.
In colour, not black and white
Beautiful weather greets
Arriving trains
As well as rains

And sweat was wiped away
and skin turned brown
And laughter rang
As faceless, doomed souls herded out
To death

God smiles on his creation
And we spit.

So the sun should shine at Auschwitz
And it does.

JSM



CP



GRMF



LRC



WFH



AMD



ARGF

SALVETE

EMP

Esther Parsons grew up in Oundle and went to Malvern College. After spending a gap year in Kenya she studied German and French at Manchester University which included a year in Hamburg. After graduating she spent 18 months living in Leipzig, former Eastern Germany, working for a church. Stowe is her first teaching job. In her free time she enjoys being outdoors, aerobics, swimming and running.

RDK

Following 15 years teaching at Cranleigh School (12 of these as a Housemaster), three years ago Richard Knight accepted the invitation to become Headmaster of St Andrew's Senior School in Kenya. During his time in Kenya, apart from the fun of being involved in the leadership of a lively school, he greatly enjoyed tackling the many excellent golf courses and, needless to say, they all derived immense excitement from many holiday safaris. He has a wife (Sally) and three children – Edward (18), Becky (16) and Oliver (14). Why Stowe? ... well, for family reasons they needed to return to England and what better place could there be than Stowe?

CP

Costas Peratopoulos' previous school was Buckingham Secondary. He obtained a Bachelor of Education with honours degree at the college of St Mark and St John in Plymouth, part of Exeter University. He enjoys spending time with his family and watching his three children take part in their respective sports. He is also a very keen angler.

RBJ

Robert Jackson left Bradford GS with little to his name save the two A levels he needed to go to BRNC Dartmouth. After a less than illustrious career in Her Majesty's ships, he got a job delivering a yacht to Cape Town. Half way across the Atlantic, he had a Damascene experience and 'got God'. He then attended Coventry Poly, to do a degree in Business Studies. He left Coventry to go to Oxford to read Theology and spent three years preparing

for ordained ministry in the C of E. A curacy in Bromley was followed by Tim Hastie-Smith, then Chaplain of Stowe, persuading him to have a look at the job of vicar of Stowe and assistant chaplain of Stowe, 1992-1997 were five very happy years spent at Stowe, which he left to work at Lord Wandsworth College. After four years, well he's back! with Jane, his wife, and three daughters, Clare, Anna, and Lucy. His interests include personal fitness, steamy hot curries, and Bradford City.

GRMF

George Ford is a graduate of the University of Sussex where he read for a degree in History with French. This included studying for one year at the University of Paris IV – Sorbonne. Shortly after graduating he studied for a PGCE at the University of Oxford and began his teaching career as a teacher of History and French in the public sector. George took up his post as Teacher of History at Stowe in January 2003. Outside the classroom George's interests include skiing, cricket and rowing.

Common Room Matters

DF (below) is leaving Grenville after six years to take over Admissions, and will be replaced by RDK.



This year we have celebrated the births of Amy Floyd and Joseph Ruben. We also wish to thank Aline Soufflet, Holger Graff, Frances Kouyoumdjian, Mike Kayson, Ed Himners, John Fretwell and Peter Thwaites for all they have done, and wish them well.

Jonathan Gruber's Speech at the STOWE/HARVARD DINNER

I arrived at Stowe on a cloudy September morning, and I'll never forget seeing the mansion – framed by the Corinthian Arch – emerge from behind a layer of drifting fog. It was like the curtains on a stage were being opened to reveal the backdrop for a fairy tale. The splendor of the setting instantly mesmerized me. As the taxi pulled up to the North Front, I concluded that, in terms of attractiveness, Stowe was quite a step up from New Jersey, which, in our first conversation, the Headmaster referred to as the most god-awful place he'd ever been.

Of course, Stowe quickly became much more than a picturesque place. From my first encounters with colleagues, it was thereafter a welcoming, supportive, and collegial place. From my first encounters with Stoics, it was a vibrant and invigorating place as well. The past eight and a half months have truly been a joy and I am excited to share with you, this evening, some reflections on my time here.

I quickly discovered that one of Stowe's many strengths is its common room. I doubt many schools can claim to have such a dedicated team of teachers, each of whom is both a great professional and a good person. It has been a pleasure to work with, to laugh with, and to learn from Stowe's brilliant faculty and support staff.

While teaching proved to be the most challenging part of the job, serving as an under-housemaster proved to be the most exhilarating, and at times, the most exhausting. I was able to interact with Stoics in a variety of activities and settings, but it was through my involvement in Temple House that I came to fully appreciate the dynamic spirit of this school. The boys in Temple are terrific and equally so are its fearless leaders. But, to be honest, it hasn't all been a walk in the park. I also faced a great many challenges: like tasting marmite for the first time, coping with the flexible timetables of the British rail system, and trying to sit through a full hour of televised snooker. Without a doubt, the most difficult challenge was overcoming the language barrier. Fortunately, I came equipped with my Lonely Planet British Phrasebook. But even still, the meaning of many words eluded me, and sometimes, entire sentences got lost in translation, so to speak.

My poor command of British English mainly elicited laughs, but also the occasional stare. In October, I went to purchase kit for the first Duke of Edinburgh hiking trip. When I told the sales clerk that I needed waterproof pants, she seemed at once amused and alarmed. She said, "you'll have to go across the street for that, but we do carry waterproof trousers."

Early in the autumn term, a Temple boy asked me who I thought was more fit, tennis player Anna Kournakova or pop star Britney Spears. I responded, "Well, Ms. Spears is a talented dancer and many of her

routines seem quite rigorous. One would think that she has to exercise regularly to maintain her high level of performance. However, Ms. Kournakova is a professional athlete. Surely, she must train everyday to stay in top-notch physical condition. So, I'd have to say Kournakova." Judging from the bored and baffled look on the boy's face, clearly I hadn't understood the question. He then said, "Right, Mr. Gruber, which one would you rather shag?" "Oh right... shag... hold on a second." At which point I turned to my trusty British Phrasebook.

But beyond the confusing conversations and the culture shock, there were poignant moments of cultural understanding. For example, I learned that if you've got two overs to go and 16 runs to get, and your tail-ender is on strike, facing the opening bowler who bowls a mean swinging Yorker, then you tell the batsman to play it with a straight bat and you hope that he doesn't edge one through to the wicket-keeper or slips, and that he doesn't pop it up to silly-mid on or silly-mid off.

I also learned that it is uncivilized to eat a pudding until you have first smothered it with custard, ice cream, pouring cream, clotted cream, or any type of cream, really.

In addition to learning a lot about life in England, I like to think that I helped to clarify for the students certain perceptions about life in the States. Sharing my thoughts on American culture was one of my favorite parts of the fellowship. From the moment I arrived, Stoics were brimming with curiosity: curiosity that yielded a lot of curious questions. The queries varied widely, from, "Mr. Gruber, do you own a handgun?" to, "Mr. Gruber, have you ever seen someone get shot?" or even, "Sir, have you ever witnessed a drive-by shooting." One boy asked, "Mr. Gruber, have you ever been to Los Angeles?" "I have, actually. It's a great place; perfect weather, beautiful beaches." "I'd really like to go," he added, "but my parents are afraid we'll get shot."

I tried to explain that life in the States is not as dangerous or as violent or even as thrilling as the movies might lead one to believe. But you can't blame people for holding onto to Hollywood visions of American life, especially if they've never visited. Before I came to England, I thought it was going to be like living in a James Bond film or a Benny Hill sketch. And now I know that it's not like that at all... unfortunately.

In the classroom, I faced a barrage of tough, thought provoking questions, from 3rd formers and 6th formers alike. Teaching US and British politics and history or war turned out to be very timely, and as a result, quite tricky. Class discussions were as much a learning experience for me as I hope they were for my students. I encouraged them to put on their "thinking caps," as my year-two teacher used to say, and to subject their

assumptions and attitudes to scrutiny. To me, America's best trait is its spirit of inquiry and I tried to spread that spirit both in and out of the classroom. I found that the task of opening young minds is a difficult one, but a task that is well worth the effort.

In addition to learning much about the craft of teaching, I also got a preview of parenting, I think. On duty in Temple or even in the classroom, situations arose in which I found myself sounding eerily like a grown-up. I would make some pronouncement and immediately think to myself, "I can't believe I just said that!" Things like, "Good habits formed at youth make all the difference." Or, "When I was your age..." Or more stern expressions like, "I don't want to hear language like that." "Rules are rules." Or, "I will count to three!"

Rehearsing such lines has hopefully given me a head start for when I venture into fatherhood.

I realize that my role at Stowe was largely defined by what I could contribute as an American, and I enjoyed filling that role. But in truth, the more time I spent at Stowe, the less I felt like the American or the Harvard Fellow and the more I felt like a faculty member at an outstanding school. This has been the most exciting and most rewarding year of my life. I just hope that I have made at least a fraction of the impact on the people at Stowe as they have made on me. When I leave the grounds for the last time and that curtain of fog closes behind me, I will take with me a collection of experiences, memories, and images that no fairy tale could ever match.



Rupert Knox (5th)

SELF



Dominic McDonald (4th)



Jamie Emslie (4th)

PORTRAITS

CHAPEL

Arriving at Stowe as Chaplain is an interesting experience, especially if it constitutes a return trip. Five years after being waved goodbye, I'm back again, finding my feet in an unfamiliar community surrounded by familiar buildings and the odd familiar face. It has been a little disconcerting at times and I feel that five years of my life at Lord Wandsworth College have disappeared down a black hole... but I am delighted to be here.

Stowe is an exciting school, and it is a rewarding place to be a Chaplain. The Christian Foundation of the School remains the defining factor of the place, and it is challenging to ensure that the Christians are encouraged, the agnostics are informed, and the atheists challenged! I have been pleasantly surprised by the positive attitude of Stoics in Chapel, and delighted at the offerings of my colleagues in the mid-week chapel slots. I am tempted to create an anthology of addresses, such is the quality and clarity of many of them. The houses also have been invited to take a Chapel, and these have been well received. On Sundays, I have attempted to ring the changes, and have tried to invite as varied a group of individuals as possible to preach. Amongst others therefore, we have had James Cary, an award winning radio comedy script writer, Jim Saker, the Ford Professor of Retail Marketing at Loughborough University, Father Michael Seed, the Archbishop of Westminster's advisor on ecumenism, and Geoff Lanham, a mate of mine from theological college who is vicar of an experimental church-less church in Birmingham. It has also been good that during the headmaster's final term, we have been able to welcome back three of his four chaplains to preach.

Another satisfying aspect of the job here is that there is a Chaplain's Assistant. Will Harwood arrived here with me in September and he has been a terrific assistant in every way. Amongst other things, he runs Crossfire, the weekly Christian meeting for Stoics, and I have been impressed by the numbers who attend on a regular basis. He also co-ordinates the weekly Bible Studies of which there are seven in total, and I am grateful to other members of staff who help by running these. All told, up to sixty attend Crossfire, and a similar number are involved in the Bible Studies... Amazing!

One of the big happenings of the year is the week in Lent when we have the Lenten Addresses. I couldn't believe the squash that occurred in the Dobinson Theatre as we tried to squeeze far too many Stoics in to hear what the above mentioned James Cary and his colleague Ed Drew, a soap powder manufacturer from London, had to say about Jesus Christ. At the end of the day however, it's one thing to acknowledge a nice idea, but it's quite another to work out how to live as a Christian. This is something that confronted the Confirmation Candidates.

This year we had a wide-ranging set of candidates for confirmation, from 3rds to U6th. We met weekly in the Temple Room in order to find out what Christianity is actually all about, both in theory and in practice. Each week a presentation from either RBJ or WFH was followed by the chance to discuss the issues raised in a small group setting. The course was very enjoyably rounded-off by a two day retreat at Grendon Hall where a couple from a church in Milton Keynes took us through the more practical implications of Christianity (there was also ample opportunity for some lively sporting exploits!). The Confirmation Service itself was a serious and yet inspiring time, presided over by the wonderfully warm and down-to-earth Bishop Keith Arnold. Huge thanks therefore to LJJ, JJWB, MCE and EMP who gave up their free time to assist in the classes.

The candidates were:

Krishan Thadani
Freddie Porritt
Algy Lendrum
Marcus Crofton
Ben Gaffney
Jean-Michel Hall
Alastair Russell
Charlie Beldam
Jack Coats
James Powers
James De la Force
George Shirley-Beavan
Bertie Cassels
Douglas Miller
Harry Duncombe
Charlie Williams
William Bond
Harry Watson
Nick Hill
Will Badger
Giles Lucas
Jack Jaffray
Toby Lucas
Hugh Birchall
Robert Harington
Miles Gilbert
Hugh Archdale
Rory Shepherd-Barron
Christian von Schroder
Charlie Margesson
Chris Fenton
Henry Worssam
Andrew Drummond Moray
Alex Kennedy
Georgie Budgett

All in all, therefore, a good first year for me, and a good eightieth year for Stowe and its foundation.

RBJ



CAMELOT

Photos by AGM

Camelot the musical: on the face of it, a concept as incongruous as *The Pop up Book of Finnegans Wake* or *My Marcel Proust Join-the-Dots*. The Matter of Britain in the hands of Malory and Tennyson, or portions of it filtered through the Gawain poet, T.S. Eliot or even the Pre-Raphaelites has a resonance defying centuries, customs and creeds (Milton, after all, claimed *Paradise Lost* was very nearly King Arthur in pentameters). But Lerner and Lowe, full of wandering stars and the rain in Spain, could surely only offer debasement. The greatest texts are often ill married to crotchets and arpeggios: for every Bach Passion or Verdi *Othello* there are thousands of shredded or forgotten manuscripts littering the foothills of real achievement, and although the Pythons squeezed a rhyme and a giggle from “pram a lot”, they respectfully left the depths alone. So how on earth can an almost unbearable tragedy, fantastic yet all too human at the same time, retain its profundities, arcane and transparent, in the hands of *Brigadoon*’s creators?

Enter Stowe. Twice in fact. First in T.H. White, *Head of English at the School* from 1932-36, whose sequence of novels, known collectively as “*The Once and Future King*”, left Alan Jay Lerner’s production manager in no doubt as to what the next show would be. The books were a brilliant, quirky, empathetic and at times downright funky take on the legend, with erudition and wit effervescently bubbling to glorious effect. The musical, though it nodded to the original text, suffered a mixed reception, despite White’s blessing, and that film version

did little to help. But now John Moule and Tony Meredith bring Stowe back into the frame. A few alterations, a greater respect for the darker side of the tale, and suddenly music and characters return to the altar in a union that inspired cast and crew to present one of the truly great Congreves. Here was magic.

Over one hundred names filled the programme, and from the second one entered the Roxburgh Hall it was evident why. Vivid coats of arms, banners and flags graced the walls, while knights, lords, ladies and pages sparkled among the audience and on the stage in the wonderfully attuned lighting of Jeremy Walker and his team. Costumes, make up, shields and swords were bold and bright and smacked of quality. And then, when the music began, any fears that spectacle would oust all else were relieved: Jonathan Kingston had a band of wind, brass and keyboard players whose individual talents had been blended into a tight, sympathetic whole: Gerald Moore could not have accompanied with greater sensitivity. The ensemble on stage were instantly at one with that in the pit and so, in a glorious fusion of colour, choreography and full, clear sound, the pageantry began.

And yet the leads managed not to let the solid, towering sets, the lingering melodies and the visual beauty of the directors’ tableaux overwhelm them: instead they were spurred to tell the human tragedy all the more intently. Charles Cavill, Jamie Roberts, Guillermo Clark, Nick Greenwood and Alasdair Shaikh stirred and saddened us as Round Table Knights, once

great, but prone to frailty and corruption, while Danielle Goodger seduced as the voice of the nymph Nimue. Harry Soames' worldly-wise, Pellinore, delivering deadpan lines with a contemporary edge and singing of the questing beast with a weary sense of duty showed real subtlety in letting the comic reside with the heroic. Frederick Barrie chilled as Mordred, his stunning white make up, shocking black costume and cool, cool delivery teetering between teenage contempt and real evil. Aloof, greedy, powerful, Morgan Le Fey was given a stately, Miss Haversham grace and madness by the excellent Lucinda Dunseath, while Andrew Drummond Moray's young Tom Malory was wide eyed and awash with dreams: what a tale he would tell. Merlyn's torment and personal calamity were manifest in Alex Perry's mysterious but humane study, and few will forget his voice echoing around the hall as he apprehended both his own fading power and the fact that Arthur must learn the saddest truths for himself.

And so to the lovers. The nonpareil, Lancelot, began with a comic hymn to arrogance "C'est moi", deliciously rendered by Oliver Tree in his shimmering armour. But the knight fell increasingly out of love with himself as he stumbled into love with the queen, and Oliver's silences were as potent as his words: this was a cast that understood nuance and the grim shadowlands of adults' despair. Yet this triangle had four sides since Fleur Shepherd and Pollyanna Middleditch played Guenevere in alternate performances. A comparison, it seems, has to be "odious" in our world of cliché and limitless relativism, but in the case of these two actresses, the juxtaposition is acceptable. Both performances charted the course of the fresh, coquettish girl who became a loyal wife and queen and then a passionate woman plagued by conflict and guilt. The interplay of both with Oliver was mature and moving, and though their respective voices offered very different timbres, they were beautiful. Pollyanna filled the hall with a rich, embracing, warmth; Fleur with a clear, poignant sadness. Interpretations may have been different but they were always pertinent and hugely intelligent.

The outstanding Christian Roe, lauded for his scintillating Hamlet two years earlier, excelled again as he made manifest an Arthur who, left without his guru and soothsayer, suffered as king and man. There seems to be no emotion, no situation that Christian cannot convincingly respond to or engender, and whether in the scenes of pathos with Fleur and Pollyanna, or instances of doubt and regret with Oliver, he could with a gesture or glance turn comedy into vital, piercing drama. It is all too easy in a musical to have characters burst upon the scene fully formed and for them to remain unchanged throughout (Dickens managed that without the melodies), but Christian and his fellow actors took us with them on a journey, and we went willingly through their songs.

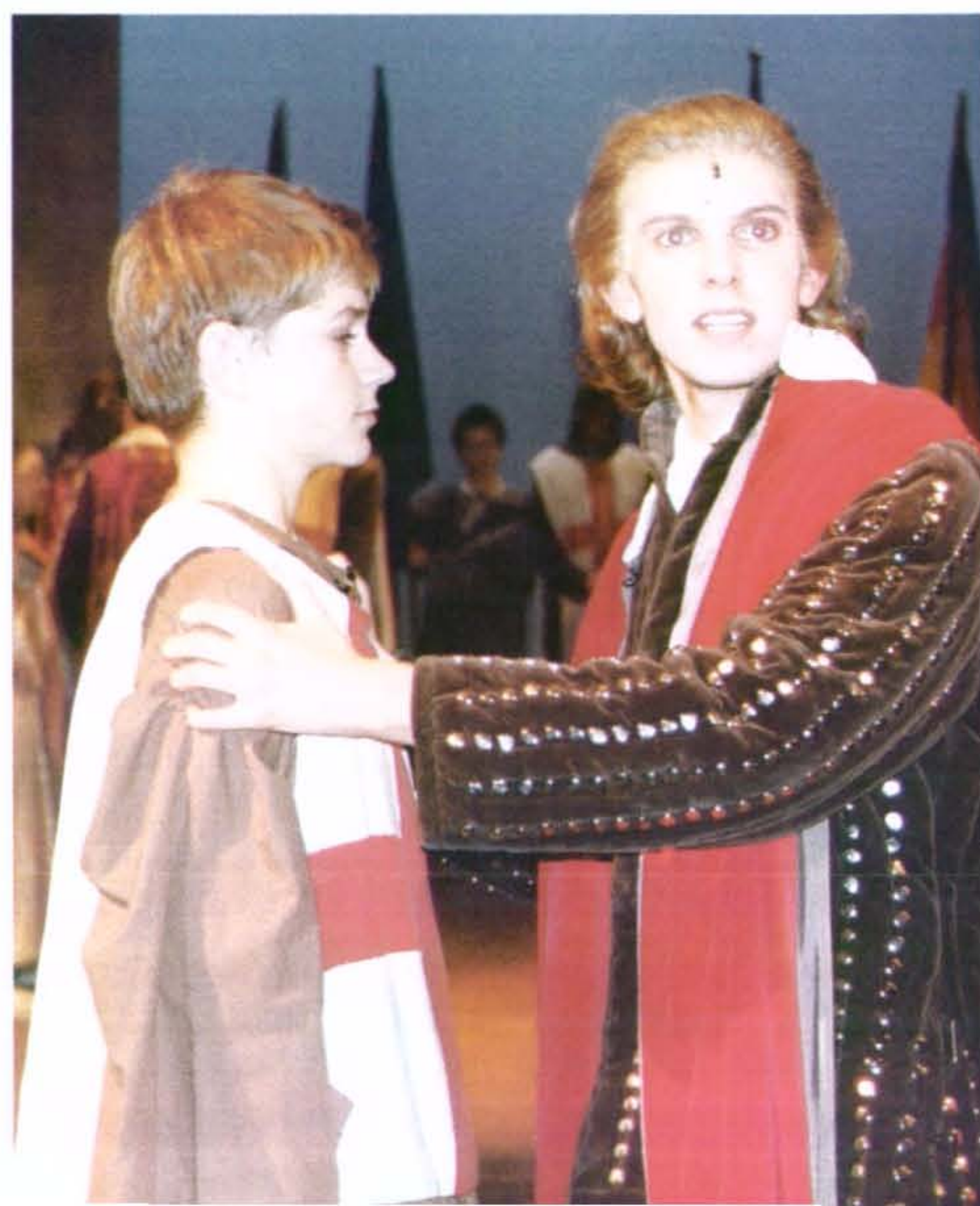
And here's the thing: it was not only the wonderful singers such as Fleur and Pollyanna who impressed with their renditions, but Stoics whose voices were untrained.

One of the triumphs of great American popular music is its ability to allow a singer less than perfect (take Fred Astaire or, to stretch a point, Bob Dylan) to lay a song at your feet honestly, with all the imperfections inherent in a so-so voice and yet for the experience to be supremely moving because somehow, in those very imperfections, the song's – and the singer's – essential humanity is enhanced. The European tradition has, until recently been, less forgiving. For many of these singers it was their final Congreve, just as it was Jeremy Walker's. We will miss their talents and dedication: every success to them all. And sadly, those other names that made the programme's hundred cannot be reproduced here: staff, Stoics and friends of the school worked more hours than were good for them, from the indomitable Elspeth Mullineux with textiles to Brian Johnson and Steve Grimble on props and set.

Yet we must finish with the directors because it was their vision that turned the "one brief shining moment" into one of the Roxburgh Hall's finest runs. John Moule and Tony Meredith revisited Lerner and Lowe to change, sensitively, what needed changing. They created in the visual splendour of the castle and the other-worldliness of the enchanted wood an experience intensified by a Passolini like control of crowd and movement, an artist's eye for the medieval tableau and a sense of pace assuring the most sceptical that form and content were happily yoked.

Tony Meredith looks back on many Congreves, but here, with a whippersnapper co-directing and the spirit of T.H. White abroad, he can pause and celebrate his place in the story. It wasn't so much Camelot we enjoyed for two and a half hours, Tony: it was Avalon.

CJE



‘FOR ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT’

Guillermo Clark recounts his experience in the cast of “Camelot”

The first thing you notice when you’re on stage is that the lights are so bright on your face, that you could easily get a nice tan if you stayed in front of them long enough. I had never acted before, except in front of matron when trying to get off games. Now I was on a stage with Messrs. Moule and Meredith watching my every movement like a pair of lions waiting to pounce on their helpless victim. Even though you know that their criticisms are constructive and well meant, you just hope that your scene will pass with as little commentary from them as possible, especially when you have such other good actors present like Christian, Pollyanna and Fleur.

Thinking back on it now, I can’t exactly explain how I got involved in all this in the first place. Firstly, I hated musicals. The image that came into my head when the word “musical” was mentioned was of pansy dancers in unflattering leotards and leg-warmers singing songs that you are absolutely sure are just the same as the last one. Secondly, I hadn’t acted much before, and the little I had done wasn’t very convincing. I had only done one short sketch in the past where I was in a dysfunctional family and I was the rebellious gay son, but it seems that I wasn’t even good at portraying that.

However, I somehow turned up for the auditions, probably encouraged by the prospect of having to wear costumes and prancing about pompously saying transcendent stuff. I was given a part not only in the chorus (which some people may say are just there to fill the stage), but also as Sir Lionel (much to my surprise!).

Right from the very beginning we were made aware of the tightness of the schedule and Mr Meredith constantly threatened to call the whole thing off if we didn’t show a polished show by the week before the performance.

Under the hilarious musical direction of Mr Kingston, we went through each piece slowly... dangerously slowly. The main problem was that quite a number of the chorus, were neither chapel choir singers nor experienced actors. It soon became a vicious circle; if we managed to remember the words, we forgot the actions and vice versa. Now and then, our occasional lack of attention would drive Mr Moule into fits of fiery rage and Mr Meredith close to a heart attack. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to Messrs. Moule and Meredith, on behalf of the whole cast for any risks to your health we may have caused and also to thank you for keeping your faith in us when most directors would have abandoned the whole project.

That said let’s continue with my account of the progress this musical was making. The standard of acting was very demanding at all levels of the cast. Various disciplines had to be learned. Mainly for the chorus to fill

the entire stage when they were dominating the scene and also to keep absolutely still when the scene froze (this happened quite often). About a fortnight before the opening night, costumes arrived, much to the delight, and also distress of some of the cast. The knights especially enjoyed the fact that they were going to be given real swords and I was absolutely ravished by the prospect of being one of the few to wear plate mail armour.

As the day of the first performance drew nearer, we had to make the best we could sharing the stage with the ever active stage crew. I remember a most amusing time in one of the dress rehearsals when in the middle of the most moving and dramatic scene between Lancelot and Guenivere, Jeremy Walker suddenly appeared from the side of the medieval room in his casuals with a microphone headpiece giving some instructions to the rest of the crew who were trying to install something like a new curtain. Sooner than any of us had expected or preferred it was opening night and the nerves made us forget our earlier worries. Most of us had got used to the costumes by now and even to the sight of men like Neil and Andreas in full makeup (of course, we had previous demonstrations from Merlin), sometimes it looked like a transvestites’ convention, but I’m sure it looked a lot better from the audience’s point of view.

Each performance passed with varied success, but in all of them we gave it our best. After the final night we had an after play party; everybody showed real happiness after all their effort and I was never happier to go into 6th form Club.

This has been one of the greatest experiences I’ve ever had. I haven’t completely changed my views on musicals. I still think it’s a bunch of people in tights singing (sometimes) awful songs... I’ve just learned that it can be fun to do so.



WORKING WITH TONY

Helping to produce Camelot was a wonderful experience. The hard work of the pupils involved needs to have been seen to be believed and the size and success of the whole operation still leaves me exhausted when I think about it. From the awful (really awful) first dress rehearsal to the Prep School Day; from the tentative planning over the Summer to the tumultuous final standing ovation, it was a privilege to be part of it.

But whatever the commitment of the pupils, whatever the joy of the audience, one factor still stands out. I have produced plays before, both in tandem with others and on my own and always enjoyed the experience. But this was different, and much better. I was working with Tony Meredith...

Muttering under the breath begins. The Hands go slowly to the Head and push through the wavy Hair with exaggerated concern. Unable to stay in his seat, he rises to his feet and begins to pace about . . . slowly at first but with increasing agitation. Eventually words are found, and everything, but everything, comes under fire in a painfully eloquent peroration. The words are anything but a release; indeed they seem to be like the myth of the Hydra; as one scathing denunciation finishes, it gives birth to seven more. Eventually, silence interposes. Then, usually with a nervous and apparently despairing giggle, he announces that we should carry on. The rehearsal continues.

Mr Meredith's famous 'lost it' moments will no doubt be familiar to many generations of Chathamites, and to countless Congreve performers. Indeed, there was a remarkable calmness about several of the Camelot cast when such moments occurred – those who had participated in the previous AGM triumph, Anouilh's Ring Round the Moon (2001)! But pity the majority of the 60 or so cast as they learned to adjust. And pity the naïve co-directors as they struggled to know how to react.

Pity us particularly on one night after half-term, when we ambitiously decided to attempt a run-through of Act 1, with three weeks to go before performance. We got through it with minimal prompting. Yes, there was little life to it and it was worryingly long but we thought it OK. We waited. And Tony panned it in the fashion of a first-night critic. The cast left, some tearful, all depressed. We talked – or listened – for another hour. Among the highlights of the tour de force were the observations that we should do it as a concert without acting or costumes or lighting, since the singing was at least (grudgingly) OK; a stinging criticism of Christian Roe's indulgent style; and an offer – hastily repressed by the petrified colleagues – to retire from the whole project. Pity us indeed.

But not for long. Working with Tony Meredith is quite simply the most rewarding experience of my teaching career to date. And I am not alone. Reading the above might imply that such a thought is lunacy given the stress of doing so but anyone who knows Tony will immediately understand. I have never known such commitment, such enthusiasm, such skill. To see his boyish excitement when he finally failed to resist the temptation to hire the

two horses for the auditorium was only matched as a moment by seeing his delight when we arranged a special lighting effect to fall on them both at the start of the second Act. I do not know quite how many hours he put into Camelot – Heather does – but it was remarkable. And it made for a great production.

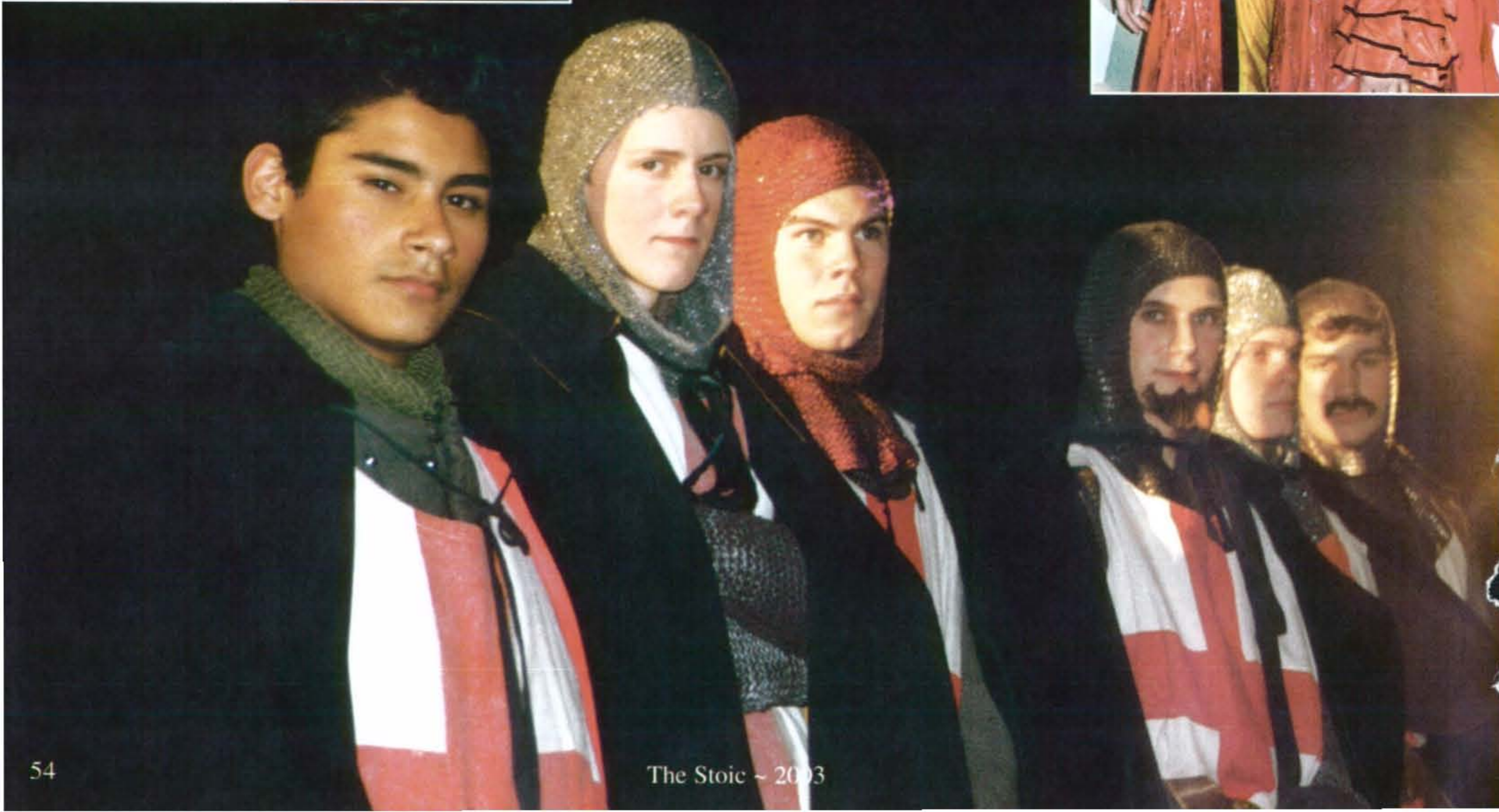
As I reflect on working with him, one thing strikes me. I find it difficult to comprehend how one so talented could be so modest, even on occasion diffident. He bounced in one day to announce that he had written a song for Harry Soames (Pellinore), a clever reworking of a slightly questionable number from 'Gigi'. I was initially sceptical but grew gradually to love the song and its place in the show. Typically, Tony grew to hate it more and more and insisted that it be withdrawn. It was one of the few battles I won. That lack of arrogance is, I suggest, the reason for the outbursts of anger. He is so perfectionist and yet humble that he can not quite believe that what is happening is good and yet he desperately desires it so to be. It is a remarkably endearing, if stressful, combination.

I will remember the difficulty I had in persuading Tony to go ahead with Camelot after he had decided that the school was not sufficiently committed. I will remember the moment when JRK rang me to say that he had had to take a rehearsal on his own since Tony had left in disgust at the lack of application from the actors. I will remember his condemnation of 'The Lusty Month of May'. I will remember that Monday night.

But I will remember so many other things too, not separately – for that would be to sanitise what was a gloriously rich experience – but alongside. I will remember the skill with which he handled both experienced and inexperienced actors and the quality of performance he inspired. I will remember what I learned about how to direct. I will remember the wonderful trip to Stratford to the RSC costume cupboard and the guilty abandon with which we piled the costumes in the minibus. I will remember the elegant shuffles across the stage as he demonstrated the various moves that would enhance the songs. I will remember the moving speech he made before the final Dress Rehearsal – 'we are such things as dreams are made on' – and the self-deprecating undermining of his own words immediately afterwards. I will remember the long and wonderfully genuine ovation he received in the after-show party as he was presented with a small memento of the show, standing bashfully in Club with his battered raincoat still firmly on. Perhaps above all, I will remember the long discussion I had with Jeremy Walker and with Christian Roe on the afternoon of the final performance as I persuaded them not to call him forward after the Final Curtain. The fact is, he would have hated it. And that, in essence, is what makes him such a great man.

Oh, and on that Monday night, very few people were aware that Hobbes, his beloved dog of many years, had had to be put down that very afternoon. And he still came into rehearsal. That was Tony. But I am not at all sure that that entirely explains the tirade – that was Tony too.

JSM





DRAMA EXAM PIECES

Journey's End by R.C. Sherriff

As part of the GCSE Drama examination students are required to perform extracts from a play. This year we decided to attempt a production of a whole (albeit abridged) play text and we chose Journey's End; the story tells of a group of men in a dug-out in the British trenches near St. Quentin in 1918. All of the boys handled this challenging text extremely well. Notable performances came from Lionel Ashun and Will Puxley who shared the role of Stanhope, a 21 year old captain who resorts to alcohol to help him cope with the atrocities he has witnessed. Both boys portrayed the character with maturity and sensitivity. The part of Raleigh, the enthusiastic 18 year old, straight out of public school, was played with huge energy by Hamish Morgan. His keen youthfulness contrasted effectively with the pessimism of some of the older characters. This part was taken over by Xavier Keenan who took Raleigh to his journey's end, his death, but not before his realisation that fighting for one's country is not quite as romantic as he had previously imagined. All boys gave respectable performances and can rest assured that they gave it their best shot. It was extremely hard work but eventually they came through and worked as a team.

Nighthawks, Money Talks and All That Jazz

As part of the A2 course students have to devise and direct their own play based upon a given stimulus. VKFR's group were this year given a History of Art book as a starting point for their piece.

The performance was based around three pictures painted in 1921, 1931 and 1941 by the American artist, Edward Hopper. The play explored the changing role of women in America during this period using the paintings both as inspiration and as detail for the set. Two scenes were devised about each of the three decades.

In the 1920s, "A New York Restaurant", two scenes were created leading up to and ending with a tableau of the painting. The scenes showed a young woman stuck in a dilemma about whether she should continue to enjoy life with all the freedom that the 1920s afforded or marry the sensible man that her father had chosen for her.

In the second section which began with a representation of "The Pharmacy", 1931, scenes were devised about a young, female factory worker who has to choose whether or not to break a strike about low wages in the Depression or protest with everyone else.

The third section was inspired by the characters in "Nighthawks", 1941, where four characters are in a bar, visible through the lit shop front. This painting ended the section with two scenes leading up to it exploring how they got there. The context of this told the tale of a female government worker who discovered confidential information about Pearl Harbour and she had to decide whether or not to leak this in an attempt to save lives. A high standard of ensemble work was evident as were a strong command of several sophisticated dramatic techniques. The performance was further brought to life with carefully made sets, original period costumes and attention to detail, such as a huge picture frame through which the audience watched all the action. The character of Hopper himself wandering through the scenes observing was, I think, a touch of genius. Well done.

The Love of the Nightingale by Timberlake Wertenbaker

This play was performed by VKFR's AS group as part of their practical examination. The play was written in the 1980s but is set in Ancient Greece. It tells the mythical story of Philomele and Procne and is based on stories by Sophocles and Ovid. Philomele travels to visit her sister Procne who is lonely in the land of her husband Tereus. However, on the journey Tereus falls in love with Philomele and, unable to control his lust, takes her in the only way he knows how, with violence and force. He rapes her and then cuts out her tongue to silence her. Eventually she gets her revenge and is reunited with her sister. The ruling idea of the production was that human nature has always been, and will always be, the same; it has been the same since ancient times and is unlikely to change in the future. The chorus of the play question what it is that makes people violent:

" Why did Medea kill her children?

Why are little girls raped in the car parks of dark cities?"

The themes of love, violence, xenophobia and revenge are ones we can all relate to and Wertenbaker's play is powerful and poetic.

Outstanding performances came from Victoria von Westenholz and Kelly Kerruish as the sisters, Philomele and Procne, and Harry Arkwright as the scarily convincing Tereus. The main strength of the play, however, lay in the ensemble work of the entire cast who pulled together to make this an impressive performance and one which bodes well for the A2 course next year.

VKFR

THE TRIAL

Lyttelton House play 2003

Lyttelton house play in March 2003 was *The Trial* by Anthony Booth. The play was a great success even with the few accidental trip ups (me literally tripping over the front rows feet). It was performed in Lyttelton house room in the round on the 8th and 9th of March.

The Trial, for those who missed the performances, was set in a basement room where an informal trial was taking place, conducted by a resistance organisation, to see if Leonora's character was guilty of giving information to the army, which resulted in successful raids. The questioning of the accused girl took a violent turn, when she was flung across the room, had her hair pulled and a cigarette 'stubbed' out on her, as some of many violent actions (no-one was hurt in the performance or rehearsals of the play). The violence was as realistic as possible and seemed to make a good impression on the audience. She was found not guilty of the giving information to the army, but was found guilty of fraternization for which she got the punishment of having her hair shaved of and being dosed in printers ink. The twist at the end of the play was when we found out that she was a decoy to find the real informant. Phoebe's character was the real informant as revealed at the end of the play.

Performing in the round was having an audience on all sides of the stage, which was a square set in the middle of Lyttelton house room with the front row being right at the sides of the stage, which made the audience get involved in the action. Performing the play in the round was an interesting experience, which worked well after we managed to get used to having the audience on all sides.

Leonora Wemyss, Phoebe English, Nathalie Brodie, Sarah Hughes and Charlotte Scott-Gray all acted in the play, while Amelia Jeffery and Kate Clive-Powell were in charge of advertising and stage management. Mrs Ryan directed the play.

I enjoyed the experience of being a part of Lyttelton house play and I especially enjoyed the rehearsals, which were never taken too seriously, and the opportunity to play a violent character without hurting Leonora.

SARAH HUGHES

SNUFF

Chandos House play 2003

Created by Chandos' answer to Stephen Spielberg, Alex Orchard-Lisle; "Snuff" certainly had the potential to be a huge success. Being set at Stowe, location did not prove a problem for Alex and Guillermo Clark, our directors. The plot showed the evening of a birthday party being held by Richard I, Duke of Buckingham (Guill), for his son Richard II (Ben Corner) set in 1827. "Snuff" was essentially a "whodunit", part Restoration Comedy, part satire. This was because the David Beckham of the era, Beau Brummell (Rob Colvin), had been savagely murdered, but by whom? Consequently, the high ranking and wealthy people who were present at the party adopted their own views as to whom the killer was, but no one expected the sweet, senile and sexually frustrated Rev. Jonah Cleech (Alex) to be the murderer.

Rehearsals, unfortunately hampered by the inconvenient timing of the AS and A2 exams, began in earnest. One of the first obstacles faced by Alex and Guill was the casting. The final cast was not the strongest that could have been staged, however, some real talents were unearthed and everyone gelled together on the night. All of the male actors came from Chandos apart from three, which were filled by Harry Arkwright, Nick Greenwood and Hubert Bourke-Borrowes. On the feminine side, Stowe is blessed with numerous quality actresses. However due to exams and the Junior Congreve, the girls that were left for Alex and Guill were not enough to fill the necessary vacancies. And so almost in desperation the two directors called on the ex Prime Minister, Henry Kimbell to play one of the leading female roles, the evil old aunt Lady Griselda Bellaston-Taylor. Was this an accident or was it fate?? Only the directors can answer that question! There were some wonderfully characterised performances, Phoebe English's comic timing was a joy to behold either singing, showing off or screaming as the hysterical vamp, Elizabeth Acton. Rob as the dandy with Stevie Thomas as the effete manservant mastered narcissism to camp perfection in their celebrity fuelled duo. Charlie Sanchez proved commanding stage presence as King George IV as well as drawing the audience to him in his long monologue. Kate Clive-Powell managed to convey her vulnerable Jane Austin heroine in a very competent manner as well.

Tension and emotions were rife. I think I can vouch for almost everyone in the cast when I say that by the end of it all, both Alex and Guill were on the verge of nervous breakdowns. Alex was on the brink of a triple heart bypass and Guill was close to going bald and becoming even smaller with the stress. In the final two weeks, Fred Campion-Awwad came in to assist the directors. We started practised projecting loudly for the first scene when the cast sits round the banquet table and some charming dance sequences for the second scene. An hilarious flashback film was ingeniously used to explain why the murder happened as well as scenes where we had to act in the dark and another where we were eating with masks on. Music was used as much as possible. It was all worth it in the end, however.

HENRY KIMBELL

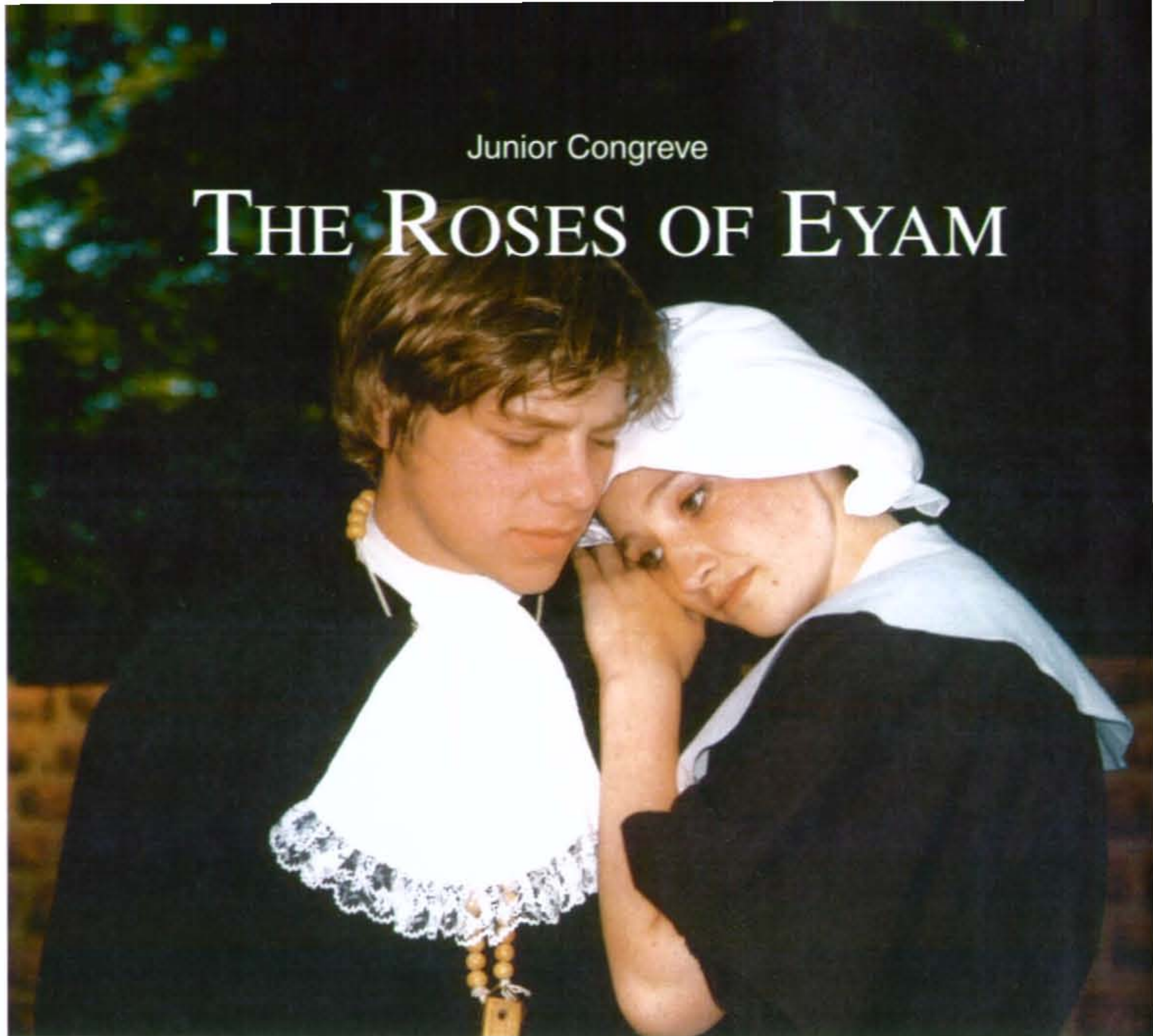
Is it about SARS, sir? No, but the coincidence helps us to try to imagine what it must have been like as the bubonic plague of 1665/6 arrived in a village in Derbyshire, and helps us share the playwright's fascination in trying to understand how those people could decide that as they had nowhere to go, they should go nowhere, and thus prevent the spread by holding fast, and simply waiting it out, as the population reduced from 366 to 95 in little over a year.

The apparently pretty title, actually referring, of course, to the tell-tale ring o' rose blisters that appears on the skin of the plague victim, exemplifies Don Taylor's bittersweet hunt for the silver linings in such grim clouds of subject matter. His unexaggerated but unshakeable demonstration of the robustness and generosity of human nature explains why it is possible – still brave – to choose this play as a junior school summer play. And let there be no doubt: they brought it off. Lionel Weston, his sidekick Mark Edwards, a cast of fifty, a back-up team of a further twenty, a back-cloth of Stowe church and a perfect summer's evening all combined with a responsive audience on the Saturday night to involve everyone in an unusual and very special dramatic event.

The enduring memory will be of the whole thing. The village square was represented by a "stone" cross with steps around it centre-stage, a few terraced house fronts of well-painted flats supported on scaffolding beyond, and the ability to see a couple of interiors on "this" side of the street on either wing. Straightforward enough, but utterly transformed by its location at the foot of the huge trees in front of Stowe Church, supplying a real path through trees to a real churchyard, real church and bells, and actual avenues through trees to fields either side. The genius of the production was to sew everything into the tapestry of the play (and thus incidentally solve the boredom of backstage waiting, I expect) by having the actors move quietly around the area in role during the action, so that it was not uncommon to see during an onstage exchange that the back-cloth (back-and-sides-cloth, really) would include another character emerging from behind the houses and disappearing off about his everyday business. Choreographed with a sure touch, this was never distracting but always successful in including the audience into a real sense of time and place that the cast must have derived from their trip up to Eyam earlier in

Junior Congreve

THE ROSES OF EYAM



the term and from endless attention in rehearsal to details of period, down to styles of movement (and hair-length!) and aided by absolutely excellent costuming. Thus "minor" actors such as Stuart Stevens and James Randall-Coath made a massive contribution to the distinctive success of the production. Appearances from some of the younger children in the community (well done Akams, Bevingtons and Wellingtons!) bolstered this extra dimension, and the timing even enabled the weather to play a part, the last of the sun giving you time to enjoy the slow-moving atmospherics of the long first half, and the encroaching cold and dark chilling the blood as the shorter second half sees them close the village and endure.

Fluent, controlled, precisely projected and all-embracing, this was a huge team success. Large crowd scenes were immaculately organised and arranged into convincing activity, either as separate groups (the dancers, the horse-shoe throwing mob, the old'uns appraising the young'uns...) revolving around one another when relaxed, or as fifty disparate people with a single focus when troubled; all would then melt into the moving back-cloth as another scene for two or three principals took place, only to re-emerge with exact timing when next required. All fifty actors acted all evening, and conspired in a focussed act of imaginative recreation which swept the audience along and provided the platform for the principal actors. It hardly seems fair to refer to them as such, or to single them out, after such a notable team success, but reviewers have to do these things.

The lower Sixth girls must have been a significant stabilising force throughout, and Leonora Wemyss and Kelly Kerruish gave really assured, professional performances in major roles. Catriona Stewart handled beautifully the simplicity with which the villagers forgave their priest for smuggling his own small children out of the village before closing it. Jean-Michel Hall mixed potently and effectively his truculence with his need to be fiercely loyal to whoever would give him a strong enough lead, and Alexander Fisher and Freddie Wojnarowski did a wonderful double-act as the cantankerous old codgers who harbour resentments and practise insults as frequently as defiance, from whom much of the play's leavening humour arises. Another ten or eleven actors, led by John Galvin, contributed well-judged, roundly-conceived and perfectly audible performances in similar sized roles, but special mention must be made of two pair.

Edmund Jones' Bedlam, cast in emergency only days before the show, struck exactly the right note. Half metaphor for derangement, half simple village idiot, the Bedlam observes, offers childlike disrespectful comment, and grows from beggar to gravedigger's assistant in the chaos. Edmund adopted a crouched, hunched lope and an infectious but eerie giggle to flavour his pithy bits of nonsense and emotional rawness, drawing the eye and losing it again at will. His performance complemented Jonathan Elfer's Marshall Howe, big enough and strong enough and irreverent enough to silence the squabbles, avoid the disease and bury the whole village if he has to do it. He is the indomitableness of the human spirit, even

lifting his mood for the sake of his bedlam companion when he is burying his own family, and Jonathan's performance was as large and effective: he swaggered around the extensive set with an easy, cheery charisma, using his voice apparently effortlessly to fill the air around the audience from any distance, and to persuade us to take a down-to-earth perspective on life. It was a magnificent display that fulfilled the play's need for that role to glue together the evening, and his Dad's rich chortle was icing on the homemade Derbyshire cake.

Alasdair Shaikh's concentration and commitment branded the puritan ex-priest's inflexibility across his every word and ramrod-backed move, charting precisely the shame and humiliation which paradoxically allows him eventually to be drawn into partnership with the king's man replacement priest, the embodiment of everything he has lived his life to fight and hate. Hugh Viney brilliantly vanished his body within his black robes and used just his face and fists to communicate the anguish and uncertainty and vulnerability of a young man who imagined himself over-qualified, but instantly found himself out of his depth in the rural parish he must seek to lead. Most impressive of all in these two performances was the way the young actors handled the rhythms and cadences of those long, latin-like, inversion-ridden, incantatory sentences. They spat and curled at one another, minor miracles of inflection and breath control and hard work to learn the patterning, as fluently and flawlessly as if they had been given monosyllabic expletives to bandy about, and made Taylor's prose sound as fine as Miller's from *The Crucible*. These were mature and accomplished and moving portrayals of a foreign world.

In a final eerie echo of its subject, the play closes with a couple of possible false finishes, as lines with the aura of closure belie the end as uncertainly as days without new cases of plague indicate the cessation of the epidemic. then the theatricality of the final scene - under the dark fingers of the trees as the whispered ring-a-ring o' roses climaxes with so many of the regathered cast falling down and so few standing as the lights blackout - serves to remind what a superb whole-team effort this truly fine and affecting dramatic event has been. My thanks and admiration (and envy) go to every single one of those involved in any capacity in such an ambitious, serious and special show.

SGAH



MUSIC

An Overview of the year from the Director of Music

Because our musical life at Stowe is so busy and active I tend always to be thinking about the next event rather than recalling what has just taken place. Writing this report is therefore a good time to think about the enormous amount that our musicians have done and achieved over the past academic year. With more than seventy musical events during the year we have averaged nearly two every week.

A good indication of the strength of a school's music is to look at the number of instrumental groups. Over the past two years there has been a phenomenal rise in the number of pupils learning brass instruments and therefore we now have many more brass ensembles. All this under the inspirational direction of DJB, who has almost become a Pied Piper figure at Stowe. Junior and Senior Brass groups, as well as Trumpet groups seem to abound and every lunch time is used to its utmost. Likewise in the past two years there has appeared Junior and senior Saxophone Groups, a flute group, and a large mixed woodwind ensemble as well as more clarinet quartets. Another of our ladies, ZJF, of the Queen's Temple is responsible here. These two have also worked hard to establish a Wind Band at Stowe which has given two excellent concerts as well as playing on Speech Day and in "Music for a Summer's Afternoon" and is going from strength to strength.

Like many schools we have experienced a great surge of interest in Electric Guitar playing and this interest has been harnessed in a "Blues Band" which meets every week. The Jazz Combo, directed by Paul Westwood from the Royal Academy of Music, has produced improvised music of a very high standard and has been in much demand for playing in the area.

The String playing has also been outstanding this year. The Senior String Quartet has greatly increased its repertoire and plays with much more conviction and is now a very fine ensemble, whilst the string orchestra has given two very good concerts.

There have been some excellent solo recitals from a number of present and former Stoics. Jonathan Howse gave an outstanding Clarinet Recital in December which contained major works of the repertoire including Messager's "Solo de Concours", the Poulenc Sonata and Joseph Horowitz's Sonata. We have come to expect playing of the highest standard from Jonathan and he did not disappoint. He is now in much demand as a soloist for recitals outside the school and has won many competitions.

We welcomed back Oliver Thomas who is about to go to the Welsh College of Music and Drama. There was much to enjoy in this recital as Ollie is such a sensitive

and musical player. The Brahms E minor Sonata was especially enjoyable. Alex Hodgkinson also gave an excellent organ recital of major works by Bach, Howells and Whitlock and a gem of a piece by John Ireland entitled "Capriccio" which I had not come across before. The AS and A2 recitals at the end of the Spring Term were also of a very good standard and we hope that all these candidates did themselves justice in their final exam.

We were also pleased to welcome back Alexander Winter who is studying piano at Trinity College in London with Philip Fowke. He has developed a very fine technique and is now much in demand as an accompanist and as a player in Chamber Groups. Alexander has one more year to go and we will then look forward to hearing about him as a professional pianist.

Although numbers attending the Wednesday evening concerts have varied there has normally been a good number and I am very grateful to this audience who make every effort to be there. They in their turn have heard some very good recitals and concerts entirely given by our own pupils. Many concerts of individual items of all standards and music for ensembles in addition to those already reported in this journal. There have also been a number of excellent house concerts.

There has therefore been much going on and much to enjoy. I would like to thank all the visiting instrumental staff who do far more than is expected of them and give such loyal support to our work. To RJSS who has raised the standard of string playing to such excellence, to BJD for all his wonderful accompanying, to ZJF for the development of so many woodwind groups, to JRK for playing the organ in Chapel and his very fine work with the Chamber Choir and to DJB for developing the Brass playing at Stowe and all this done by all of them in addition to their large teaching load. The excellence of our work in the music department at Stowe is well respected and will be reflected in the Inspectors' report which is due out shortly.

JCG

Chamber Choir 2002-2003

I am delighted to report that the Stowe Chamber Choir has grown slightly in size and immensely in stature since the start of the academic year. They have showed themselves as being a gifted and sensitive group of singers, with repertoire ranging from quiet, reflective classical pieces, performed as a grace for Stowe's numerous evening dinner functions, as well as Beatles' arrangements, unaccompanied jazz ballads, and catchy Christmas melodies designed to make any concert go with a swing. Their efforts have been widely acknowledged and appreciated at every event, the most recent being a performance of the Dream of Gerontius by Elgar. This was a big highlight for them in their role as semi chorus, and we joined forces with Aylesbury Choral Society and the Oxford Philomusica. The concert met critical acclaim, the choir being congratulated on their

blend of sound, tone and musicianship. The chamber choir has admirably met the brief of being the school concert choir, and I would like to record my thanks for the unstinting support and enthusiasm of its members, many of whom leave Stowe this year.

JRK

Recital for Trumpets by Debbie & Phillip Bailey

Our two brass specialists presented a varied and interesting concert. They brought with them a selection of instruments from the trumpet family, Phil Bailey getting the concert off to a rousing start on Piccolo Trumpet with Purcell's Sonata for Trumpet. It was evident that whilst Phil is clearly a master brass player, he also has that rare talent of totally engaging his audience; feeding them with snippets of information and highlights to look out for during the performances. The Scherzo by Blazevich followed, played by Debbie on Bb Trumpet, displaying to the healthy audience (with good Stoic support) how nimble party pieces should be tackled. Phil followed this with Flor Peeters' soothing Aria. He chose to perform this on the Flugelhorn which suited the long, lyrical musical phrases coupled to the instrument's warm and mellow sound. This must have been a well judged warm up for Phil as he then launched himself into the Concert Study for Trumpet and Piano by Goedicke. Pianist BJD was ready and waiting to join in the fun, and it soon became apparent that this piece was a real tour de force for them both, displaying great virtuosity and requiring a phenomenal technique. After this blaze of sound, Debbie once again took the platform and treated us to a superb performance of Haydn's justly famous Trumpet Concerto. She performed this on the Eb Trumpet entertaining the still captivated audience with her clear, bright sound. The concert drew to a close with both Baileys playing Suite for Two Trumpets by Nelhybel – a piece familiar to Stoics early on in their brass playing careers, and one that has been tackled by the Stowe brass ensembles that Debbie and Phil so successfully run. This was a magnificent concert with a wonderful atmosphere. I don't think I was the only person left thinking 'Encore!'

JRK

Speech Day Concert

A capacity audience easily filled the Roxburgh Hall for this year's Speech Day Concert which featured the Chapel Choir, Jazz Band and Orchestra. It was the orchestra that opened the concert in grand style with an energetic performance of the Bohemian Festival Overture by Massenet. The Jazz Band took over the reins immediately afterwards with a rhythmic and lively rendition of You've got a Friend in Me (theme Toy Story 2) by Randy Newman. Richard Rogers' song The Lady is a Tramp was next, featuring vocalists Georgie Bennett-Warner and Pollyanna Middleditch. This exciting and

polished performance brought the house down, before the band finished their time on stage with the ever popular Build me up, Buttercup. The orchestra once again took centre stage with some musical and varied playing clearly evident in Gounod's Ballet Music from 'Faust'. This work comprised five separate movements, each not without difficulty, but being well managed by the ensemble. The final Allegro vivo was particularly exciting. Next came the turn of the Chapel Choir who burst forth with Thou O God art praised in Zion by Malcolm Boyle. They had already sung this piece at St. Paul's Cathedral a fortnight earlier rehearsing it very thoroughly, however it was pleasing to hear that the Speech Day performance still retained a good deal of freshness and enthusiasm. Finally, the orchestra took stage once again to conclude the concert with Soirees Musicales (Movements from Rossini) arranged by Benjamin Britten. This was a real triumph for the orchestra as it is a work that is technically very difficult for a school ensemble to perform. Subtle phrasing, big dynamic contrasts, and exposed solo work abound in this colourfully orchestrated piece. The end product was superb, and sincere thanks should go to JCG who directed the operation with his customary efficiency.

JRK

Stowe Choral Day

Once more it was a great pleasure to welcome over twenty prep school choirs to Stowe in February. Along with our own choir, they formed a force of almost 550 voices which made a glorious sound. As usual the service was that of the Choral Evensong. For the Introit the choirs sang the S.A.T.B. version of the Peter Hurford's "Litany to the Holy Spirit", a work that has a most beautiful and plaintive melody which gave a meditative start to the service. George Dyson's setting of the "Magnificat" and "Nunc Dimittis" is loved by choirs and congregations. It is admirably suited to such a large group of singers and the treble voices were able to soar up to the top notes to make a thrilling sound. The Anthem Stanford's setting of the Te Deum in Bb, is one of the best known works of the Anglican Choral repertoire. The choir and organ were joined by the senior brass from the school and the whole effect was thrilling. The service ended with Vaughan Williams setting of the hymn "All people that on earth do dwell" Writing as Director of Music, I find the Choral Day enormously uplifting hearing so many young voices united in such a large choir. I very much enjoy the opportunity of meeting and talking with music teachers from other schools and I hope that they find the day as rewarding as I do. Finally, my very great thanks go to the catering staff, without whose kindness and patience this whole event would not be possible. As always they coped brilliantly with providing lunch and tea for an extra 500 persons and I am very grateful to them.

JCG

Music for a Summer's Afternoon



Clarinet Quartet



String Quartet



Wind Band

Music for a Summer's Afternoon

When giving a concert outside in Summer what occupies the thoughts of the Director of Music most is what is the weather going to be like. With "Music for a Summer's Afternoon" in the Headmaster's Garden at 4.00pm, at 1.15pm the skies darkened and the rain poured, an inside event seemed to be a certainty. For the next couple of hours the skies brightened then ominously clouded over, but all somehow stayed dry. At 3.15pm the Director of Music pronounced "we're going to go outside for the concert", shaking of heads, sharp intakes of breath and mutterings of "is this man mad?". It may have been windy, but the sun shone and we had a window of fine weather – how lucky can this man be?

A larger than usual audience had the opportunity to say personal farewells to the Headmaster and Mrs Nichols whilst they enjoyed a feast of music, food and drink. Musical items were heard from the Brass Group (Fanfare for the Common Man), Wind Band, String Quartet, String Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Mixed Wind Ensemble, Clarinet Quartet and Saxophone Quartets. The Headmaster and Mrs Nichols have done so much to support and encourage music at Stowe during their time here and this afternoon in their garden was a wonderful way to hear some of the groups play for the last time, in this academic year, in the final term of Mr & Mrs Nichols at Stowe.

JCG

Woodwind Prize Competition

Set in the inspirational surroundings of the State Music room this year's competition was able to focus entirely on the talents of Stowe's woodwind instrumentalists. To adjudicate the daylong event we were delighted to welcome Victoria Soames Samek, Professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, founder member of the Muhlfeld Trio and the Clarinet Classics record label.

The morning began with five Third Form ensembles featuring both oboes and clarinets. For most this was their first public performance after only a term's worth of

Chamber Choir



Prizewinners

Right and clockwise:
Jonathan Howse, winner of the Senior Woodwind Prize
Edmund Jones, winner of the Piano Competition
Wind Competition prizewinners with the adjudicator
Victoria Soames Samek
Harry Darby, winner of the Senior Brass Prize



group tuition, but their determination and enthusiasm carried them through. Finally the winners emerged as the oboists Alex Sainsbury-Bow and Alexander Gordon, and the runners up with a spirited account of Acapulco Bay were Nasiru Iman, Benjamin Reeve, Rory Lyon, and Will Sheppard. In the Beginner Woodwind class Michael Goodenough won first place with a sonorous rendition of The Volga Boatmen. Second place went to Oliver Ritchie on the oboe with a well-controlled performance of Mellifluous Minuet.

The Junior Woodwind section and Hatfield & District Cup was won by Frederick Rolt with a captivating solo performance of Londonderry Air while second place was awarded to Christian Cook with a wonderfully up-beat Blue Moon and a special mention made of William Gale's Lazy Haze. The Lower Intermediate Group was won by Hamish Hardie with an assured account of Five Foot Two, with both Jack Peile and James Randall-Coath as joint runners up. Disaster hit when Jack's key-work seized up but he kept his composure and went on to give a gutsy rendition of Bright Spark on a borrowed instrument. He so impressed the adjudicator that he was awarded the coveted Khurody trophy for best potential in the Junior section.

Il Yang won the Intermediate group with powerful account of that iconic saxophone classic Baker Street. Coming a close joint second was Sebastian d'Agar's rollicking Hornpipe and Edward Comber and Louisa Burwood-Taylor 'world premiere' of the Stowe Mooche written especially for them by their teacher Alan Wakeman. Indeed much jazz repertoire was featured over the course on the day and first place in the Woodwind Recital class was secured by a charismatic rendition of Charlie Parker's YardBird Suite by Rupert Knox. The adjudicator made special mention of James Bentley, as runner-up, for his poignant and beautifully phrased account of the Adagio from Weber's Concerto No.1 in F minor.

One striking theme as the day progressed was the number of players ably competing on more than one instrument. This was demonstrated at the highest level in the Senior Woodwind class by George Walker who after giving a haunting performance of York Bowen's Sonatina for recorder rapidly swapped to clarinet and played the fiery Szalowski Sonatina. Despite stiff competition in this category first prize and the Giles Underwood Tankard was awarded to Jonathan Howse for his thrilling account of Francaix's Introduction, Theme and Variations. Once again the competition proved to be a double success for Jonathan who also won the Boosey and Hawkes Cup for the best overall performance of the day. He particularly impressed the adjudicator with his expressive range and breath-taking technique in Francaix's great clarinet show-piece – an achievement made all the more remarkable as he has won this prize for three consecutive years! Summing up the day's extraordinary achievements Victoria Soames Samek gave special thanks to the marvellous accompaniment provided by BJD, which lifted everyone's performance on the day.

Cups and Awards

Marlborough House Cup	Chris Dalton (Ensembles)
Khurody Trophy	Jack Peile (Junior Potential)
Paul Harris Cup	George Walker & Faber Music Prize
Oboe Studies Cup	Alex Sainsbury-Bow
Flute Studies Shield	Jack Peile
Clarinet Studies Shield	Jack Hawkes
Hatfield & District Cup	Frederick Rolt (Junior Woodwind)
Lower Intermediate	Hamish Hardie Woodwind Cup
Brackley & District Trophy . . .	Il Yang (Intermediate Woodwind)
Giles Underwood Tankard . . .	Jonathan Howse (Senior Woodwind)
Boosey & Hawkes Cup	Jonathan Howse (Best Performance)

ZJF

Brass Prizes

Sunday 9th February saw the third annual Brass Prize Competition in the State Music Room.

The adjudicator this year was Simon Hogg of the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble and also Professor of Trombone at the Royal College of Music, Junior Department.

In a break with tradition, the day commenced with the Senior Brass class where fine performances were given, especially from the two third formers Matthew Payne (Walpole) and Toby Marshall (Walpole) who were entering the competition for the first time. In his summing up of this class, Mr Hogg expressed his delight at the high standard and suggested a few pointers to the players about performance techniques.

The next class saw the Junior Brass players competing. In this class there was a wide variety of both instruments and styles of music ranging from Polovtsian Dances on Tuba to Pink Panther on Trombone. This class saw notable performances from Peter Ross-Beeby (Chandos) and Charlie Empson (Walpole).

After a short break for lunch, it was the turn of the Intermediate Brass players which saw worthy performances of Pink Panther and America. It was at this point that James Richardson (Temple) was asked to come to the front again and demonstrate to the audience some of the technical points which Mr Hogg wanted to show us. He asked James play in a variety of different styles and explained that no two pieces were played in the same way.

The end of the day saw the Beginner Brass classes which were for third year pupils who have had group lessons since September. Three boys were brave enough

to perform solos and indeed played them extremely well. They were Adam Forsdike (Grafton), Richard Hill (Grafton) and Stuart Stevens (Cobham). This class was followed by the Ensembles class where all of the groups played the same piece. It was a really enjoyable class as the pupils were all so enthusiastic and excited to be playing. After the performances, Mr Hogg explained the intricacies about playing as a group without a conductor and gave the audience an insight as to how to start and finish a piece at the same time.

Throughout the day, although comments were made by the adjudicator, no one knew the results of any of the classes and therefore the day finished with the Presentation of Prizes. All prizewinners were given comments on their performances, certificates and more importantly massive bars of chocolate.

Prizes were awarded to

SENIOR BRASS

- 1st Harry Darby (Temple)
 - 2nd Toby Marshall (Walpole)
 - 3rd Paul Hinds (Temple)
- Matthew Payne (Walpole)

JUNIOR BRASS

- 1st Charlie Empson (Walpole)
- 2nd Peter Ross-Beeby (Chandos)
- 3rd Krishan Vadgama (Cobham)

INTERMEDIATE BRASS

- 1st James Richardson (Temple)
- 2nd Edward Cookson (Grafton)

BEGINNER BRASS

- 1st Stuart Stevens (Cobham)
- 2nd Richard Hill (Grafton)
- 3rd Adam Forsdike (Grafton)

BEGINNER ENSMBLE

- 1st Alex Trotter (Grenville)
- Dominic Farr (Chatham)
- Stuart Stevens (Cobham)
- James Richardson (Temple)

After the Prize giving and Thank yous, the Headmaster asked if the winner of the Senior Brass Class, Harry Darby, could perform his piece again, which he duly did. A fitting end to an excellent day of Brass playing and a tradition which will be continued in years to come.

ZJF

Stowe Piano Competition 2003

We had already enjoyed the Strings Festival and the day of Brass Prizes and of Wind Prizes earlier in the year: it was now the chance for the pianists to take to the platform. The Stowe Piano Competition took place on Sunday 8th June with the adjudicator Christopher Scott.

Alexander Fisher opened the Novice class with 'Man Overboard' by Harris. He certainly showed himself to enjoy this piece with its left-hand note clusters suggesting the splash of the poor sailor. Manuel Poblador pro-

vided the second half of the class with a fluent and relaxed 'Walking in the Park' by Duro. Though it was seemingly unfair to separate these two brave musicians the prize was awarded to Alex. The Elementary class followed with four very different pieces. It was Toby Marshall's 'Motorway Blues' by Pam Wedgwood that most impressed the adjudicator. It is not a fast piece, strangely, but Toby, in the excitement of the occasion, pulled into the outside lane making for an exciting performance. Mention must also be made of Alex Ayoub's 'Night in the Woods' by Gedike.

The Lower Intermediate Class contained two performances of the same piece. This always makes for an interesting comparison and it was Matthew Dalton's performance of Burgmüller's popular Ballade that was awarded the prize. Set between the two Ballades was Hamish Ritchie's C major Prelude by Bach. He was commended for the fluency and beautiful, quiet sound he achieved. Competition was laid aside in the next class, 'Three's a Crowd' which, as its name suggests, featured pieces for three pianists at one keyboard. It can be quite a squeeze but great fun, as well as an excellent chance to develop ensemble playing. The audience certainly appreciated the teamwork involved in the jazzy pieces by Manfred Schmitz.

Such has been the growth of those studying jazz piano that two classes could be programmed this year. Drew Leeman, playing Whiteside's 'Slinky Thing' won the prize in the Intermediate Jazz Class and Harry Thuillier won that of the Advanced Jazz Class. The adjudicator praised Harry's natural and liberated improvisation in Beale's 'Oscar's Boogaloo' and his colourful sounds in 'Shh!', also by Beale.

Jeremy Walker was the first to play after lunch in the Intermediate Class. His performance of Schumann's 'Träumerei' showed a real musical sensitivity and portrayed the dreaminess of the title beautifully. Sam Vance-Law won the Higher Intermediate Class with two preludes by Chopin including the agitated G minor prelude.

The Advanced class again saw a rich diversity of repertoire where the pianists were able to present two pieces. Alexander Hodgkinson started the class with some lively Scarlatti and one of Prokofiev's Visions Fugitives. Eimile Howlin continued with a lyrical performance of the Beethoven Sonata from Op. 14 and was followed by Edmund Jones with the Chopin C sharp minor waltz and the Kachaturian Toccata. More Beethoven was to follow, this time of a more dramatic nature, the Sonata Op10, No.1, played by Sarah Turner. She concluded with the Minuet from 'Tombeau de Couperin' by Ravel. The last to play was Edward Cowan who treated us with a dark Shostakovich prelude and Debussy's mercurial 'Gradus ad Parnassum'. All performers deserved the prize for their tremendous music making but in the end it was awarded to Edmund for the imagination, poetry and commitment he communicated.

BJD

String Masterclasses given by Lesley White

It was wonderful to welcome Lesley White back to Stowe to give a set of masterclasses for string players. Over the last few years the school has been blessed with a number of highly talented string players and this year is no exception.

Highlights of the afternoon included Hwei Kim playing "Spring" from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", Sam Vance-Law's brilliant playing of the formidably difficult Kabalevsky Violin Concerto and some beautifully musical playing from Edmund Jones and Drew Leeman.

Sam Vance Law, Hwei Kim, Edmund Jones and Drew Leeman later joined forces to play the Vivaldi Concerto for four violins (a work which Bach admired so much that he arranged it for four harpsichords!!)

String chamber music, which is so much part of Stowe's musical life these days, was represented at the end of the afternoon with an attractive Trio Sonata by Geminiani and a brilliant performance by the Stowe String Quartet of an early Mozart Quartet.

Lesley White's comments were very encouraging for the players and made for a fascinating and entertaining afternoon.

RJSS

Music at Christmas

It is easy for the Carol Service to be thought of as a concert but for me, it is very much a service and much thought goes into the choosing of the music. The balance of hymns and choir carols, the appropriate music reflecting the readings, the feeling of build up during the service of darkness into light and a good balance of styles within the carols: all these things need to be taken into consideration. As always the Chapel was absolutely packed with a congregation of around one thousand. After the lighting of the candles and the traditional opening hymn "Once in Royal David's City" the choir sang their first carol, "A boy was born" by Benjamin Britten. With its stark and dissonant harmonies the clear message of the text was "he let himself a servant be that all mankind he might set free". After the first lesson concerned with the fall of Adam, we heard Poston's "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" which symbolises Christ as the tree of life. A solo treble, Georgie Bennett-Warner, began this carol and like a tree it grew through the verses with more voices joining in. "Riu, Riu, Chiu" is a 16th century Spanish carol and we were fortunate in having Guillermo Clark to sing the solo, not only was he an excellent baritone, but as a native Spanish speaker he was able to put across this very interesting piece. Many carols have a great beauty because of their simplicity and "Gabriel's Message" is one of those as it simply tells the story of the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary. Up until this point all of the carols had been unaccompanied and quite reflective in mood but then we hear the lesson telling us how St. Matthew described the birth of Jesus.

The joy of this birth was reflected in John Gardner's rhythmically exciting setting of "Tomorrow shall be my dancing day". In a short address we heard from the Chaplain of how our society has become more secular and the true message of Christmas has been forgotten. The thought provoking words of the next carol "Child of the manger" described how we have wrapped Christ in tinsel and sold him in shops. The next three carols were all arrangements of well known tunes or words. Edward Higginbottom's "Rocking Carol" uses the lower voices to maintain the feeling of a crib rocking to and fro whilst Bob Chilcott composes new music for the familiar words of the hymn "In the bleak mid-winter". The third of this group was Carter's brilliant and joyful setting of "I saw three ships". Just before the headmaster read the ninth lesson the organ and choir came bursting forth with Andrew Carter's setting of "Hodie Christus Natus Est" a great paean of praise. Following the ninth lesson the brass proclaimed a fanfare which introduced the hymn "O come all ye faithful". We hope that the congregation felt uplifted and full of the realization of the birth of Christ as we went into our final hymn "Hark the herald Angels sing". On the night before the Carol Service, the Choir, Orchestra and Brass Group give a Carol Concert, which is an opportunity for those who cannot attend the Carol Service, as well as people from the surrounding area to hear many of the items from the Carol Service. The Concert also contains additional items sung by the choir, the chamber choir and performed by the Brass. A very important feature of the concert, are the readings, as always done brilliantly by David and Debbie Fletcher.

In both these Christmas events the choir performed beautifully and a final mention should be made of JRK whose accompanying on the organ was perfect.

JCG

Dream of Gerontius

Elgar's oratorio "Dream of Gerontius" is regarded as being his masterpiece yet at its first performance in 1900 the chorus was so ill prepared that it was almost a disaster. Fortunately some German musicians heard this performance and recognised the work's greatness and subsequent performances in Germany fared so much better that the British realised that it was a work of genius. I had the great privilege of studying with a man who worked with Elgar at the Three Choirs Festival and he often talked about the great composer and so I have a great love of this work.

The music is a setting of Cardinal Newman's poem in which he dramatises the Roman Catholic doctrine of belief that a soul must go into purgatory and be washed of his sins before he is fit to see God. So it is a work of great emotion and catholic spirituality. There are three characters: Gerontius (a tenor) who is dying and later in the second part becomes the soul, the Priest (Bass) and an Angel (Mezzo-Soprano).

Right from the outset it was clear from the control and poise that this was going to be an outstanding performance. The conductor, James Burton, had a clear

vision of the work and the speeds he chose allowed the music to unfold with just the right pace. The Oxford Philomusica is a very fine professional orchestra and they accompanied throughout without blemish, filling our chapel with a glorious orchestral sound.

The first voice to enter is that of "Gerontius" proclaiming that he is near to death. Considerable demands are made upon the tenor soloist and a performance of "Gerontius" can stand or fall on their portrayal. William Kendall is well known for his singing of this part and he produced a performance of great passion and conviction. Next to enter is the semi-chorus, a part which was taken by the Stowe Chamber Choir. They are to be congratulated on their singing which was sustained at a very high level with great confidence and purity of sound. The Bucks.Herald said that they "looked as well as sounded angelic" – little does he know! JRK who played the organ for the performance, trained this small group brilliantly.

This was the seventieth anniversary concert of the Aylesbury Choral Society and it was a great pleasure to welcome them all to Stowe and see the Chapel packed. It was quite obvious that they had been very well trained and it was a great joy to hear a chorus so well balanced and who sang with great clarity, warmth and vigour. The other two soloists were Timothy Mingin (Bass), who looked like one of our own sixth formers but had a very powerful resonant voice and I am sure he will be a name to look out for in the future. Marie Elliott (Mezzo Soprano) sang the part of the Angel beautifully and with great passion.

Altogether there was such a high standard of soloists, orchestra, chorus and semi chorus in the hands of an inspirational conductor that this could not fail to be an excellent performance that I, along with the rest of the audience, will remember for a long time.

JCG

The Chapel Choir sing evensong in St. Paul's Cathedral

An opportunity to sing a service in St. Paul's is something a chorister will never forget. St. Paul's is regarded as the mother church of our country and is where many of our great national services take place. As soon as we arrived we were taken down to the crypt where we saw the tomb of Nelson and then up to the Quire where we were aware of all those great services that we have seen broadcast from this very spot. The choir this year has been one of the finest, if not the finest, that Stowe has ever had. The acoustic in St. Paul's allows a choir to enjoy the sound they have produced, often for many seconds afterwards! Fast, complex music is often lost whilst majestic sounds allows the building to enhance the quality and fill it with a magical quality. Malcolm Boyle's Anthem "Thou O God art Praised in Zion" is such a majestic work and has the added bonus of a long section for Sopranos voices alone. The Soprano section this year

has contained many outstanding singers and they made a wonderful sound in St. Paul's and it was one of those experiences in music which can almost be described as "spine tingling". George Dyson's setting of the "Magnificat" and "Nunc Dimittis" also works well in St. Paul's. A large choir such as this made a vigorous and full bodied sound and the thrilling top As and B flats of the Sopranos soaring through the Cathedral was matched by the quiet ending of the "Nunc Dimittis" which seemed to float through the Cathedral.

In a building as large as St. Paul's, it is difficult to judge how large the congregation was, but it was clear that there were upwards of five hundred which included many parents. At the end of the service we were thanked by the Dean who extended an invitation to the choir to sing again in the Cathedral.

JCG

Stowe Orchestra Concert

Under the leadership of Sam Vance-Law and the baton of RJSS, the Stowe Orchestra was in very fine form for their winter concert in the Chapel. Given to a large audience of the school plus a disappointing few parents RJSS was wise to choose shorter movements or works rather than substantial pieces.

The concert opened with a jolly piece entitled "Winterfest" which contained many tunes that would be familiar to the audience. Sam Vance-Law then became soloist in the first movement of Kabalevsky's "Violin Concerto". Written in 1948 this work with its catchy tunes and rhythms is very approachable to the listener. Sam Vance-Law played with enormous panache and vigour as well as with great lyricism, displaying all the maturity of a fine musician and performer.

The Irish hymn tune "Slane" which we use for the hymns "Be Thou my vision" or "Lord of all hopefulness" was set by an American composer Douglas Wagner. Though simple in structure it had a great beauty and warmth and made a good contrast to the previous piece. Massenet's "Angelus" is a movement from his orchestral suite "Scenes Pittoresques" and suggests the tranquillity of the French countryside. Slow pieces which require a good sense of control and balance are not as easy to perform as one might think and the orchestra did a very job at this.

The penultimate work in the concert is very well known to concert goers. The first movement of Haydn's last symphony is a difficult work to perform as it requires great precision to bring out the fast complex details. In particular the writing for strings is very hard and our strings are to be congratulated on their excellent performance. This very enjoyable concert was brought to a rousing end with del Borgo's exciting "Romany Dances".

JCG

Pupils' Formal Sunday Concert

Coming at the start of what turned into a major flu epidemic within the school we were fortunate not have been more hit than we were, with all the items surviving intact be it with one or two last minute changes in personnel. Altogether it was a wonderfully varied programme, performed at a very high standard by ensembles and two soloists. The senior Brass group opened the concert and their playing has transformed over the past year. Sam Vance-Law and Hwei Kim were the soloists in Handel's Concerto Grosso Op.6 No.1 in G accompanied by the string orchestra. These two fine young players from the fifth form made an excellent sound, complementing each other extremely well and interweaving their contrapuntal lines with great artistry. This was followed by an unusual combination of Piano (Sarah Turner), Clarinet (Jonathan Howse) and Horn (Harry Darby), performing the first movement of a Trio by Frederic Duvernoy. This Romantic work with its long mellifluous lines suited these instruments extremely well and was given an admirable interpretation by these three young players.

A performance by Jonathan Howse on the clarinet is always something to be looked forward to and this was no exception. Jonathan gave a sparkling performance of the "Duo Concertant" by Darius Milhaud with Benjamin Davey at the piano. The Senior String Quartet has become an extremely accomplished group and their performance of Mozart's Quartet in G was almost professional in standard. The first half of the concert ended with the Senior Saxophone Quartet giving excellent renditions of "Maple Leaf Rag", "Jeanie with the light brown hair" and "In the mood".

The Senior Clarinet Quartet opened the second half with "Bon Train" and "Russian Folksongs and Dances". These performances were full of fun and demonstrated that these four players were masters of their instruments and had a very good sense of ensemble. It was good to hear an arrangement for Trumpet Group by one of our former distinguished Head of Brass and Woodwind, Bram Wiggins. "The Cricket" by Josquin des Pres is a jolly work and it is a pleasure to hear four trumpeters of such a good standard at Stowe. After that Sam Vance-Law gave a very musical performance of Kabalevsky's "Violin concerto". The Chamber Choir sang two fun items: Cole Porter's "Anything goes" and a very amusing piece "Viva la musica", all with their customary skilfulness. To round of this excellent evening of music making the Jazz Band played three items: Gillespie's "Groovin' High", "Blue suede shoes" by Perkins and were joined by Georgie Bennett-Warner for a vocal number "Embraceable you". The whole evening had been a great showcase for the music at Stowe and many congratulations to all those involved.

JCG

Concert by the Chapel Choir

Over the past few years the Chapel Choir has become one of the great strengths of our musical life at school. It now numbers just under one hundred with forty girls and sixty boys. As well as singing anthems every week in Chapel it leads the worship in many other important services, both here and elsewhere. It was therefore good to have the opportunity to hear the choir singing a complete performance by itself in a concert. Without doubt this year's choir must be one of the strongest that the school has ever produced. There is quality in all the parts but particularly so in the sopranos who would be coveted by any Cathedral choir (who had girls of course).

The concert opened with George Dyson's glorious setting of the "Magnificat" which made a great impact upon the audience. Maurice Greene's anthem "Lord, let me know mine end", written around two hundred years earlier is, as one might expect, very different in style from the previous piece. Whilst the Dyson relies on a full choir sound the Greene allows each vocal part to imitate each other and intertwine in a graceful way. The central section is written for two soprano soloists, beautifully sung by Sophie Johnson and Sarah Turner. Antonio Lotti's "Crucifixus" was written in the early part of the eighteenth century. In eight parts this is a complex piece which contains much dramatic writing. In the first section we hear the crowds clamouring for Christ's blood, in the second section the nails are driven into his hands and in the last the blame is laid upon Pontius Pilate. The work gives much scope for musical interpretation and the choir performed it with great sensitivity.

From the complexity of the Lotti we went to the simplicity of Peter Hurford's "Litany to the Holy Spirit". The first verse for sopranos only allowed us to enjoy the beauty and brilliance of the Stowe Soprano voices. Haydn's motet "Insanae et Vanae Curae" has two contrasting sections each of which is repeated. The first is aggressive and sustains a high tessitura in all the voices whilst the second is much more tranquil in mood. The choir next performed Malcolm Boyle's majestic anthem "Thou O God art praised in Zion" which they sang with great conviction and the central section for sopranos was particularly fine.

Grayston Ives is a former member of the King's Singers and is now Master of the Choristers at Magdalen College Oxford. His small scale anthem "Listen sweet dove" was charming and provided an excellent moment of repose between two monumental pieces. The anthem by Bairstow "Blessed City Heavenly Salem" is regarded as being one of the great works of the anglican tradition, though there are now few church choir capable of performing it. The work is a tour de force with many varied sections, all making great demands upon a choir. The opening flourish from the organ introduces an impressive response from the choir and the last section dies away almost too nothing. All these things were very well controlled by the singers.

Howells' "Like as the hart" relies upon long melodic lines sensitively sung, easy to handle with a small cathedral choir of professional singers but less easy for a large choir of young voices. However, they coped with the difficulties extremely well and the phrasing was well done. The final item in the concert was "God is gone up" by Gerald Finzi, a great paean of praise which made a suitable ending for this concert. A very well deserved long and appreciative applause brought this very enjoyable concert to a close. JCG who directed the choir and JRK who played the organ should feel justifiably proud of this group who do so much for our music.

RJSS

Music Technology at Stowe

Music Technology at Stowe is a subject that looks set to grow and grow and grow. Many students who, in the past, would not have contemplated a sixth form music course are now haunting the music department. It makes for an interesting mix of music styles and, as one of the tasks includes making a classical recording, there is plenty of co-operation between the musicians.

As music flourishes at Stowe so the vexed problem of space becomes more pressing and also of what might be described as noise pollution. Recording rock instruments, especially a drum kit, does tend to be quite noisy and the actual act of recording does mean that for a while everything has to be silent except for the player or players being recorded. It is expected that these teething troubles will be solved in the near future.

We have a well equipped department although we will need more as the subject becomes increasingly popular. We can do the latest digital recording but we also have some interesting analogue synthesizers. It means that when visiting us you can hear a string quartet recording, a heavy metal recording or someone working with a piece of equipment that really can make "Doctor Who" sounds!!

RJSS

A Concert of Student Compositions

We delight in hearing the musicians of Stowe performing and singing the music of the great composers; what can be even more inspiring is to hear the music they have composed themselves.

The wealth of their creativity was in abundance during a concert of compositions at the beginning of the summer term.

The concert started with the work of our four AS Music students. It is the third year that A-level students have been required to submit compositions during both years and it has proved a valuable vehicle with which to continue this most creative of musical activities. The first piece we heard was by Jack Hawkes; a piece for two clarinets and string quartet. After a dramatic opening driven by the strings a dialogue ensued between the clarinets in which Jack's experience as a clarinettist demon-

strated itself well in the virtuosic passage-work. This was followed by Harry Darby's Russian Dance for clarinet and string trio. It took as its inspiration folk music of Eastern Europe and one could certainly hear in its flavoursome melodies and spiced rhythms the influence of Bartok and Kodaly

Sarah Turner had chosen to model her piece on the classical minuet and trio for string quartet. As a cellist she was able to compose inventive and varied textures for this medium without ever losing the simple and noble charm of the dance. Finally, we heard a movement for wind quintet by Jonathan Howse. It conjured up the image of a lonely organ grinder churning out his forlorn tunes. The dissonant and modal harmonies imbued the music with a subtle melancholy, the momentum being interrupted several times by searching chords.

After hours of creative effort a piece of new music is only truly born when it has its first public performance so we were very grateful to the players who had enabled this to happen.

The second part of the concert saw some nine GCSE candidates present their finished compositions just prior to submission. The AQA exam board give candidates briefs and targets to be met thereby focussing their attention to wide ranging forms and styles of music. This year, all candidates had to present pieces for an occasion, and a second composition to be constructed in a free style. This opened up many different possibilities and it was wonderful to hear such a breadth of sound and some very innovative ideas. Music for an occasion ranged from stylish fanfares composed for school events, wedding receptions, memorial services, classical music and jazz festivals – Stowe's renowned 'Dinner n Jazz' a clear inspiration for one candidate.

For their second work, some chose to explore the world of film music, writing themes for title or opening scenes to thrillers, horror movies or sentimental tragedies. Others went further and wrote in a contemporary style for string quartet and unaccompanied choir. The final challenge to be overcome was issued by AQA in the Spring Term. The Integrated Assignment presented candidates with a number of options for composition: A Film Storyboard, Baroque Dance, Music from the 1960s and the Classical Period. Time was not especially generous, but everyone worked very hard and the result was some very stylish pastiches as well as completely original work on the given themes. It has been quite a busy two years for everyone concerned, however they can be rightly proud of what has been achieved.

The following participated in the composition concert and were examined in GCSE music this year:

Matthew Dalton, Alexander Hodgkinson, Hwei Joon Kim, Rupert Knox, Cyrus Poteratchi, Edward Radcliffe, Sam Vance-Law, George Walker, Il Yang.

BJD/JRK

SOCIETIES

Chess Club

The two main events were the UK Land Chess Challenge and the Inter-house Chess Tournament. In the former, Ned Pendleton, Walid Islam, Casper Sheppard went through from the club championship to the Megafinal in High Wycombe, where they won points and gained experience. Danny Lee also went forward, but was too old to qualify for the Megafinal.

There was another exciting finish to the House Tournament. Cobham, the cup holders, went out in the semis to Temple, who beat Walpole 3-2 in the final, Walpole having contested the last three finals, last winning in 2001. Cobham have previously won the cup in 2000. 2004 promises to be a very fierce contest.

Noteworthy was the entry of the Lyttelton girls' team. We hope that girls will continue to compete in this event.

EST



Inter-house Chess Winners, 2003: Temple. Left to right: Christopher Maitland-Walker, Danny Lee, Jamie Emslie, Paul Hinds and Rupert Knox.



Temple boys play Lyttelton girls in the 1st round of the 2003 House Tournament. SRJ (Lyttelton Housmistress) and IM (Bruce Housemaster) watching.

Community Service

Community Service at Stowe this year has seen a variety of activities get under way, the most popular being the opportunity to help at a local primary school, where the Stoics get to see things from the teachers' point of view!

Students have certainly been involved in the wider community, with some assisting in a charity shop and others serving tea at a Day Centre. We have been able to use students' skills to help others – they have worked with disabled people to enhance lives in terms of pastimes such as cooking or computer use.

In terms of the physical environment, a large group has been helping the National Trust with work in our own grounds and yet others have improved the gardens of local elderly people. These are the people who most look forward to their contact with the Stoics and we have sent students to both individual homes and residences for the elderly.

Our biggest event, as ever, was the Christmas party, where nearly two hundred senior citizens enjoyed an afternoon of jazz, carols, Santa, bingo and sausages (who am I to change popular tradition?!). Having tried to include as many guests as possible, I started to understand just how large this event looms in the minds of some as I received a few slaps on the wrist for missing the odd one out-take two next year!

The Stoics undertake this worthwhile activity for a number of different reasons – it may form part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or fulfil their Communication and Leadership responsibilities in school or simply serve as an activity in its own right for whatever personal reasons they may have. In any case, it serves to open their eyes to the real world and the many types of lives being lived therein. It is very satisfying to witness such mutual benefit – our clients, obviously, but also the service-providers – by what they learn about others and from what most of us secretly crave, which is to be appreciated!

SRJ

Junior Debating

This year the Junior Debating Society has experienced a rather hectic year under Chairman Thomas Borwick. His approach to debates was always somewhat 'last minute' and with TJHB overseeing him with absolute determination to use every slot available to us, almost every member has had to stand in a day before at least once. With the loss of a very strong 5th Form year, we have witnessed many 4th formers accepting prominent roles within the society.

We have enjoyed a wide variety of topics including Apollo, (the school's very own Big Brother), to which an unusual number of staff turned up. There was the motion whether the Simpson family represented a typical American family, with guest-speaker and Stowe-Harvard

Fellow, Mr. Gruber, who opted to support the motion. We also posed the question whether mobile phones stand as the greatest invention of the last quarter of a century?

From the imagination of Jeremy Hinds we have seen the introduction of new ideas such as argument debates, where the speeches are substantially shorter and to the point. With a little work these ideas will become commonplace next year.

With speeches from Alasdair Shaikh and Edward Coram-James, the society has not had a dull moment. This year we were invited to Buckingham to take part in the English Speaking Union's competition. Representing Stowe were Thomas Borwick, Alasdair Shaikh and Alastair Russell, who came a close 3rd, just shy of qualifying for the regional finals.

As we say good-bye to our current 5th form, we can see a bright future for the society with speakers such as Alasdair Shaikh and Edward Coram-James and a strong team behind them. We look forward to next year with anticipation under the guidance of TJHB.

ALASTAIR RUSSELL

Senior Debating

This has been a good year for debating, with the first debate of the autumn term on "football culture is ruining England." It was a battle of the sexes, with Verity Taylor, Pollyanna Middleditch and Alex Kennedy proposing, and Harry Soames, Neil Holder and Charlie Shirley-Beavan narrowly persuading the audience that football is merely a scapegoat for society's ills.

Next was the topical "the Conservative Party has no future as a force in British politics." Fred Raikes, Alex Pike and AMD successfully defended the Tory party against Oliver Hogg, Charlie Sanchez and PSR.

In February Oliver Hogg, Pollyanna Middleditch and Alex Kennedy proposed controversially that "the UK should not use military force against Iraq." The opposition of Charlie Cavill, Edward Comber and Danielle Goodger carried the day.

The Ballon Debate in March was on a rather lighter note, with Georgie Bennet-Warner as Ms. Dynamite, William Gallimore as David Beckham, Danielle Goodger as Cat Woman, and Fred Raikes as Bob Marley. Charlie Cavill played a wonderful Arnold Schwarzenegger, accent and all, but Harry Soames clinched the victory in the second round as the Godfather.

The final debate of the year came in May with "Stowe should go fully co-educational." Matthew Gracie, Gabriella Alexander and Alex Perry proposed, with Chris McGee, Harriet Brand and Christian Roe opposing. The motion narrowly passed.

There was a high standard of argument throughout the debates, with good audiences and frequent challenging questions. I look forward to another promising year next term. The Chairman of the Society was Alex Pike; the Secretary was George Margesson.

PASF

Classical Society

In the autumn term we welcomed back Nicholas Smith, an Old Stoic lecturing at Lady Margeret Hall, Oxford. He gave a fascinating review of epic poetry, right up to modern times, intriguing some with his reference to a Beeriad as well as the Iliad. Another visitor was Mr Ashley Hern from Christchurch, Oxford, who gave two very helpful and illustrated talks to GCSE groups on source material for studying the Roman army.

A planned visit to see a production of Euripides' Electra in Cambridge was thwarted by November fog, but a group of mainly Lower sixth-formers braved the back streets of south London (and, for one, the supposed complications of underground tickets) to see a lively performance of Euripides' Hippolytus. It was in Greek but with some surtitles, performed by students of King's College. Also in the spring term sixth-formers and staff had an enjoyable evening sharing brief studies on excerpts of Latin literature. Each selected a passage for translation and comment. After the exams in the summer term we are looking forward to a swan-song talk by Mr Burden on Greek philosophy. We are very grateful for all he has done for Stowe classics over the year, especially with the junior Greek club.

One of the passages chosen for the January meeting of the Classical Society was an excerpt from Horace (Odes 4.8.28-34), potentially well known to many Stoics. Below is a rhyming verse translation, which attempts to reproduce in six syllables part of the original Asclepiad metre:

dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori,
caelo Musa beat. sic Iovis interest
optatis epulis inpiger Hercules,
clarum Tyndaridae sidus ab infimis
quassas eripiunt aequoribus ratis,
ornatus viridi tempora pampino
Liber vota bonos ducit ad exitus.

That man worthy of praise
From death my Muse delays,
My Muse skywards does raise.
Thus fierce Hercules came
feasts' guest, Jupiter's fame;
sons of Tyndarus, bright,
brother stars of the night,
rescue ships in their plight
lost on ocean's great might;
Bacchus – on his fair brow
green vine leaves he has now,
and says yes to our vow.

MJB

Literary Society

In October 2002, Mr David Hunt provided us with a magical evening when he gave a presentation of Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner'. Even apart from the dramatic appeal, especially when sequences were set to music on the piano, we were all deeply impressed by his learning the great narrative poem by heart.

In November, Mr Daniel Rosenthal gave a fascinating talk on 'Shakespeare on Film', with particular reference to 'Macbeth' and 'Othello.' Several carefully chosen clips were shown in a way which elucidated different interpretations and adaptations.

In the same month, The Creative Writing Group presented readings by Stoics of their own poems and short stories in the Library. As ever, we were gratified and astounded by the merit and range of the work read and the courage of those prepared to read their own writing before a considerable audience in the Library. As so often before, we were greatly indebted to Mr Thompson for his dedicated organisation of this excellent event

In the Spring Term, Professor Valerie Sanders, Head of the English Department at the University of Hull, no stranger to Stowe, gave a magnificent lecture on the Victorian novel, miraculously bringing together strands of thought and writing from the three novels most familiar to the Upper Sixth: 'Wuthering Heights', 'Hard Times' and 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'.

The Lower Sixth English specialists provided two memorable evenings, fielding balloon debates which placed the characters firstly in Chaucer's 'The Franklin's Tale' ('Which was the mooste fre, as thinketh yow?') and secondly in 'Wuthering Heights' in dangerous competition. Every-one dressed for the part. Primrose Matheson survived as the Magician, Charlie Leet-Cook's dashing Aurelius in tennis whites notwithstanding, and Jamie Roberts' formidable Heathcliff manipulated and bullied the audience into submission in the second debate, softening his stern message with some charming appeals from the piano, before drowning his sorrows afterwards over supper.

In May, Mr Farquhar gave a lecture on 'King Lear': the Nature of Evil in Tragedy'. This brought forward some very penetrating questions on the approach to the A2 examination from the Upper Sixth.

PASF

WATER CONSERVATORS' CHALLENGE

Jonathan McInnes-Skinner and I arrived at the upstairs of the Science department, knowing nothing more than there was a competition to do with chemistry and that there were prizes to be won. Eight other boys also had little idea of why we were there.

Soon, Mr Ted Flaxman of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators was introduced to us. He talked to us about the importance of clean water to our daily lives. After that talk Miss Carter spoke to us about water conservation from a more scientific angle, about what we used to purify the water and in what order they were used. It began to become clear what we would be doing after the talk had finished.

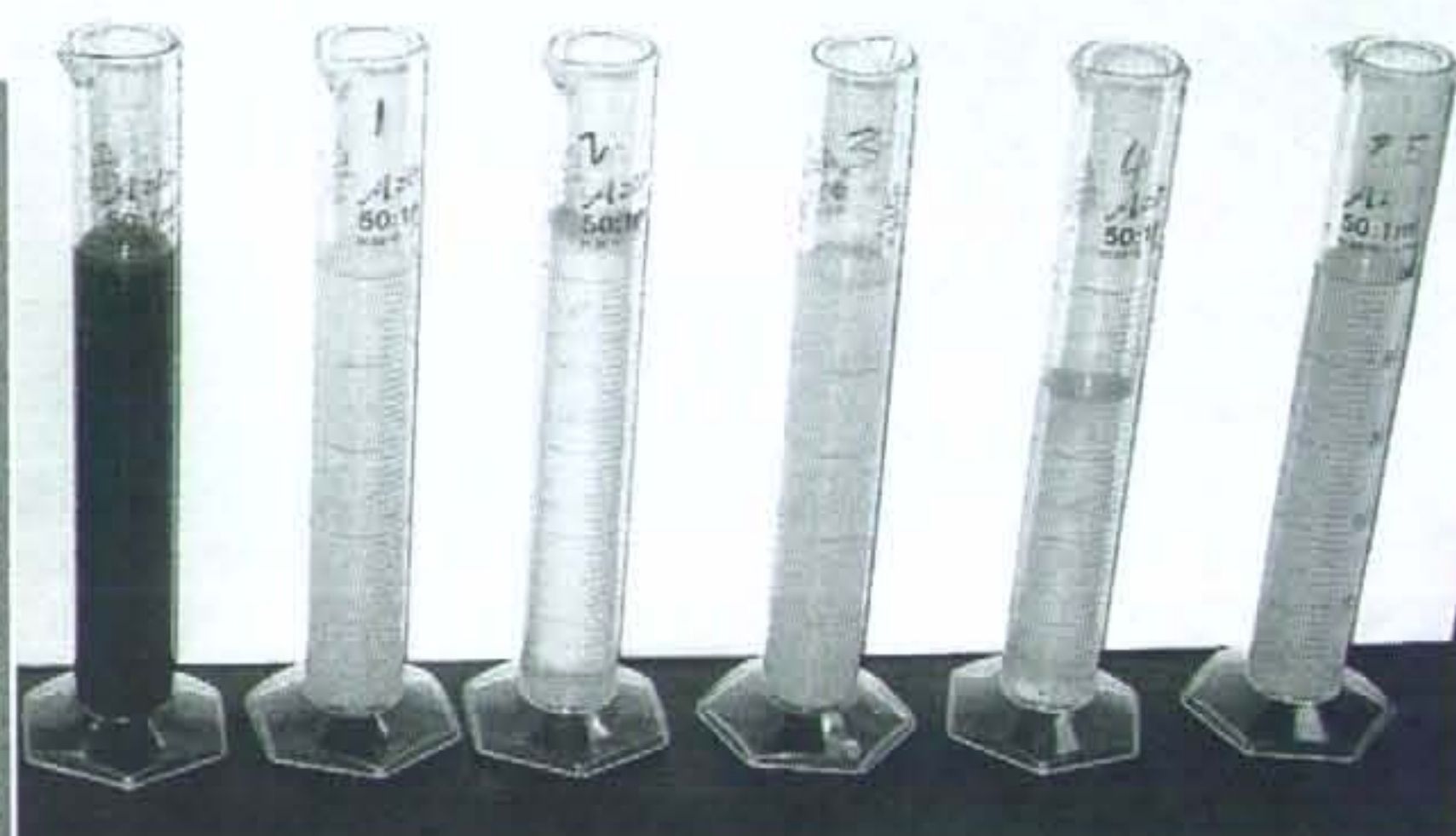
Then it was explained to us what we were going to do, confirming our suspicions. The task was to make a dirty solution of water, mud, oil, leaves and many other things, as pure as possible. Once the time limit was over our samples would be taken away for tests like clarity, density and pH.

They gave us our solutions and we began to purify. They had given us a number of containers and different substances to help us. We used a needle-like tool to poke

holes into the bottom of one of the containers so we could use it as a filter. Then we poured the different substances in on top of each other to create a filtration system. We continued to have ideas and use them to purify the solution. By the end we had got our solution reasonably pure and completely neutral, but we were unable to test the density with the apparatus we were given. We handed our 50ml of solution in to Miss Carter for testing while we were left to write a report on what we did to purify our solutions.

Soon we were called back into the classroom from the lab and sat down in our places, anticipating the results. But first we were all given a certificate. The results came. It was a close call between two pairs, but in the end we won by one mark. Neither Jonathan nor I could believe that we had won but we had. We shook hands with Mr Flaxman and received our prizes. After that I gave a brief summary of what we had done to purify our solution. Soon afterwards we said our "goodbyes" and "thank yous" and left. It had been a very enjoyable and worthwhile challenge.

TOM FOX



Above:
Original substance
(left) against the
finished products
from the five teams.

Left: The winners –
Jonathan McInnes-
Skinner and Tom
Fox (right).

CHRISTOPHER VILLIERS (OS)

INTERVIEW

Alex Orchard-Lisle essays some questions

Did you always want to be an actor?

When I was 5 years old. Then I wanted to be a Ballet dancer even though I had no idea about music. My father was a film director, my mother an actress, the Godparents were all actors and actresses, my wife is an agent, my younger brother Jay is an actor and my sister Cat is a producer. She has won an Oscar. Acting is in my blood and you must only become an actor if you know you would not be happy doing anything else. Working in the industry is a living nightmare. It is vicious and uncompromising with much backstabbing. Only 5% actors are working. I am one of the lucky ones. I've done 8 films, a hell of a lot of TV, some American, some garbage, some quite good. But I chose to do this and I care deeply about the industry. That is why I started 20 20 Casting.

Tell us about your company, 20 20 Casting?

When I was doing 'First Knight' with Sean Connery and Richard Gere, the personal trainer on it, Richard Smedley, suggested I should start 2020 Casting with him, an extras agency. That was 7 years ago and now he is training 1,300 Mexicans to be fighting Greeks in the Brad Pitt film, 'Troy' and I'm sitting behind a desk in Shepherd's Bush. This is a small office with 7 people working here so we are always busy. We have supplied extras for the Bond films, 'Harry Potter', 'Star Wars', 'Bridget Jones' Diary', 'Gladiator', 'Shakespeare in Love', as well as lots of TV. In 20 20 we use people's skills whatever they are, a soldier, a policeman or a uni-cyclist. We can exhibit those skills on the screen. We take their pictures every year so what you see is what you get. In 'Saving Private Ryan' they wanted a few people without arms. We offered them 42 people. We visit the extras on the film set as well. 20 20 is also the first ever extras agency to teach acting classes to extras, confidence in front of camera, improvisation, recreating reality, listening. Acting is being, not demonstrating. Acting is like a Venn Diagram. You concentrate on the overlap, the bit that connects you and the character. You finally get an eclipse and you are the character. You peel away the onion, the preparation. The joker in the class and Falstaff may be funny people but they may also be quite sad, as they want attention. There are always reasons why people are the way they are. We want to create real characters on camera. The extras are all part of the storytelling and we know that storytelling is the oldest profession and the prostitution the second and so it should be taken seriously.

You've had an amazingly diverse career, the lover of Penelope Keith in the TV series 'Sweet Sixteen', opposite Val Kilmer in the film, 'Top Secret!' and the original stage version of 'Another Country' with Rupert Everett. Is there anything you are particularly proud of?

I'm proud of shows like the Paul Greengrass directed 'Bloody Sunday', All the soldiers in it were real soldiers with the only actors, James Nesbitt, Tim Piggot-Smith, Nick Farrell and me. It was all improvised. It won many awards, a huge achievement. I am also proud of 'Two Men Who Went to War'.

Yes, you wrote 'Two Men Who Went to War' a recent film with Derek Jacobi. Tell us about the experience. Would you like to continue screenwriting?

I wrote it with a friend, Richard Everett. He found this weird story about two dentists who invaded France in 1942, a true story. I thought it would make a great film so we bought the rights a day later. Several years later a draft emerged.

Are you related to the distinguished Villiers family that is connected to Stowe and that wonderful actor, the late James Villiers? Was he a role model?

Jimmy was a cousin. He got better and better, as he became older. He was not a role model because I did not know him very well. The Villiers goes back to 1066. George Villiers was a Duke of Buckingham.

What are you working on at the moment?

Apart from working on selling negotiations for 'Two Men' which was released last November in the UK, I am writing a film with Richard Everett again, another by myself and an updated 3 part adaptation of Daphne de Maurier's 'Flight of the Falcon' for TV. That has never been done before. I have updated it from the 1950s to modern day. It is a bit spooky, demonic and is set in a multi-national University in Italy. It has Ferraris, drugs, young people sitting in cafes, loud music, Eurotrash, beautiful woman, and hopefully very few clothes on the ladies. There is also a new series which Yorkshire TV is interested in. My cousin Julian Fellows is having his new adaptation, 'Vanity Fair' filmed in Bath this week with Reece Witherspoon and James Purefoy. We're doing all the extras and background for that as well. I love working all the time. I love acting because you can work in your trailer. You can sit there for 5 hours writing wherever, in Henley-on-Thames or Cyprus, anywhere. If, I've been doing office work all week I will get up at 6.00am on Sat and Sun until 10.00am to write, so projects are always moving. I can't sit still at home doing nothing, waiting for the phone to ring. I want to make it ring.

Gosh, all these wonderful connections.

That's another thing, the industry is so small and intimate. It's like a baton race! Writers write scripts who pass it on to the directors and producers to raise the money to film it. Then the actors have the baton to make it live, then the editors cut it to tell the story. Then the music composer makes a score to evoke the setting, then the distributors, then the audience to react hopefully as well. The whole industry is packed with a legacy of stories. Generations pass on the baton to generations. Unfortunately this terribly small industry doesn't make enough films, the government don't help, there are not enough tax incentives, TV is shrinking, there is also too much reality TV. So no wonder viewing figures have gone down. When I did TV, 15 years ago you could expect 12-15 million viewers, now you are lucky to call 7 million a success. There are now so many things to do, so TV audiences are shrinking so advertising revenues are shrinking so they have not got the budget so people are now switching off because its drivel. The whole industry is getting smaller and smaller. You used to have many different series so there were more varied writers and directors. Most importantly, new ideas were accepted more easily. Then came 'Heartbeat' with 52 episodes and that took a whole year away and the industry shrank because you had the main characters, a baddie of the week, a writer, and 3 directors.

You were a baddie in 'Heartbeat' once?

Yeah, everyone's a bad guy once. They're fun to play. So, it needs someone very brave to turn around and question the fact that everything is now about hospitals or police. The executives are not brave enough today to commission a series about a drag artist touring Northern clubs because they're frightened no one will watch it. We need something new in the recipe. 'Cutting it', 'Fortysomething' and 'State of Play' are swinging the pendulum back, however. America is better than us and we can learn a lesson from them. We don't make the best TV anymore. We do have the best directors, writers, and cameramen but we don't put our money where our mouth is. I was depressed in January 2002 but suddenly along came sensational television worth staying in for like 'Conspiracy', 'Shackleton', and 'Bloody Sunday'. So, we can do it when we put our mind to it.

Do you have any role models? Was there any member of staff who inspired you at Stowe?

There was a wonderful, wonderful teacher called



Roger Potter who directed all the school plays and taught me English. He made long summer afternoons fly by when you'd normally be wanting to stare out of the window. John Dobinson was a good guy as well. The Headmaster, Bob Drayson was very fair, strict but not ruthless. He made you proud to be a Stoic. It is true what J.F. Roxburgh said, 'A Stoic will know beauty for the rest of his life.' It is that building. I always say to friends who have never seen Stowe, when we go up the Front Drive to the North Front, 'This is good but just wait'. Then they go to the rest of the school. When I was at Bruce, the Music Room was our Common Room and we had

Orange fights on the ledges and inside so there were always Orange stains everywhere. Thank God, Bruce was moved out. All 5 keys to the Roxy belonged to boys, not teachers. We did all kinds of exciting things there including plays. There was the Dobinson, another little place where you could do plays. House plays were done outside in the temples as well. I spent my whole time doing plays, helping other houses with plays. There was a Festival of House Plays where actors would come and give talks.

It is true that Stowe does breed a lot of imagination.

The magical thing about Stowe is that you always had free time after classes in the confines of school where you had to do something and make your own entertainment. There were always masters willing to help. I have a cricket team that includes people like Sam Mendes, Leslie Grantham, Hugh Laurie, Samuel West and 4 old Stoics. The Stoics have always mucked in with the rest. There are friends you will keep from Stowe for life. It taught me a lot of old moral values. The film industry is not about class. It does not rely on what you are like, it only matters if you can do the job. Stowe gives you confidence about talking to all people.

Can you remember any particularly amusing experience from your time at Stowe?

Famously someone drilled a hole in King George and filled him with water so he peed for three weeks. Someone drove a Mini into the school chapel up the steps. That was cool! I was beaten after the last line of 'Hamlet' in which Rodney Coiteier played the title role. He is now a principle at LAMDA. I was Gertrude. We were caught drinking. Rodney was expelled I think and I was beaten by Drayson because he thought I was too young to be expelled.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Bronze group assessment walk – our story.

So once again we started off our D of E trip on a wonderful sunny day, with not a cloud in the sky. Was it to last? No.

On the tremendously exiting bus journey up it got cloudier and cloudier; a picture of what the walk later on in the day would be. We stopped off in a service station in a random place up north, stocked up our energy levels, (apart from Freddie who stocked up on packets of Pro Plus), and departed full of junk food and sweets. We, from then on, had a rather eventful bus journey of eating, drinking, and reading magazines... Oh and not forgetting getting stuck on a bridge which was probably built to take a horse and cart, not a bus with one inch either side to spare!

After reversing one mile up the lane to escape the bridge, whilst meeting lots of cars on the way, we found a new destination where we could start our walk. If my memory serves me right we ended up starting up outside the Blue John caves. Unfortunately that was the closest we got to having a look at the caves as we set off in the opposite direction.

So, bellies full, and minds focused, we set off up towards the first hill, it turned out that Mrs Sandow had chosen the tallest hill in the area as our first, thank you?!

Half way up we stopped, regretting that we had eaten so much, and wondering why we were so out of breath, apart from Freddie who was by then at the top of the hill, still raving to go. His burst of energy turned out to be caused by the whole pack of Pro Plus which successfully he managed to take just before we started walking.

We at last made it up to the top of the hill, and there our two bronze groups parted to the sounds of Edmund exclaiming 'oh look at the view, isn't it wonderful?'

Then with the wind in our hair my group and I set off down the hill, with Mr. P keeping close behind us. From then on we kept up the conversation, and checked once in a while whether we were going in the correct direction.

After the flurry of complaints from Alistair that he was hungry, we stopped for lunch, and then soon after it started to rain. It continued to do so on and off until we got to the camp where we spent the night.

We had fun playing havoc with the tents as the wind was really quite strong, and the tents had intent – determined intent – to run off with the wind. We then proceeded to cook our evening meals of Cup-a-Soup, and Pasta Taste Breaks (which both ended up tasting suspiciously of meths) and then fruit cake for pudding. We then spent the evening playing cards, talking, placing bets on when the gold group were going to get back from their walk, and generally fooling about with a football. Also it turned out that Freddie was by that time feeling pretty rough as he had practically ran all the way because of the energy given to him by the Pro Plus, and was now feeling extremely tired as that was probably the most exercise he had done since prep school. It then rained all night.

The next morning I opened my tent to the spectacular view of a lake, blue sky and the sun shining. It was to be a perfect day.

We set off from camp at 9:00 and a few minutes later we had to stop. We had an injured person on our hands. Alistair had fallen over and got a gash on his forehead. There was so much first aid going on that I could have sworn we were at the scene of a pile up on the M1, but no, poor Alistair was crowded with antiseptic wipes, Savalon Dry, bandages, plasters, sellotape and Paracetamol, I think we were a little too keen. After asking Alistair how many fingers we were holding up and what his name was we set off to meet Mr. P. and Mr. Young, and proudly tell them about our masterful first aid and show off the results.

By the time we came to have lunch the sun was still shining. We had climbed the biggest hill and stopped for Hugh to go to the loo about 15 times. We settled down in a hole in the side of the hill and sat admiring the view and also our hard walking. We passed the time wondering where the other bronze group was and wondering whether the gold group did actually make it back the night before as we didn't see them in the morning either.

We finished the walk in true stoic style, by walking along singing the national anthems Jerusalem, I Vow to Thee my Country, and God save the Queen. It was a triumphant end to a triumphant walk, and on the coach journey back all there was, was quiet.

CHRISTIAN COOK & FREDERICK HESKETH

GOLD D OF E EXPEDITION IN THE CAIRNGORMS

Day 1 (Sunday):

A party of about 40 of us set off from Stowe by coach at 8.30 am and arrived at Blair Athol at around 6.00 pm. We all had our last good meal at Blair Athol Arms Hotel before setting off for our 5 mile walk with very heavy rucksacks to base camp at Cuiltemhuc. The scenery was magnificent, initially through a beautiful wood along a river past Blair Athol Castle. Fortunately the weather was fine until it started to drizzle when we got to base camp at around 9.00 pm and had to assemble our 3 man tent.

Day 2 (Monday):

After cooking our breakfast, which was provided, all Silver and Gold groups had different jobs to do around the bothy for the morning. Our group was asked to go to a nearby wood and chop up logs for the fire used by the staff! Luckily it didn't rain but of course we were covered in midges which bit us mercilessly. After lunch all groups did navigation skills around base camp for the afternoon. This involved finding three letters, which were placed randomly. All groups were given the three 6 number grid references and set off in our own groups to navigate to find these in any order. Our group was successful in doing this and got back to base camp as it was starting to rain. We had an early night after supper in order to get up very early the next morning.

Day 3 (Tuesday):

The three Gold groups got up at around 5.00am to set off at 6.00am to get the bus at the House of Bruar Shopping Centre. This was almost directly south from base camp about 4 miles along a track. We got to the bus and were driven for about 2 hours where the groups debussed fairly near to each other. Our group was dropped off at the Mountain Rescue Post 1km East from Loch Morlich, fairly near Aviemore. The 5 of us, Milka, Katie, Rufus, Fred and myself set off at about 10.30 am on a sunny day. The first part was not too difficult, walking along a track until we had to leave it to walk along the side a stream for miles through a valley. This we all found very tough walking, as we had to follow a very narrow and boggy path which in places was non-existent. We eventually got to the end of the valley, reaching what we all agreed at the end of the walk as being one of the most beautiful areas of scenery we saw. It was a ribbon lake (Loch Avon) in a U-shaped valley, which we skirted. We reached the end of the Loch where there were some wonderful sandy beaches. We stopped here for a bit before attempting to climb a very steep high mountain. It took us a bit of time to get to the top, but somehow we made it.

One problem we encountered, was that our group had never been together before and we soon found that the two girls were much slower walkers than us boys. We let the 2 girls walk in front to ensure they didn't get left behind.

We carried on along the top of the mountain where it started to tip down with rain and it continued raining during our descent to our campsite. Unfortunately having set up camp on an ideal site close to a bothy and having started to cook our meal we were instructed to move further than 100 metres from the bothy. Because other ground was marshy the only other place we could camp was on lumpy heather. We were not best pleased and morale at that point was exceedingly low! We certainly were not comfortable that night and afterwards I think we all thought that day had been the toughest.

Day 4 (Wednesday):

Today we set off fairly early again (around 8.00 am) along a path for quite a way. During the morning we had frequent showers as we walked beside a river. When the river passed through a wood the scenery was fantastic. A little further on we had difficulty trying to cross the river. We spent a long time trying to find a suitable crossing point where the river was slow running and shallow. We ended up getting our boots rather wet but my walking stick proved most useful. The next section of the walk seemed to go on forever near the river with not much of a track. We finally reached the "White Bridge" near our campsite where we met our assessors for the first time. We also encountered an interesting person who was bicycling and camping. As we were approaching the campsite the assessors warned us that we were likely to have problems crossing the river there, which we certainly did. We achieved it by taking our shoes and socks off and very carefully wading through which wasn't as easy as we thought it would be, as the stones were very slippery and it was exceedingly difficult to balance with our heavy rucksacks on.

Day 5 (Thursday):

We decided to have a bit of a lie in this morning as it was the shortest day and it wasn't a race so we set off at around 11.00 am. We walked along a small narrow path for a quite a way and our feet suffered when walking along the steep sided V-shaped valley at an angle. At the end of the valley at a metal suspension bridge, used we were told when filming "Lord of the Rings", Fred's alertness prevented us from making a map reading error. We then had to climb a very steep hill overlooking the amazing waterfalls of Tarf. We all then had to do some diffi-

cult navigation, as there wasn't much of a path to follow and we walked through a lot of thick heather. We found some sheep trails, which made life easier. We soon got to another wide river which again was difficult to cross but with good teamwork we crossed safely. Our blisters by now were exceedingly painful. We then had to walk a few kilometres further over marshy land to our campsite near a bothy. We were all very relieved to get there. We finished the walk sooner than on previous days, as the route was shorter. We decided to have an early night in preparation for the final day.

Day 6 (Friday):

We intended to set off early today, as it was the longest leg of the route. The 3 boys got up at 5.00am intending to leave at 6.00am but the girls weren't ready to go until 7.30am and we got very cold and annoyed waiting for them. It was a very hard walk starting with a steep climb up a very high mountain followed by peat bogs and more steep climbing. We slightly went off course whilst climbing a mountain but managed to navigate back to our route, which was a bit of a deviation. At the top of the mountain we had amazing views as it was a clear day and we could see for miles around us. We then had a fairly steep descent all the way down to reach

the river. I found it more painful going down hill than up. Once we reached the river we walked along beside it on a track for a long way passing a rifle range and through woods. We eventually got near Blair Athol Castle and on this occasion had to go on a path on the other side of the river from the one we took on our first day. In the heat of the day we left that track and went cross country back up and down hills until we finally reached base camp. By this time we were exhausted and it was very painful to walk with so many blisters, but we were all hugely relieved and proud of ourselves to have completed the walk. It was wonderful to have a cup of tea and then a good meal.

Day 7 (Saturday):

We got up at 5.00am to set off at 6.00am to walk back with our rucksacks along the usual track to Blair Athol Arms Hotel to have a delicious proper cooked breakfast. We then got onto the coach at 10.30am to head back to civilisation and Stowe.

I am sure that the memories will never leave us. It has certainly been an experience never to forget and never to repeat!

THOMAS GREENAWAY

CCF ADVENTURE TRAINING CAMP

Last summer saw the expeditions of many areas of the school; including CCF, D of E, Etc. I was invited by Ray Dawson to go on one of the many CCF camps to go to the Lake District. I wasn't invited as a regular schoolboy, I was invited as an acting member of staff.

The whole camp was very relaxed as a whole in that it was very non-military, which was strange for a CCF camp! However, this didn't stop early morning wake ups at seven or earlier for the cooks! Everybody took turns to cook breakfast, lunch and dinner, meaning that people could add their own personal touch to the food. This meant that some meals were better than others!

Everybody managed to settle into their roles quickly, and, despite some bad weather, everybody managed to put a brave face on and there was a generally good atmosphere. There were competitions throughout the week which allowed people to get to know each other.

Everyday was packed with at least two activities, and if we got bored, there were footballs, tennis balls and a volleyball court!

The activities included:

1. Rock climbing/ absailing
2. Mountain biking
3. Boat trip
4. Canoeing/ sailing

There were four groups between all of us who were there, this meant inter team competitions! These included:

1. Tug of War
2. Darts
3. Soccer
4. Mountain Biking
5. Water Race
6. Skit Night (Comedy)

Points were given for each competition and the group with the most points at the end of the week were awarded medals! The whole week was thoroughly enjoyable and is highly recommendable to anyone who feels like going!

MARK LEECH

Sport

ATHLETICS

A short but busy and ultimately very successful term

Under the inspired captaincy of Ollie Tree and his ever dependable lieutenant Chi Kavindele, who clearly looks forward to the summer term like no other, the athletics team had some great successes.

4th overall at the Cholmeley shield, behind Epsom, Eton and Highgate, is our best ever performance in this long running event.

The juniors for their part also reached the South-East regional final of the ESAA cup falling just one match short of making the national final and managed an excellent 4th place overall in the London Trophy meeting, behind Highgate, QE Barnet and Champion.

We managed clean sweeps, winning every single match at all ages against Wellington, Oundle, Pangbourne, Forest, Bedford, Haileybury, Radley, Bedford Modern, St Pauls, Kings Worcester, Malvern, Dean Close and Hereford Cathedral School.

The best individual performances came in the youngest age group. Tristan Hirst (1.69m High Jump) and Ed Dabney (12.44m Shot Putt). Both set new school records for their events and have both been selected for the English Schools at the Don Valley Stadium Sheffield.

But the athletics team is made up far more by those willing to help out and fill in the gaps in the team wherever needed and we cannot forget Richard O'Sullivan who completed a decathlon of his own at Eton,

taking part in no less than 10 separate events.

But for those who know just how tough it is Jeffery Yip's willingness to suffer the pain of running the hardest athletic event, a steeplechase, just to get the team a few precious extra points will long be remembered (particularly when we need someone to fill in again next year !!)

AMcD

BADMINTON

The Badminton season of 2002 was again a mixed bag of outstanding victories and a few painful defeats (some of those caused by old rivals). The appointed Captain Max Green (Cobham) was unable to fulfil his role as leader due to an injury sustained before the first match of the season.

His position was ably filled by JJ Herabutya, (L6 Walpole). JJ was able to do a sterling job as Captain because the rest of the boys team worked in such a co-operative and sportsmanlike way at all times.

There were a number of fine wins against Oakham and Bloxham. The matches against Rugby resulted in a draw. Sadly, Abingdon again defeated our Senior A and B teams. However, the 1st pair of the A team, JJ and his partner Caspar Sheppard won one of their three sets and the 1st pair of the E team, Anosh Neterwala and Fred Raikes won two of their three sets. This is an excellent improvement and there is hope on the horizon for an even greater attack next season.

The Colts only had a couple of matches this season, one win and

one loss. However, their standard of play has greatly improved due to the coaching they have had from our professional this term. They are keen to get back onto the courts next winter and learn more.

The Girls A and B teams were ably led by Isabelle Katthagen who also took the team through a challenging season. Although they only won 2 of the 6 matches played, their team skills were definitely improving.

The new L6 girls were very keen and next season they will definitely be a force to be reckoned with as they again clash with Uppingham and Rugby.

The term ended with an excellent evening at the Sports' Awards Dinner. Many team members both L6 and U6 received their Colours for their commitment to this sport over the seasons.

Thanks to the boys and girls of Stowe for their interest and support in making this season so enjoyable. Thanks also to GS and WFH who helped both with training sessions and taking matches on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

KMM

CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

The first match of the year was the West of England Schools Championship, held at Hereford and Worcester Shooting Ground where a number of our B Team were shooting in their first ever competition. Conditions were challenging and strong winds hampered our best efforts on a number of stands. The A Team emerged with a total score of 158 out of a possible 250, the B Team with 126 over the same course. Stuart Randall was the A Team's individual High Gun with a score of 38 out of 50, a total that earned him an award for the third best individual performance of the entire competition. Mark Harris proved strongest in the B team with a score of 29. Stowe finished a

narrow second to Warwick School and managed to secure the runner up position after a tense shoot off between Stuart Randall and Cheltenham School's High Gun.

On Sunday 9th March, Stowe sent two teams and an individual to the Warwick Challenge at Wedgcock Shooting Ground. Once again conditions were blustery but Stowe shot well and finished with totals of 172 and 131 for the A and B Teams respectively. Harry Hay led the A's with 40 kills out of a possible

50, Mark Harris the B's with 36. This score wasn't quite sufficient to beat Warwick School on their home ground but nevertheless Stowe received the Chichester Tray as runners up. Sophia Pearson shot extremely well and won the Girls' High Gun award with a score of 33.

Having twice finished second in their only competitions of the year so far, the Stoics approached the English Sporting Championships at Riseley with great determination to win. Juggling revision and exam

pressure, the team journeyed to Riseley in Bedfordshire twice in one week to practice at the ground before the Championship itself. On Sunday 11th May both A and B teams shot very well indeed but were inched out of trophy winning places by the slenderest of margins. The A Team finished 6th out of 19 teams, the B Team 4th of twelve. Charlie Gardner, who had shot consistently well throughout the year, was Stowe's High Gun with 41 kills out of a possible 50. Ben Hussein

CRICKET

Junior Colts A

The side battled hard throughout the season against very strong opposition. The first game against Uppingham produced an impressive victory and spirited performances followed against Abingdon, Radley and Rugby before the side lost its way rather. The season culminated in an exciting contest against a talented St. Edwards Oxford side. Stowe reached 135-8 with a typically gritty 42 from Sam Krajnyk and a cavalier 32 not out from Charlie Margesson. St. Edwards were soon in trouble at 90-5 but a determined knock from their opener saw them reach their target with one ball to spare. This said much about the season as a whole - often in the driving seat but ultimately losing at the last hurdle. My thanks go to Charlie Walker - who captained the side enthusiastically for most of the season- and to the rest of the team.

Results summary:

played 7, won 1, drew 1, lost 5

Squad: Walker, Hinds, Hoy, Krajnyk, Thacker, Banks, Margesson, Worssam, Ellwood, Chandler, Gilbert, Fenton, Forsgate, Holden, Knight.

PMB

Yearlings A

P 10, W4, D3, L3

Captain: Rory Lyon

What was pleasant was having a

group of sixteen or so boys capable of playing for the As and wanting to. Equally attractive was having the balance between the cultured talent of Rory Lyon, the Captain, the aggression of George Coote and Jack Fillery, the quiet keenness of many others and the very loud keenness of Adam Forsdike.

The season started with an impressive 47 run win against Uppingham with Coote's 53 and Fillery's 4 for 5 decisive factors along with an impressive spell of leg-spin from Kit Arkwright. A weakened side faced Abingdon the following Saturday and failed to capitalise on a good score (Forsdike 79) with only Coote (4 for 31) managing to bowl straight. Radley was another draw, this time with a tense finish in prospect being ruined by the rain. Fillery and Nick Anstee put on 70 for the 7th wicket and three wickets from Lyon put us in a good position but a dropped catch allowed Radley to escape - a theme of the season. That said, the Radley game was memorable for one of the great all-time catches, a blinding reaction from Jack Fillery at short extra-cover.

Probably the best game of the regular season came against Oundle, proof positive that a draw can be very exciting. Having only scored 136 for 6 (Forsdike 45), Oundle were favourites but a very tight bowling performance, especially from Alex Trotter, saw them in

trouble only to escape at 120 for 7. With so many draws, however, it was decided to play overs games for the rest of the season.

Not a good idea. School exams might be an excuse for tiredness but nothing can really explain a dire performance against a good MCS side. After a solid Stowe start in the field, they hit themselves out of a rut and got away to 194 for 6 (Lyon 3 for 15). Our 56 all out is better glossed over, except for a mention of a solid innings from Giles Lucas, promoted from the Cs to the Bs and now to the As number 6.

And to the A team opener. Lucas and Lyon finally gave us a solid start against Bedford, putting on 53. That gave the foundation to a good total with a quick 53 from Forsdike taking us to an encouraging 195 for 9. Bedford never got going and although they eventually reached 159 all out, they were never in with a shout. A good win.

Followed by another. This time, against a poor St Edwards' side, the openers put on 174! Lucas hit a solid 77, a testimony to effort and was only overshadowed by a beautiful 102 not out from Rory Lyon, the only Stowe centurion this Summer. 231 for 4 in 35 overs was followed by the opposition being skittled for 50 with Fillery taking 4 for 17. MCS was banished from the memory.

JSM

and Oliver Carr topped the B Team with 38 kills each.

It was tremendous to enjoy the support of so many parents at the national championships.

Throughout the year the Stoics competed with enthusiasm, spirit and purpose. Colours were awarded to Harry Egerton, Josh Myerson and Stuart Randall for demonstrating great character and skill in their performances for the school.

GRMF



Clay Pigeon Shooters, left to right: Harry Egerton, Harry Hay, Stuart Randall, Ru Lynch, Andrew Atherton, Ben Hussein, Tim Karssiens, Josh Myerson, James O'Donnell and Charlie Beldam (seated)

HOCKEY

1st XI

Back row: BJLS, ET Holmes, CEF Leet-Cook, RF Coughlan, NF Forrester, AGF Leon, FOA Kirchner

Front row: WT Brann, HTC Kirchner, JASW Rainton, DFR Ashby, HGD Reid, EH Prince, JA Whaley

Photo by R & H Chapman



HOCKEY

1st XI

The 1st XI have not achieved the results we had hoped for at the beginning of the season. It has been a frustrating term of missed opportunities. Many of the performances have been excellent, particularly against the strongest sides, but we lacked the confidence in front of goal to make the most of excellent build up play.

We have conceded far fewer goals this year. Henry Reid has developed hugely and now enjoys being on the ball. Henry Kirchner was a towering athletic presence who allied a vast work rate to an improved tactical approach. Archie Leon now sometimes uses the front of his stick and always reads the game beautifully. Ryan Coughlan, under Mr. Aird's careful eye, has built on his natural reflexes and commands his zone in a much more authoritarian manner.

Our midfield have shown they can match anyone when they get going. Silky skills from Prince and Brann in the middle of the park combined with enormous endeavor from Leet-Cook, Whaley and Holmes have meant that we were never overrun.

Up front the terrifying pace of Johnny Rainton always created chances. David Ashby led by example. He is a captain who has exerted influence over his team mates and been prepared to listen, both to them and me. Technically, like the whole team, he has come on hugely; first touch, striking, movement off the ball are far better understood and practised.

The side have worked hard in training (I have not always been able to say that of other sides), the level of hockey they are capable of playing has risen to a much higher plane. As important is the attitude they have displayed. They have always been great fun to spend time with and have remained consistently pos-

itive but would pick up a shower of yellow cards. As their technical skills have improved so has the self-discipline.

These players have laid the foundations for a more successful future. We are definitely moving forwards and the efforts of the guys that are leaving will have made a significant impact on the younger players that will shoulder the weight of an even greater expectation next year.

BJS

Junior Colts A

The Junior Colts have had a successful but short hockey season. The season started with a 2-2 draw at home to Radley in which Henry Worssam continued his goal scoring ways from last season and netted two excellent goals from the right. After a physical mid week and disappointing defeat at Roade, the team was back on form and at home for the first of two ties against Bloxham. Stowe had much for the first half possession but went into the half time break at 0-0. In the second half the chances taken by Tett and Worssam saw Stowe take their first victory of the season. Unfortunately the flu outbreak hit the team hard and a depleted team were defeated 5-0 away to a strong St Edwards side. As the sick list grew the A team fixture against Abingdon had to be cancelled and half term could not have come sooner. After the mid-term break and some recuperation, the team was back to full strength for the second half of the season. Excellent defending from Broomfield and Stevenson paved the way for a 1-1 draw at home to Rugby and saw Gilbert on target from a well-worked corner routine. When Stowe took on Shiplake away there was a contrast in styles. Stowe played some great passing hockey but in the first half failed to capitalise on numerous chances. The more direct approach from Shiplake

enabled them to take the lead early in the second half but Stowe reacted well and equalised almost immediately. Hoy was on form in midfield and continued pressure and possession lead to Stowe taking the lead through Holden. Unfortunately they were unable to hold on to their lead and Shiplake got a late equaliser leaving Stowe unlucky not to come away with a victory. The inability to convert pressure into goals continued when Stowe travelled to MCS Oxford and despite some excellent performances from Charlie Walker and Tom Blain at the back, Stowe paid the price for missed chances in the first half and although the season's top goal scorer, Worssam, was again on target in the second half they once again came away with a 1-1 draw. The final game of the season was the return leg of the Bloxham fixture. This was definitely Stowe's best performance of the season, the impressive midfield trio of Tett, Holden and Howe cut through the Bloxham defence to set up Josh Chandler for 2 goals either side of half time. Forsgate returning to fitness was impressive in goal, making essential and testing saves in both halves. Margesson was on form and threatening at right striker and Holden soon added a third. Stowe looked confident in their well-deserved 3-0 victory. The progress throughout the season has been excellent and special praise must be given to Max Stevenson for his professional and committed leadership as Captain.

TLH

Junior Colts B

The Junior Colts B were keen hockey players that were ready to try their best in all their games and work hard for their position in the team. The season started with a loss against Radley 1-0, despite this it was a learning experience. Our next game was at Bloxham, winning 3-0

with two fantastic goals by Josh Chandler, our top scorer and one by James Bradshaw. James made a huge effort throughout the season and achieved great hockey skills. Later in the season and after some games were cancelled, we lost at Stowe in a rainy and cold day, against Rugby. The team played well anyway and Josh Chandler managed to score one goal. This encouraged the players and made them get ready for their next encounter on grass at Stowe against Shiplake. We won 6-0 with a huge team effort and some excellent passing from the midfield. Harry Banks and Josh Chandler scored twice, the other two goals were scored by Oskar Gerland and Gavin Forsgate. Harry was our strongest player. Oskar was an example of responsibility and commitment and one of the best players in terms of strategy. The season ended with a win at home against MCS Oxford 2-1 with a goal from Josh Chandler and another from George Field.

It was a challenge for the team to have different levels of hockey players in the field, some came from the first team and others from recreational hockey. It was a pleasure coaching the Junior Colts B and even though we had some better moments than others, they achieved a lot and respected each other as team mates and friends. The captain, Hugh Viney, was an outstanding leader and was crucial for the discipline and the perseverance of the team.

FRANCES KOUYOUMDJIAN

Yearlings B

The Yearlings are a very promising group of hockey players and I was blessed this season with the task of selecting a squad from at least twenty capable players. The circuit is a tough one and many of the players were new to the game – despite this some excellent results were achieved, due in no uncertain terms to the positive attitude of the players.

The campaign started with a

thrilling 3-2 victory over Loughborough. Chris Price quickly showed himself to be a rock solid goalkeeper, who would've represented the A's in any other season, whilst Mathew Payne and Duke Yuvachasuskul played so well (the latter scoring a spectacular 2 goals) that they were immediately promoted to the A's. The lead changed hands three times with the winder being scored four minutes from time.

A 2-0 defeat followed against a strong Oundle side and the low point of the season was below par 2-1 loss at Stamford. However, an excellent goal was scored by Naz Imam and Giles Lucas came close on at least 2 occasions. Against Mill Hill in the next fixture, though, Charlie Empson and James Richardson secured a 2-1 victory and the team then narrowly lost in the replay with Oundle. The season culminated in a fast flowing match against Uppingham with Tristan Hirst, a free transfer from the A's, scoring an equaliser in an exciting 1-1 draw.

My thanks go to Louis Steyn for his enthusiastic captaincy and the remainder of the squad who supported throughout: Steyn, Price, Prince, Richardson, Lucas, Williams, Reeve, Empson, Anstee, Hirst, Strivens, Ohiaeri, Imam, Sachs, Thuillier, Wheeler, Maitland-Walker, Hardie, Fillery, Payne, McInnes-Skinner, Nettlefold.

Record:

Played 6, Won 2, Drawn 1, Lost 3.

Goals for: 7, Against: 8

PMB

Yearlings C

This year the C squad had a very successful season, winning 3 of their first 4 matches convincingly. In particular the match against Stamford involved Hamish Hardie scoring a hat-trick with the final score being 8-0. This led to many key players being promoted to the B squad: we particularly missed Ben Reeve and Josh Wheeler.

Adam Forsdike was exceptional

in goal, saving many attempts and he was able to direct his backs with good effect into helping him produce a highly impenetrable goal.

In defence Ben Bannister kept a cool head at all times and could always be relied upon to clear the ball. In midfield the Captain Ben Reeve was outstanding, his skill at being able to read the game enabled him to be in the right place all the time. Bob Keegan took over as Captain in Ben's absence in the later part of the season. He was always enthusiastic and never gave up, running himself into the ground to prevent the opposition from regaining possession. Jack Fillery's skill improved quickly and soon he became one of the most consistent players of the squad. He scored some spectacular goals, in particular against Uppingham where we narrowly lost 2-1. Ned Boyd and Rollo Pearson had some good runs up the wing, driving into the D culminating in either a shot on goal or a cross.

Towards the end of the season Alex Sainsbury-Bow and Tim Deacon were promoted to the C squad from the D's due to excellent performances against Oundle. Alex was given the award for the most improved player at the end of the season. Many players will be vying for a place in the Junior Colts B squad next season.

Coaches KJS and LMC were delighted by the commitment and motivation displayed throughout the season. In particular when the C squad played the B's, beating them 2-0. A testament to their determination.

LMC

Yearlings D

A fun season was had by all. Despite being enthusiastic the squad failed to win any of their matches. Notable improvement throughout the season was made by Harry Duncombe, Harry Watson and Oli Travers. Good Luck next season.

KJS + LMC



James Finch-Knightley tackles, Richard Sullivan's ready to take the ball

Jason Phipps feeds the ball to Matt Gracie

Cameron

RUGBY

1st XV

This season's 1st XV was the strongest and most successful in the 5 years I have been involved with at Stowe. They only lost 4 of their regular fixtures and achieved a place in the last 16 of the Daily Mail Cup.

The campaign commenced with a pre season training camp where we played Bedford Rugby Club, Worcester Rugby Club and Berkhamstead School, winning all 3 fixtures. This gave the squad a great deal of confidence going into our main programme but unfortunately cost us the presence of Ed Baker for the remainder of the season with knee ligament damage.

It came as a shock to the team when we went down 10-7 away to Pangbourne in the first game. What we were unaware of at the time, however, was that it would provide added stimulus for the return match later in the Daily Mail Cup.

After that initial setback the side soon settled down to run up 6

straight wins on the trot including two DMC matches one of which being against our local rivals RLS. During this period the side developed a style of rugby that was based upon evasion and support and that was pleasing to the eye. It was not surprising that the back three accounted for 19 of the 40 tries scored pre the Christmas break. The fact that Ollie Tree scored 10 of them underlined his electric pace and ability to take on and beat defenders, a skill he has developed in his five years at Stowe.

During this period Matt Gracie, one of three ever present, played his most free flowing and natural rugby. He has been a fine example to his team mates with respect to dedication and has supported his skipper and coaches to the hilt. He created space for his backline to play in and flourish. Nick Forrester benefited from this and showed glimpses of vision and skill, which we hope will mature to spearhead next seasons back play. Ed Prince and Jason Phipps shared the scrum half role and each brought a different dimen-

sion to it.

Another ever present was Will Gallimore, who benefited from those playing in front of him. His capacity for outrageous attacking play was not always appreciated by everyone but often through good fortune he prevailed. Rob Colvin flourished out on the other wing demonstrating a rare appetite for tackling one, two and sometimes three attackers in the same passage of play.

If anything the backs were short of a solid, ball handling inside centre who could have given us another dimension. Unfortunately we lost the services of Nick Pearce and eventually Phil Hitner rose to the challenge. He perhaps needed more experience in the centre but one will never forget his huge contribution to the DMC victory over Pangbourne.

For the backs to play well they must have a platform to play off and this year we had a pack that had strength and pace, different boys bringing one or more of those qualities to the forwards.

The squad was well blessed for

Richard O'Sullivan in the lineout

Matt Gracie feeds Jamie Wemyss





Brown puts in a big tackle



Neil Holder

front row forwards this year. Ben Forbes, Harry Scarffe, Chi Kavindele, Rob Habib, Ju Manomaiphan, Tom Probert and Jason Phipps all played an enormous part in the success of this season. Chi and Harry became first choice props providing a formidable presence in the scrum and lineout. Chi eventually went on to represent the South West Division. Ju regained his first team place this year through sheer hard work and determination but he was too old to play in the DMC where Jason reverted back to hooker having played some of the season at scrum half, a position he grew into and helped develop his all round game.

In the second row, Harry Cobb and Cameron Brown became regulars offering a great deal of pace to the pack, unfortunately Cameron's shoulder injury prevented him completing the season.

The back row had a fine blend of ball winners both at set piece and in loose play. Will Fox was a dog of a blind side doing much unseen work. Richard O'Sullivan joined us in

September having represented England at U16 level and his lineout presence provided much of the platform for others to work off. He played at No 8 for the school and this has brought another dimension to his game allowing him to challenge for a place in this year's England U18 squad. Jamie Ryde challenged all season for a position in the backrow and was an able replacement along with Rupert Lynch from the fifth form who promises much.

The back row nor the team would have been complete without the Captain Neil Holder. He came to Stowe 2 years ago and has flourished both on and off the field. What he has done for Stowe rugby in those two short years is immeasurable. He is a hard, honest, uncompromising individual who has the ability to steal opposition ball at important times. If I were to criticise his rugby he needs to improve his aerobic fitness in order to achieve more. He is revered through out the school not just by the rugby fraternity but anyone who has cause to rub shoulders

with him. His leadership has been first class creating an atmosphere in which all are welcome and all have a common cause. Neil Holder is a shining example of an individual making the most of an opportunity and of Stowe, well done lad.

The normal season reached a high with the return game in the DMC against Pangbourne. The side eventually ran out 22-7 winners and laid the ghost of the early season defeat. It was one of those great occasions, where the whole school played a part, 15 lads on the field and everyone else screaming their heads off on the sidelines, drums, banners face paint, the lot. After that it was understandable that the boys found it difficult to raise themselves for Radley on the Saturday and eventually lost to their arch rival.

At the start of the season the squad had set itself a target to be still playing DMC rugby after Christmas and by reaching the last 16 of the competition they had done just that. As a reward we drew St Peters School, Gloucester, at home. It was another day when the whole school

Scrum down



Scrum collapses



did itself proud. Off the field the massed ranks assembled again to cheer on their heroes. On the field the heroes did not let them down. Against formidable opposition and the wind the defence exhibited was first class restricting St Peters to a 10-0 half time lead. Within five minutes of the restart Nick Forrester had reduced the arrears to 10-5 and for the next twenty-five minutes the game flowed between the two 22's. With five minutes to go Ryan Lamb the England schools fly half extended the lead to 15-5, but in the dying moments of normal time Neil Holder scored a try under the posts and Matt Gracie converted to set up a grand finale. It is testimony to the team that had passes gone to hand in injury time Stowe would have staged a remarkable comeback, it was not to be. It was an incredible game of school boy rugby.

It was a pleasure coaching this group of lads and an enormous thank you must be expressed to Craig Sutton and Barney Durrant who gave up much time and effort to the cause. They have spent the last 3 years with me working with the senior squads and their dedication enthusiasm and knowledge has been much appreciated. In order to develop a continuum throughout the school I have asked them to take on new responsibilities within rugby at Stowe working with the Colts and Junior Colts respectively.

Whilst the 1st XV season ended there this group formed the bulk of the development XV who enjoyed an undefeated season. They also went on to have a superb 7's season winning the Solihull Tournament and runners up to Cheltenham in the Berkshire competition.

They fulfilled much of what we expected, perhaps the only blemish on their copy book was a hiccup in the National 7's at Rosslyn Park. As the draw unfolded and the way they were playing I will often think back to what might have been had we not blown the very first game on our arrival.

The beauty of the game and of sport in general is that the dream can

become reality, this is the legacy that this squad leaves with its successors.

AH

3rd XV

For the uninitiated (and that is just about everybody) the Hittites are technically the third fifteen, but given the fact that not even Virgin Trains have a third class, we decided that the Hittites (an Old Testament tribe of hairy marauders) was a far better name for what is one of the few surviving bastions of Gentleman Players. Now if my memory serves me correctly, then we had a fabulous season hall-marked by amazing achievements on and off the field of play. Jamie Cummings captained the team and proved to be a fair match for his opposite number, winning the lion's share of the tosses. Charlie Cavill was remarkable – not once did he have the bad manners to tackle any of the opposition if his hair was not quite right. Young Zac Jordan had a splendid season, usually at the bottom of a pile of sweaty bodies from which he would emerge invariably beaming from ear to ear as though he really was enjoying himself. The mercurial Ganjou, a convert from footie with long flowing golden locks to prove it, managed to shave his chin towards the end of his time with us whilst Charlie Squire huffed and puffed heroically in the centre. His usual partner, Seb Rickard, enjoyed running with the ball and he even managed to pass the ball – once! Andy Parsons at full back provided the team with a reliable final line of defence, and he was one of the Temple quartet who gave blood for the team – Josh Cole, a reliable back row forward, and Alex Arkell and Richard Robinson who seemed to vie with each other for the privilege of being a half-time sub. The front row comprised the ever demure Goose Nohl-Oser who grunted magnificently alongside his fellow prop, Hugo Richards, who managed to complete at least one game without suffering a near fatal injury – the surprisingly nice Savage (Jamie) was often his replacement. Benji

Seebohm, given his house of origin, brought a surprising modicum of dignity to proceedings, as did Harry Hay when he lent his considerable persona to the Hittites' cause. The pair with the pleasant task of sticking their arms between the thighs of the props were usually the charming Will Consett, and Dema Pestov, a cheerful Soviet Stork of a lock-forward who had the terrifying job of being raised metres off the ground during line-outs. Graeme Collins patrolled the wing from time to time, and Will Tuely played from the back row but rather disappointingly, harbours ambitions of relegation to the 2nd XV – astounding! Several others also had occasional outings for the Hittites, and they are to be thanked.

So what of this triumphant season? Memory can be selectively fickle and so we will rejoice at trouncings of Pangbourne, forget trips to Bedford, and simply change the result against Radley which we did deserve to win (honest!) and so for the record, how about 19-14 to us. Yes, that'll do! Roll on next season.

RBJ

Development XV

As is now customary, those boys not wishing to play hockey in the spring term can opt to continue with their rugby training along a more 'development' route. We continue to train for three afternoon's a week and have regular matches. The senior pupils are encouraged to help those less experienced than themselves and have the opportunity to lead coaching sessions.

There were 25 boys in the squad, ranging from 1st XV to U16 B level. I was particularly fortunate to have pupils with real leadership qualities this year, so players such as Neil Holder, Mat Gracie, Will Gallimore and Richard O'Sullivan were able to take control at various times. Their mature and professional attitude to rugby deserves real credit. They engendered a very positive yet supportive atmosphere and we went on to have a very successful 6 weeks

winning all the matches we played.

Our first victory came away at Solihull. We moved Neil Holder from his customary role at flanker to inside centre, where he created many opportunities which were clinically finished off by the speed merchants, Ollie Tree, Will Gallimore and a new name for the future, Olly Collins.

We followed this encouraging result with further victories against Bablake, Northampton SFB, Wellingborough and Warwick..

With many of the last term's regular first XV playing throughout the term, the team was very strong. However many of the younger players also benefited tremendously from the input of the seniors and can approach the autumn season with real confidence. A very enjoyable and successful season.

RCS

Senior Sevens

Played – 14, Won – 10, Drawn – 1, Lost – 3

Following the unbeaten Development season, our attention moved to the ever popular Sevens tournaments for the final 4 weeks of term.

We were confident of a fair side, with proven specialists such as Neil Holder, Will Gallimore and Jason Phipps still available this year. As has been the case in many of the past years, certain players who we had not previously considered as sevens animals, came out of the woodwork leading to a squad of 18 in training sessions. We headed for our first tournament at Solihull keen to get some form of silverware, as we had done last year. Following a weak first game, which we managed to draw against King Edward's Camp Hill, I thought the afternoon would be rather shorter than hoped. However, dramatic improvement followed leading to convincing victories over Loughborough Grammar School and Kings College Macclesfield. Buoyed by these results and now understanding our roles better, we moved on to beat Warwick in the quarter-finals, Old Swinford Hospital (last years win-

ners) in the semi-finals, and we eventually beat Solihull in the final rounding off a thoroughly pleasing and encouraging day. Matt Gracie's fitness proved crucial and the 'new boys' to sevens such as Tom Probert, Harry Cobb and Will Fox overcame their phobia of open spaces, realising that running and passing can be quite fun! Will Gallimore proved to be our man of the tournament amassing 64 points. One tournament, one trophy!

Old Dowegians was our next focus, with a chance to show our regular rivals our abilities. Again we had a very poor start. Complacency was to blame here and we lost to Pangbourne. Down to earth with a bang! Radley and Oratory remained and we were certainly not out of it. We overcame Oratory with our more usual effective defence and confident attacking. Radley was a must win game for many reasons. We began poorly, letting in two tries early on. The players then dug deep and started to play as we had become accustomed to and ran in five tries, leaving a rather shell-shocked Radley in our wake. Bloxham had a strong young side and can never be underestimated. We overcame them in the semi-finals and went on to meet Cheltenham in the finals. They proved to be the best team we had come across this year, and the fatigue of the Solihull tournament played some part, as we struggled to find the usual gaps in attack. We were beaten three tries to one.

Rosslyn Park is the pinnacle of the season. We tailor our training towards it and were aiming for a semi-final place. The day arrived but things just did not go our way. We again started extremely poorly, we lost to Davenport 6th Form College. We were devastated. It meant we could not progress beyond our group. The next two games saw us play some excellent sevens again, beating Wellington School and KCS Wimbledon, but it was too late. A very disappointing way to end the season, especially as we later heard that many teams we had beaten in

previous tournaments did very well. It was a hard lesson.

The team proved to be the strongest we have had in the last 10 years. The victories were very much enjoyed and the work in training paid off. Next year's team will be strong again. J. Phipps, H. Cobb, N. Forrester and R. O'Sullivan all developed pleasingly. They should look forward to further strengthening our growing reputation on the Sevens Circuit.

RCS

Colts

To be a successful rugby team you need to have a number of attributes firmly in place. The team needs to love its rugby and the boys were certainly keen and enthusiastic. The team needs to be willing to train hard and train consistently hard. The boys in this respect were a delight and training was a pleasure, with the team always committed and willing to put in the effort. However the team also needs confidence and this was the one area in which the team was lacking at times. To be fair this year group does not have the greatest amount of strength in depth and unfortunately, when as frequently occurred, some of our key players were injured, this led to somewhat of a collapse in confidence, which meant that the team could not play to the best of its ability. This was understandable but a little disappointing as even without the so called 'stars' the Colts were a strong team, with many fine players and a responsive attitude to training and learning.

The pack was solid, if small, and always worked hard often against much bigger opposition. Kev Kim and Elliot Holmes led from the front showing excellent commitment and determination even when the team's backs were against the wall. Elliot especially, deserves praise having the heart of a lion and the willingness to put his body on the line for the team week in and week out. The back 5 were resourceful and flexible with many players playing a wide variety of positions as injuries

dictated. Harry Taylor deserves mention for his resilience and flexibility, he played every position in the pack except hooker at some stage during the season. The lineout was especially strong and much of our opposition, and a few of our players, did not have a clue what was going on as we threw a highly varied succession of short lineouts at them to try and make up for our lack of size and bulk.

The backs also made good progress during the season. Not being a natural team unit with no obvious fly-half in the team, they initially found it difficult to gel. Praise is due to Cheeca Farr who captained the team and played out of position all season with good grace and a willingness to throw in at the deep end against much more experienced back lines. Ollie Carr also made good progress throughout the season and for someone so small

showed himself to be very brave and committed, if a trifle annoying at times, but scrum halves are meant to be annoying, its their job.

The results on paper may not seem to make brilliant reading, but the team did make progress, worked hard and came out of the end of the season a better team with better players and better friends. When you have a tough season there are only two paths a team takes. They either disintegrate or they pull together and get through the season by working together and I am pleased to say that the latter was without doubt the case this season.

Many thanks to my fellow coaches Dan Brandt and Mark Edwards for all their efforts and to Kensa Broadhurst for being team mum.

CJAT

Junior Colts A

The A team had a somewhat unsuccessful season. They began fairly well with good victories in the first two rounds of The Daily Mail Cup. However, we suffered a third round loss against St.Edwards. The rest of the season proved to be a struggle and although individuals showed improvement, there was little signs of improvement as a team until the very end of the term.

Ali Wilmot and Charlie Walker held our scrum together as hard working props throughout the season while Miles Gilbert completed the front row trio, his stylish line out throwing was an asset as was his hooking ability, but he has a lot to learn about playing in the backline. Henry Worssam, played the early part of the season at No.8 but then went to 2nd Row where he continued to use his size to great advantage

Senior Sevens Squad



and, as he did last season, scored many of our tries. Harry Banks improved his scrummaging technique massively while his temperament, occasionally leading to a penalty, made sure our scrum was more aggressive than before.

George Field, having been promoted from the B team, proved to be a valuable pick by our coaches as flanker. The other flanker, Max Stevenson, could be given 100% for effort and 110% for tackling as the wee yet tough forward put in countless match saving tackles throughout the season. Alex Hancock came to the side as a newcomer, from somewhere down the road, and straight away showed to be a valuable asset to the team in the important back row trio, first as flanker then in the No8 position, where his handling and tackling skills came in very handy.

Ed Hoy was another newcomer from the B's and improved immensely as the season progressed developing a very good pass as a scrum half. Max Darby became a decent anchor player spending most of the season at fly half improving his kicking. Tom Fehan used both strength and pace to develop hugely as an outside centre scoring a few tries along the way. He matched very well with Hugh Viney who captained the team from the inside centre position. Our special wingers Will Blackham and Dan Calvert, who unfortunately suffered with several injuries this season, ran all over the opposition on both sides of the pitch improving their pace all the time. Sam Krajnyk provided the last line of defence at full back and if he wasn't prancing about like a ballerina was bringing down the opposition's biggest players. Josh Chandler was the our utility back showing his talents in all back positions during the season. James Gold provided great help to our developing side throughout the season in a similar role in the forward department.

The A team season should be seen as more of a development season for future teams. There were many position changes made to the

squad throughout the term as our coaches, Mr.Floyd and Mr.Tydeman, experimented with both A and B team players. This is where the team benefited as different players tried out new positions to help put together an idea of next years Colts team.

HUGH VINEY

Yearlings A

This was a season of mixed fortunes for the new intake at Stowe. They had terrific wins against Stamford, Uppingham and our local rivals Royal Latin but lost heavily to Oundle and very big Warwick side at the end of the season.

It was a bright start to the season with the team winning 4 of its first 5 matches the only blemish coming against Q E S Barnet who had even by their standards a better than average year group.

That result came in their second match but the team bounced back with a last minute winner against Uppingham who had been 10 points clear with only five minutes to go but the side rallied well and Jack Fillery, who looks to be an excellent prospect at No 8, touched down after pressure on the Uppingham fly half had caused him to hit the crossbar of his own posts as he attempted to clear his lines.

The team suffered a surprising defeat at the hands of Mill Hill away. It was typical of the sides regular habit of starting slowly but getting stronger as the games unfolded. After beating Wellingborough without really pushing themselves they had two very difficult matches to finish the season, Oundle and Warwick. The loss of Josh Wheeler, who shows great promise and Ed Dabney, a strong elusive second row forward, took their toll and in a pack that at times lacked aggression, trying to compete against bigger packs proved too much. Another member of the pack who showed an appetite for work and a degree of skill was Duncan Bennett, a much unsung hero of the forwards.

In the back line there are some boys with natural talent that encourages me for the future. At the

moment there lack of physical strength betrays their rare talents for beating people with flair. One such character that springs to mind is Rory Lyon an imp of a lad but he does have the ability to spot a gap and exploit it. Another boy of similar flair is Duke Yuvacharuskul. He, however, needs to establish a thirst and hunger for wanting to win and not settle for second best. Two other boys who really caught my eye were Nick Anstee and Tristan Hirst. The former needs to work upon his defence but he has some good core skills which should suit him well for the future. Tristan has out and out speed and should look to use this more often by looking for more work with the ball.

Finally a special thank you to George Cootes who was Captain and scrum half. He was often playing behind the weaker pack and I hope he has stored some of the lessons learned by doing so, it is not always an arm chair ride at No 9. He was always a threat at the base of scrums and loose play with a solid pass off both hands. He also has the ability to box kick well. He is, without doubt, the best footballer I have seen at Stowe at this age and while this is a rare compliment from myself he must not believe his own press. To achieve his ultimate ambition he must accept constructive criticism and work on aspects of his game and approach to it. He has similar qualities to those of a certain gentleman, called Matt Dawson, who learnt quickly that it is better to be cheeky and not arrogant as a scrum half.

AH

Yearlings B

The Yearlings B's are a side who can look back on a very pleasing season, both in terms of their results and also in the amount of progress they made. They are not a large side but surely made up for what they lacked in size with sheer guts and strength in the tackle. Defence was surely their best facet of play and was invaluable in their narrow win away to Uppingham early in the season. An assured display from Harry

Prince at fly half set a positive tone for the rest of the season. Prince is indeed a good prospect for the future and kicked sensibly to control a number of subsequent games. He had strong competition for the number 10 shirt from Rory Lyon, who dropped down from the As part way through the season. Rory proved himself another fine fly half, perhaps more of the 'running' variety. He had a superb attacking performance against Mill Hill later in the season and a bone crunching defensive display when we were really 'up against it' against Warwick in our final game. He's a gutsy contender. These fly halves were partnered admirably by Tom Gladdle at scrum half who grew with confidence with each game. He perhaps had his best performance against Oundle and I am sure is an individual to watch for the future. Outside the half-backs we were strong. Charlie Allport captained the side and played by far his best rugby in the last few games after he had thrown off the niggling injuries which plagued him earlier in the term. Gutsy in attack and tena-

cious in defence, he was always pushing for a place in the As. He surely would have achieved this if the season been a few games longer. Outside him Jack Jefferson made the centre position his own. He is a strong and determined runner who thrived when he gained some confidence. He eventually earned his A's starting place after a devastating performance to destroy Mill Hill in their North London quagmire. He must continue to learn the game and improve his ball skills but will progress into a fine player at senior level. At times Max Strivens deputised at centre and proved to be a useful reserve throughout the back division. He is an illusive runner if given the chance and will also continue to improve as he puts on a little more bulk.

On the wing Charlie Empson – improved as the season progressed and he began to attack with a little confidence when he realised he could beat opposition on the outside. Charles Colville rejoined the Bs late in the season and showed some real pace in attack. Oliver Maitland-

Walker our other winger was a revelation in defence. He missed one tackle in the opening game and I don't recall him missing another all season. He is a tough cookie. Lastly, Ned Boyd appeared halfway through the season after recovering from injury and proved to be reliable reserve scrum half with a good pass as well as being extremely adept at filling water bottles.

Our forwards were not blessed with size this season and had to work as a team in order to out gun larger opposition. At times we struggled against heftier sides. In the front row Ollie Ritchie came up from the C team and proved himself to be a committed and aggressive prop. Harry Nettlefold, a very versatile customer, possesses all the required ball skills of a hooker and was rewarded with a start for the A team. Rollo Pearson hooked well at the start of the season but never really quite recovered his form after his illness in the middle of the term. Tom Mitchell proved a solid cornerstone on the other side of the scrum and graced us with his Geordie tones



Philip Hitner

at every scrumage. James Gubbins was another dependable member of the front row but must remember to play like a Grizzly rather than a teddy bear. He is second to none on his 'grizzly' days.

In the second row Charlie Meredith-Owen was ever dependable and improved as he began to be little more aggressive in attack. Sebastian Bianchi was as strong as an ox and improved as he picked up the rules of the game. Later in the season the Irish assassin Harry McCorkell dropped from the wing into the pack where I think his future lies. He is honest and hard working and will develop into a fine player.

Lastly in the back row, Kyle Jordan was fit and fast and was invaluable for winning ball. He was the scourge of many an opposition fly half this season. He was ably assisted by Ben Reeve at blindside who showed an equal amount of effort and much in the way of guts. He improved with every game as he got used to life in the pack again. In between the two flankers was Julian Nesbitt, the General. He led from the front throughout the season and was probably our best forward. He deserved his inclusion in the A team in the final game.

Many of this side will go on to be key members of the A team as they progress through the school and they grow in stature. I look forward to following their progress.

DGB

Yearlings C

This season has been good on the whole. We won 5 games and lost only 3 to the big teams of Uppingham, Oundle and QES Barnet. All three games were hard. We lost because they had good training for longer than us and our defence was quite appalling at times. Against QES Barnet we had a gutsy come back and ended up losing by only two points. Against Uppingham and a huge Oundle side we managed to keep them down to only three tries each losing by 15 points in both games.

We all played well against Milbrooke which was basically a trial game for the team. We also beat Buckingham A's by 29 points, Wellingborough B's by 14 points, Warick by 24 points and Mill Hill by 12 points. Our team was at its best against all these teams.

The Team was:

William Bond at Fly half, the captain and kicker.

James (Titch) Richardson the little scrum half who scored the most tries and worked well with the pack and the backs.

J.P. Reynolds the strong fast inside centre who made some great breaks.

Tommy Prendergast the great tackling strong running Outside centre who made some try saving tackles and good runs.

Toby Marshall the strong running winger who came up from the D's and made some try making runs.

Patrick Hall the small but quick winger who played some games for the D's, but was a good attribute to the team.

Charles Williams the quick winger who made some vital runs and who was promoted to the C's.

Edward Dillnott-Cooper our other winger who made some good tackles and some great runs.

Alex Trotter the small Full Back who made some excellent tackles on people much, much bigger than him.

David Nahmad the strong hooker who hooked well and was a huge attribute to the team.

Drew Leeman the #8 who made some great pickups from the scrum which worked brilliantly against some opposition.

Will Gale the flanker who put a lot of pressure on the opposition's Fly Half and also strong in attack.

Will Shephard the other flanker and pack leader who made some good runs and tackles.

Max Rawicz-Szczerbo one of the second row who is a big powerful runner and was injured for a while but returned to fulfill his potential.

Kit Arkwright the prop who made some good runs pushed well in the scrum and also made some nasty handoffs.

Hugh Mackay the flanker who was mainly a sub but when he came on he really did make a big difference.

Richard (Jimmy) Hill the huge second row/prop who kept going with about 5 players hanging onto him.

Kelvin Kom the second row who made some strong runs, tackles and was a very good attribute to the scrum.

Andrew Marshall-Read our other second row who came up from the D's and made good progress all through the season he was with us.

Other players who started the season with the C's and later moved to the B's or even the A's were Harry Nettlefold who was a good fly half and moved up as a Hooker (fancy that), Ollie Ritchie the Prop who made some huge pushes in the scrum and moved up as a Prop and finally, Jack Jefferson the inside centre who we really missed in the back line.

I would like to thank all the players for their commitment and great progress throughout the season. It has been a great pleasure playing with all of you. I would also like to thank all the coaches who taught us so much during the season and whose inspiring half-time talks really made us play harder. So thank you very much Mr Tydeman and Mr Dawson.

WILLIAM BOND

At the end of the season the coaches awarded certificates to:

*William Bond for the Most Valued Player.

*Kelvin Kom for the Most Improved Player.

*Jimmy Hill for the Most Dedicated Trainer.

*Titch Richardson for the most tries scored and excellent all round play through the season.

ACT/RTD

NETBALL

The 2003 season was very tough for the three new netball squads. The 1st VII from last season only retained Jules Robinson and so the initial few weeks were very challenging for the squad. Not only had they to get to grips with the required skills but they also needed to familiarise themselves with the rest of the squad. Time was against us as our first fixture against Downe House was on the second Saturday back. The girls were fully committed, but there were misunderstandings between attacking and defending players leading to glaring mistakes being made both up and down the court. Communication between the players was lacking, mainly because most of the girls did not know each other at this early stage in the season. Unfortunately all three teams returned home defeated but the 3rd VII performed magnificently being narrowly beaten (19-14). By our next fixture, a triangular against Bloxham and Cheltenham, communication amongst the squads was much improved. The 1st VII started sharply against Bloxham and at half time were drawing. Unfortunately at full time we were down (21-7). The fitness level of the squad seriously impeded their progress and the quality of the game deteriorated. The 2nd VII played at a very fast pace and drew (9-9), with some excellent shooting by Georgie Budgett. Unfortunately both teams were beaten by Cheltenham.

The last fixture before half-term was a triangular against St Edwards and Pangbourne. St Edwards last year were a very tough opposition and this was still the case to our misfortune. However, the defeat this season was not as devastating as it was last year. The firsts were beaten (26-7) and the seconds (20-3). The highlight of the afternoon were the matches against Pangbourne. The firsts had a high spirited game, Henrietta Addams-Williams was

outstanding in defence and made some tremendous leaps to block the oppositions counter-attacks. On the final whistle the score was (9-9), but Pangbourne had just been awarded a penalty in the shooting circle. Thankfully due to some excellent defending by Eliza Pritchard-Gordon the shot was deflected. The seconds won a thrilling match (7-18) by dominating the centre court. Georgie Budgett and Primrose Matheson were both on form hardly missing a shot. Amy Whittaker was outstanding as centre and linked up well with Lydia Coles to move the ball quickly up the court.

The first Wednesday back after half term we fielded a mixed 2nd and 3rd squad to play RLS 1st VII at home. We dominated the first two quarters and were leading up until the third quarter. The tables turned in the final two quarters and we lost (10-22). All credit to RLS, they played a very steady game and we seemed to lose confidence as the game progressed, frustration took hold, moves were mistimed and far too many penalties conceded.

That Saturday we played in the Bradfield tournament and were drawn against previous opposition: Downe House, St Edwards and also Charterhouse. Unfortunately not only were the 1sts at a disadvantage skilfully but also psychologically. Having been previously well beaten by both schools the squad found it very difficult to gel and highlighted the need for sharpness, positive decision-making and trust. However, Chloe Ingold made her mark on the 1st VII squad that afternoon, she made some valuable contributions and worked well with Jules Robinson who dominated the centre court with her usual air of determination.

We met Downe House and Bloxham again the following Saturday and fielded three away teams. The firsts and thirds lost both

matches, but only by a narrow margin (3rd scores 12-15 v Downe House and 13-14 v Bloxham). The 2nd VII lost (5-14) to Downe House but had a good win against Bloxham (9-14). Amy Whittaker stepped into the shooting role for this match and made some incredible long distant shots.

The following Saturday we played Pangbourne whom we had previously met earlier in the term. All three squads travelled away on a hot, sunny Saturday afternoon. The firsts unfortunately did not manage to lay to rest the draw they were held to at the St Edwards triangular and lost (19-29). However, a lot of good netball was played and I was delighted to see the squad gel together and play as one rather than as individuals for the first time. The 2nd and 3rd VII squads both won, the scores were (10-27) and (9-34) respectively. Both these teams rose to the occasion and fought well.

For the last fixture of the season we played at the Berkhamstead Invitation Tournament. It was good to play against new opposition: Berkhamstead, Wycombe Abbey, Queen Anne's, Bedford and St Albans. Without exception, all played well and the squads benefited from playing against teams of a very high standard.

Colours for the season were awarded to Captains Lara Pilkington and Henrietta Addams-Williams as well as Jules Robinson who made a tremendous impact in centre court and put in a number of outstanding performances. Chloe Ingold and Rosanna Durham were voted the most improved players of the season.

I must congratulate the squads for their effort and enthusiasm throughout the season. All the teams improved enormously thanks to the assistance of LJM and EMP during practices and matches.

LMC

SAILING

It has probably been the most difficult season in recent years for fitting in sailing matches. With only one week clear before public examinations started in earnest, perhaps we were fortunate to fit in as much as we did. The first match, away against Rugby four days after the start of term, had to be abandoned when strong winds flattened most of the fleet. Our other two matches against individual schools were cancelled by the other schools who were unable to raise a team. We did, however, compete in both the Midlands British Schools Dinghy Racing Association championships at Farmoor, as one of 20 teams, and the Eastern championships at Middle Nene as one of eight schools. At Farmoor the team steadily improved and reached the quarter-finals of the plate competition. At the Eastern's there were several new members in the team and it was good to see them make evident progress during the afternoon.

The housematches were held in June, after AS examinations, in a happy and highly competitive series of races. It was good to see eight houses, including the two girls' houses, competing. We have been operating on three weekday afternoons despite the rush on Tuesdays and Thursdays; this has allowed a large number of Stoics to take up sailing both at Great Moor, on the



House sailing matches, final

newly repaired 420's, and on the Eleven Acre Lake on the Toppers. I am grateful for the usual invaluable support of Dr James, Messrs Hirst, Sandow and Corbould.

MJB

Team from:

James Hayhurst-France (captain), Richard Robinson, Edward Cooke, Alastair Russell, Charlotte Scott-Gray, Alexander Arkell, Edward Lotto, Harry Thuillier, George Nissen, Alice Braithwaite.

Colours re-awarded to:
James Hayhurst-France

Colours awarded to: Edward Cooke and Richard Robinson

The Helmsman's Tankard:

1st James Hayhurst-France

Housematches, finals:

1st Temple

2nd Bruce

3rd Cobham

4th Grenville

Junior Pennant Competition:

Alastair Russell.

r.u. Jonathan Rudland

SQUASH

This year, all squash teams have experienced an enjoyable and productive season. The 1st and 2nd teams enjoyed victory over a variety of schools. The girls' matches have been very tough with most of the team new to Squash this year, but they have improved hugely as a result and will be able to build on these experiences next year. The first fixture was against Bedford who, from past experience, are an extremely good Squash school.

However both teams won relatively comfortably. After this good start to the season, the boys (1st and 2nd) went on to beat Bloxham away with ease. Then came the hardest fixture of the season. Away at Oundle was always going to be tough, and in the end it just proved too much for all three teams, (the 1st and 2nd only losing 2-3 overall). The season continued with a tough match against Berkhamsted followed by a close return fixture to Bedford. We then had an easy win over Oratory and concluded with a very competitive and close fixture against Rugby, in

which both Stowe teams narrowly came out victors.

A highlight of the term has been finally moving into the new 'glass backed' courts next to the Drayson. They were ready just after the 2nd exeat in time for the Senior House Matches, which were won this year by Grenville.

Finally, in the last week of term, an extremely competitive staff vs pupil match took place to finish off the season, with the pupils just coming out on top.

HUGH WILSON (1ST TEAM CAPTAIN)

SWIMMING

A season to remember!

Swimming has continued to improve again this year. In the Bath Cup events at Crystal Palace we achieved our best results in the 20 years of competition. In the 4x50m Medley our team of Alex Ward, Benji Seebohm, Dominic Merritt and Robin Bogh-Henrikssen, qualified for the final of the Dunelm Cup, for schools under 500 boys. They then swam very well to come sixth, their time of 2.08.08 breaking our record which has stood since 1996 of 2.09.31. In the Bath Cup our 4x100m Freestyle Relay Team of Ed Baker, Robin Bogh-Henrikssen, Dominic Merritt and Alex Ward,

produced our best ever result of 16th. The previous night we entered an open team in the Otter Cup at St.Pauls, a competition of seven events, against 18 of the top schools in the country and again improved a few places from last year.

In our regular fixtures the boy's team had successes against Loughborough, Oundle (twice), Rugby, Radley, Uppingham and losing narrowly to Eton and Harrow. In these galas the Intermediate team distinguished itself by being unbeaten against all the schools, whereas the junior team only lost to Eton. Unfortunately the girls team were unsuccessful in their competitions. There were some notable performances in these competitions – in the juniors

David Nahmad broke the 50m butterfly record of 33.73 against Rugby and Oundle which has stood since 1981.

Freestyle relay of David Nahmad, Algy Lendrum, Rupert Wynne and Edward Colville broke the record from 2.15.97(1996) to 2.09.39.

In the Intermediate section

Alex Ward broke the 50m Freestyle record held since 1978 from 27.3 to 27.01.

Rupert Lynch broke the 50m Butterfly record from 30.35 set in 1987 to 29.86.

The Intermediate Freestyle relay team of Fergus Playfair, Dominic Merritt, Henry Worssam and Alex Ward recorded a record time of 1.55.20.

In the Girls Caroline de Peyrecave reduced the 50m freestyle record from 32.11 to 30.11 and the 4x25m Individual Medley to 1.20.10 set in 1996.

The overall winners of the house competitions were Temple House and Nugent House.

Swimming Colours were awarded to Caroline de Peyrecave and Charles Cavill. Colours were reawarded to Ed Baker, Benji Seebohm, Igor Tolstoy-Miloslavsky and Robin Bogh-Henrikssen,

The swimming competitions would not be able to function without our team of willing helpers in particular the matrons Rowena Pratt, Sara Drew, Daphne Bennett, Terry Bosman, Pat Reilly, Ann Lake, Jenny Cope and the staff KB, EMP, JRK, LEW and DCB who also was the fixtures secretary. Mr Cowie was the coach for the second season and much of the credit for our improvement must go his coaching of our swimmers.

ACT



TENNIS

1st VI

Oratory	WON	7.5	1.5
Oundle	WON	4.5	4.5
St.Edwards	WON	7	2
MCS Oxford	WON	5	4
Solihull	WON	5	4
Warwick	WON	6.5	2.5
Abingdon	WON	7.5	1.5
Old Boys	WON	5	4

What an excellent season! There were many nail biting moments along the way, but the players should be congratulated on managing an unbeaten record. This is a considerable achievement against strong tennis schools.

The 1st VI team were a young, but experienced group of players. Only captain Max Green is in the upper sixth form, so most will be playing again next year.

The first pair of Max and Hugh Wilson were capable of producing real fireworks on court. When 'in the zone' they were extremely powerful and ended winning 25 of the 30 sets they played. No ball got half measures from these two! They added tactical understanding to their power towards the end of the season and were usually to be found watching and supporting the others having finished their matches in record time.

Rob Colvin and Tom Brann were very different. Quieter and more

measured by nature, they tended to set up many team victories by invariably beating the opposing 1st pair. Their highlight was beating a well respected Solihull 1st pair.

Freddie Wynne usually played in the 3rd pair with James Tedder, however Charlie Leet-Cook, James Bradshaw and Tom Mallett also represented the side. Freddie, the most improved player, will be an important player next year. He and James held their nerve admirably to win a tie-break at MCS which would decide the whole match.



The boys generally play competitive tennis for 10 hours per week. I can honestly say I have enjoyed every one of them as coach this year.

2nd VI

Oratory	WON	9	0
Oundle	WON	8	1
St. Edwards	WON	5	4
MCS Oxford	WON	7	2
Abingdon	WON	9	0

This is the third year in succession that the 2nd VI has been unbeaten. The team train with the 1st VI, so there are no easy games in practice and competitiveness runs high. Unfortunately many school matches prove to be rather to one sided in comparison.

Captaining the side was Christian Roe, who partnered Tom Mallet for most matches as the first pair. They proved to be a steely combination, winning many matches through consistent and thoughtful play.

Alex Farr and Charlie Leet-Cook were a very strong pair at this level and are both capable of playing 1st team tennis next year. If it wasn't for injuries, they may have done so more regularly this year.

Freddie Raikes and Ed Tang emerged as the dependable pair. They never gave less than their best and strung many good victories together.

They were a good natured and enthusiastic group. It was a pleasure to coach them.

RCS

3rd VI

A predictably dominant and undefeated season from a powerful 3rd VI squad. Both Oundle and MCS Oxford were crushed 5-4, with St. Edward's unable (or possibly too afraid) to raise a team for the remaining fixture. Greenwood, Greenaway, Jordan, Banks and Cobb were ever-present, with Savage and Shann playing a match each. Highlight of the season: the Greeny boys match-winning tiebreak at dusk in a downpour at MCS.

RRA

Girls

This year was always going to be a hard one for the girl's tennis team as only two members of last years team remained. However they were joined by a healthy, if not technically brilliant, crop of lower 6th formers and both the A and B teams gradually improved as they progressed through the season.

Following an early defeat at the hands of a strong St Edwards team we drew with Pangbourne and then inflicted our first victory over Bloxham.

Isabelle Katthagen was by far our most consistent player and formed a strong partnership with Chelsy Davy and latterly was partnered by Kate Lowe. Liberty Waters was a stalwart of the second pair and was playing some fine tennis by the end of the season, being partnered admirably by Lucy Barlow. The third pair was made up of the frenetic partnership of Eliza Ferguson and Anna Narizzano whose energy was boundless.

Colours were awarded to the captain Isabelle Katthagen, Rosie Armitage, Chelsy Davy, Kate Lowe, Liberty Waters, Lucy Barlow, Anna Narizzano and Eliza Ferguson.

I am pleased that the core of this year's squad will be here next year. I wish them well.

DGB

Colts U16

The Squad: Hamish Scott (Capt), Chica Farr, Charlie Beldham, James Robson, Gary Higson, James Troughton and Charles Hodson.

Results Played 4 Won 4

Due to GCSEs, the tennis term for the U16s is relatively short and abbreviated, never the less one can't fault the effort and commitment all the boys showed this season.

Our opening match was our only home fixture, which underlines the significance of their achievement in remaining undefeated, against Oratory where the team only dropped one set. Whilst the boys themselves wanted to play on hard court surfaces all their matches

ended up on astroturf and they adapted well to the lack of bounce that this kind of surface generates.

Oundle and St Edwards were the next two fixtures and it was with a sense of relish that both these schools were put to the sword. There was a distinct edge to the team and when matches were close fought this inner strength helped them prosper, particularly against St Edwards where our third pair had to get a result against their second pair to ensure victory, a comfortable 6 - 2 set achieved by Gary Higson and James Troughton won the day.

Another feature of the team and of tennis generally has been the professional approach adopted by the teams in terms of dress sense, punctuality and reliability. In the last match of the season our opposition were anything but that. In the end we played against their head boy, two other A level pupils, a Father and their Master in Charge plus one boy who was of the right age group. It was gratifying indeed, for the team and for me that Stowe secured another victory.

Charlie Beldham and James Robson formed a solid partnership as second pair with "Robo" stepping up to partner "Chica" Farr when Hamish was ill. Both players have some excellent strokes and can look forward to a successful two years in the sixth form. Both players however need to develop the ability to control their body language if things don't go as planned.

The first pair played some aggressive base line tennis and both Hamish and "Chica" have powerful first serves for young men of their stature. Hopefully both will press for 1st VI places next year. To develop their game more their volley game must improve with more shots played at angles rather than parallel to tram lines.

Finally the boys were an excellent bunch to work with showing a good deal of wit and humour once they had got the job done on court

AH

Max Kirchhoff on the COLTS RUGBY TOUR TO DEVON

As it has now become a tradition for the Colts Rugby team to go on Tour, we followed others before us and embarked on a challenging and joyful tour, this year to Devon.

It was Wednesday morning just after lessons, when the whole squad consisting of no less than 23 keen players, took our seats on our two school minibuses. Watching others go home for half term we eagerly drove off to Devon. The journey was long but certainly not boring with Mr Brandt cracking the odd joke and a keenly anticipated lunch break at Burger King for Mr Terry and Mr Edwards. This insider information was kindly disclosed by the skipper, none less than Charlie (Cheeka) Farr who together with Tom Allport drove ahead with our luggage. Thanks to them our chalets, kit and supper was already prepared when the rest of the team arrived later that night. Each chalet housed about eight players and boasted a kitchen, bathroom (with shower), sitting room and television. That evening we all received our kit, which thanks to Cheeka was partly sponsored by Eggcatcher. We all received a sizable shirt that 'even Carr can grow into' some shorts with the Colts alleged Lion (we all think it is a horse), waterproof top and by the courtesy of Eggcatcher a t-shirt. That night we all slept quickly, apart from one chalet after Mr Brandt told them 'Beware of the one pound coin Gallimore planted in the shower!'

Thursday

So after an early rise on Thursday and a carbohydrate-orientated breakfast we had an easy training session on the beach with Giles Gray repeatedly reassuring all of us that 'this is just like home'. In the afternoon we trekked for two hours by bus to Queen's Taunton. We

quickly changed and started warming up. Queen's Taunton did likewise and the match soon began. With good weather conditions and a divine turf to play on we kicked off and foolishly gave away a penalty in front of our posts after a few minutes of open play with neither side gaining much ground. Queen's Taunton converted with ease and it was 3-0. Not long after we made a break on the far side and gained quite a considerable distance, following this bit of play, we got a penalty right near the right hand touch line about five foot out of the 22, which Wemyss majestically converted with his right boot! 3-3. Queen's Taunton score again of a penalty made it 6-3. Then Wemyss converts another penalty for us, 6-6. Not soon after the ball came down the line and the man himself came up from full back joining the line and scored a beautiful try in the far corner. With the kick being in a similar position as before he sadly did not convert 6-11. The next try was scored by Tom Allport who coming off the back of a ruck, having a great game side-stepped their centre and scored making it 6-16. Sadly the conversion was to be sought after. Wemyss was also having a great game and scored another try in the corner after a long run making it 6-21 but he sadly was unable to convert it from this tight angle. After a long lull Queen's Taunton scored but did not convert making it 11-21. Near the end of the game Elliot Holmes majestically picked up the ball, and went in through a considerable number of opponents tallying 11-26. Sadly Benji Nesbitt was tackled rather crudely in the opening minutes and was concussed and was not able to play anymore during tour on 'doctor's orders' but still produced the same level of feedback during training. Clearly Jamie Wemyss was man of the match not only due to his great opening kick, which would have been enough, but also from his two trys. We greatly appreciated a great match tea that consisted of a local speciality, Cornish Pasties. That night we went of to celebrate down

in Woolacombe together as a team in the Pub. In high spirits we had a splendid time.

Friday

On the next day the weather changed slightly and it started to rain periodically with a slight wind but nether the less we trained in the afternoon at the beach where Ollie Carr discovered the advantages of rolling down sand dunes once reaching the top and Gary objecting to getting his toes wet. That afternoon we relaxed and for the night we went bowling with Kev Kim gladly showing off his sporadic bowling skills and Max Kirchhoff showing everybody how to really use guns (That's Time Crisis, from practice on duty with his AK) and Mr Edwards keeping the dosh rolling in at the Who Wants to be a Millionaire computer. After this we had an early night eating out at the local McDonalds.

Saturday

We departed at about ten in the morning with a two-hour drive to Crediton RUFC a local rugby club. Having arrived we quickly got changed and warmed up. Today's team even featured our 'injury prone' Max who managed to play for the grater part of the game, but the greater difference made in the game was by the referee, a woman. These are a scarce sight in the rugby world and was greatly welcomed even with irregular decisions and not being as strict as she promised. The game was a hard one, with both sides giving their all from the first whistle, which happened to be their converted try. We were playing up hill and found it hard, but just let them slip from their own 22 to score making it 12-0. It was quite literally up hill from here with Wemmsy scoring a powerful try in the far right. They then scored by us letting them get away making it 19-5. In the second half we used a bit of their own medicine with the newly subbed on Gallimore who replaced Oliver Collins by ousting no less than four of their players on the wing and using his lanky legs to full effect

made it 19-10. With no conversion it was a tough fight with literal beatings quite common at subtle moments and Alex Howard had to come off being concussed. Sadly we stooped down to their game and let ourselves be carried away and angered by their ill discipline and they scored another converted try making the final score of 26-10. The score may not reflect the closeness of the match but we were a perfect match thus making Drew Howard-Green's comment of "if we had played them with a different ref" true. Man of the match though was Ben Hirst. At the end of the day we were all tired and ate pizzas in our chalets.

Sunday

Another early rise and shine brought us to Barnstaple RUFC with us being too tired to put up a decent performance and also fighting gale force winds and Mr Michaels' com-

ments from the side line we lost 33-0. This was a surprise as Crediton RUFC beat Barnstaple RUFC by no less than 36-17 two weeks before. We did do quite well though and had tries disallowed and nearly scored two more. In this game our defensive prowess really was exploited. Albert Derbyshire also had a cracking game with some beautiful runs. That evening we had a prize giving for the tour where Ollie Carr was awarded Man of the Match, Stuart Coughlan Most Improved Player, Charlie Farr Team Man and Elliot Holmes Most Valuable Player. We also had court where Robson discovered how similar Mr Brandt's medicine was to Newcastle Ale and Harry Taylor discovered his new liking for poached eggs. We managed though not to forget the best prizes which were awarded to the staff who so kindly made this tour possible and we hope that they were not given in vain (a special note to Mr Terry, if

you don't like yours Galli will take it).

Monday

On Monday we slept in late and went paint-balling where the forwards wasted the backs, overcoming Ollie Carr's determination against Mr Terry and with many pleas of him not being hit Max again displayed his accuracy by offloading about 30 rounds at close range. Giles also shone here displaying his tactical skill together with Gary.

Tuesday

We left very early after tidying our chalets.

With this article I would just like to thank Mr Terry, Mr Brandt, Mr Edwards and Miss Broadhurst for all their help and support on tour and I hope that other colts teams in the future will have as much fun as we had.





Patricia Chadwick's silk painting

CREATIVE TEXTILES

The atmosphere of Mrs. Mullineux's Creative Textiles Activity is both relaxed and hurried. Multicoloured dragons adorn batiks (pictures on cloth formed using wax and dye), rag rugs are woven, Marilyn Monroe is transferred onto T-shirts, felt is made using sudsy water, Union Jacks fly on bean bags, and a production line of tie-dyes await their next tying or dying. Frequent cries of:

"Mrs. M; I think I've broken the sewing machine again" and "Mrs. M- Mrs. M!" - how much salt should I put in the bucket?" resonate around the homely room.

Stoics (more than you could deem possible to fit in the small area) from different years and gender are placed around the space, putting the finishing touches to silk paintings, ironing out tie-dies, and discussing topics as varied as whether Jesus actually existed or what happened at the last house dance.

And all the time Mrs. Mullineux flits around the room, pinning along a zip-fastening, instructing on how hot the dye water should be ("Cold enough so you can put your hand in it, but hot enough so you don't want to leave it there") - thermometers fail to survive - and of course, fixing the sewing machine.

HARRY THULLIER



Edmund Jones' dragon and Dominic Heath's bird cushions



Emma Shackleton's painted and piped cat bed



Anna Metzger's papier mache bowl



Tom Williams silk painting



Caroline de Peyrecave silk painting



Alice Braithwaite tie dye, machine embroidering and beading

DRESS MAKING

From my own brilliant experience of Dressmaking this year I believe that it has been a fun, popular and very communal activity. It encourages many students particularly the girls. There are a wide range of facilities that enable us to make our clothing, adapting different designs or garments to fit our needs and liking. For example I chose to make a 'Leavers Ball' dress, consisting of a bodice, a skirt and a shawl. I altered the bodice to make a more elaborate costume. This is only one of the many different types of clothing that has been made over the year. Other students have made; trousers, skirts, shirts etc. The list goes on.

This activity gives those with no experience an opportunity to learn new skills and others with previous knowledge to develop further. This is especially due to the expertise of Mrs Mullineux (who we have branded Mrs 'M'). She is a good teacher who allows us to take pleasure in what we make and enjoy them when we have finished to be admired at the end of the year on Speech Day.

LAURA GAZE



Laura Gaze in her ball dress

THE CHOICE

I was sitting alone but this was not the cause of my feeling of isolation. The light that crept through the crack beneath the door dimly lit the room; the air was cold and the single bunk that was to serve as my bed was hard and cramped. Had it been warm and comfortable, sleep still would not have been an option, there was too much to think about. Thoughts of panic, worry, despair and unbearable regret seemed determined to keep me lying awake. It was far worse than I had ever imagined but, looking back, this was only natural; I had got all my images of a situation similar to the one I was in from television programmes and films. This is all very well, as watching people will provide you with a visual image that enables you to set the scene in your head but not even a talented actor would have been able to convey the overwhelming feelings I was experiencing. Why had I done it? Why had I gone along with it and allowed myself to be dragged in? There is a saying: "It is hard to stand up to your enemies, but it is even harder to stand up to your friends." Through my personal experience I realized that this is entirely true.

On the other hand, perhaps I was just a coward and took the easy way out. These people whom I talk about were not really my friends and if they categorise themselves as such then they don't know the genuine meaning of the word. Real friends look out for one another and in our situation would have confessed in order to prevent the other "friend" from taking the blame single-handedly when it was not solely their fault.

While sitting in the cell into which I had been ushered I did at first wonder what had happened to the others. Had they got away, did they realise I was missing? Or had they been caught as well? If so, where were they now? I waited; an hour, an hour and a half, two hours, and slowly my unanswered questions became the last of my worries, the first being the reaction of my parents.

I'm not sure when or even exactly how, but finally my body gave up and I drifted in and out of an uneasy sleep. My dreams were forcing my conscience to work overtime; driving my thoughts to consist of the same distressing memories my mind had been so vividly re-living and trampling over throughout the course of the night. The crowded noisy bar where we had sat, our many different plans of how to pass the evening in an enjoyable way. How we all laughed when Hugo had first come up with the idea; the contrasting feeling of shock and then worry when I realised he wasn't joking. The clear image of the stolen keys to his father's BMW, the pounding of my heart as he turned the key in the ignition, Hannah and Caroline's excited giggling as they sat on either side of me in the back seats, the numbers on the speedometer which seemed to be ever increasing: fifty, sixty, seventy miles per hour and then the crash.

When I awoke, for a split second I didn't realise where I was. The events of the previous evening had

briefly left my head and I was my usual carefree self. That feeling of freedom didn't last long. It was snatched away from me just as quickly as it had arrived. Fragments of memories from the night before flooded back to me and pieced themselves together forming the vision of remembrance that I least wanted to see. It felt as though someone was pouring liquid mercury down my throat and allowing it to settle in the pit of my stomach where its dense heavy mass meant I had to take the deepest breaths in order for me to breathe. I felt like giving up, I wanted to end it all there and then. I had let everyone down too many times already and by making the wrong choice, I had succeeded in doing so again. That was the story of my life. Why bother to continue? My GCSE exam predictions were far from promising. I was just creating one disappointment after another. It would make no difference whether or not my parents forgave me for it would only be superficial. The damage had already been done; on the inside they would be so disappointed in me, saddened that I hadn't lived up to their expectations and angry over the embarrassment and shame I would cause. They would try to keep it quiet but gossip would get the better of them. At a drinks party parents would talk about how their talented daughters had achieved so much during the past term and conversation would slowly turn and one mother would say to the other: "Did you hear what the Reeves' daughter has done now? I'm so glad my Lucy doesn't mix with those sorts of people. So irresponsible, what were the parents thinking?"

It was around seven thirty when I was informed my parents had arrived. A female officer unlocked the door to my cell, led me down the corridor and through an entrance on my right, in to a small interview room. I was sick with nerves. My legs felt weak and unstable as if they were going to collapse beneath me. My mother's eyes were red and swollen, a total contrast to my father's expressionless face. I wanted more than anything to break down weeping and release the build up of emotion inside me, then for my mother to hug me and hold me so tightly against her warm soft jumper and tell me not to worry and that she still loved me.

It was my father who spoke first. He didn't shout or even slightly raise his voice in the hysterical manner my mother so often adopted, he just said calmly, "Why Minty, why?"

I couldn't reply, what was I to say? That was the very same question I had been asking myself over and over again, but after hours of consideration I still didn't have an answer. The only thing that was clear to me were the overpowering feelings of regret that led to despair and the constant longing to turn back the clock.

AMARINTA REEVES (L6)

WINNER OF THE SENIOR GAVIN MAXWELL ESSAY PRIZE

Discovery

Daily silent midnight; my moment, joy and peace
No fear – rather, a clamour drowned mind – breathes, and
Bathes bare, unchained, in soundless cool.
Proprieties acquiesce – they cannot follow here, they stay awake at
Home – will wake me – at dawn.
Light – so fatiguing – he’s sedated now by night
Dad’s thousand star light crystals – day cannot now conceal.
Light’s daytime ceiling Westward parts,
Bright diamond threads, thin like gossamer, touch earth –
Creation’s beauty declares sure hope, confirms his care – he alone we trust,
When, surviving on our daily stage, we hear him “Surely I am with you
always, to the very end of the age”

This land of peace I took years to find,
Often I got lost in day.
Day was all I had, and night a hole in day.
I was tired of lonely midnights – there had to be
More than day – more than empty performances, That
Die and die away.

A discovery sublime
When became his words my dear promises. Living
certainty carved in stone, which before to me was merely
condemnation printed within old tome.
In night I don’t reach heaven, but Father reaches, enfolds me.
His Spirits living presence allows me to perceive,
I was once a weary daytime wanderer, now a
son who – after earth – will rest, continuously praising thee.

PETER TROMANS

WINNER OF THE SENIOR ROXBURGH VERSE PRIZE

5 MINUTES OF THE WORLD TODAY

The market is busy today, busier than usual, maybe. Omar acknowledges that the crowd throbs more than usual beyond his fraying medley of cotton and synthetic organza. Every now and then the throb swells the crowd nearer, but it recedes again and no material is sold.

The day is clear, shadows are scarce. Fresh meat sweats out a new kebab shop’s income, tenuous because of Macdonald’s menacing proximity. Omar can see its revolution from behind the material rolls, can smell it as it is bellowed out by pressurised glass doors, using the **air** or sweaty saris, nylon tracksuits or palm-oiled hair, **for its conveyance.**

He doesn’t know – white sacking blocking out the **market and world** behind, above and to his sides – that **the congestion** of the throng is owing to more than the **clear day.** A man, for whom the weather is of as little **concern** as someone else’s stall in another market, is **slowing the movement** of the crowd. He stands on a plat-

form surrounded by leaflet covered tables that greedily consume the sacrosanct, un-marketed space in front of the traffic lights. His voice is as sharp as the day, his message wrong or right, depending on what set of prejudices your religion chooses to condone.

“Is he talking ’bout the Jews?” a white man asks a white girl.

“Naah, it’s Christians he’s on at,” is the reply. She is disconcerted by the sudden intimacy with a stranger, and one so grotesquely old.

“I was born in Israel in 1915, you see.”

She stares momentarily into the thick cataracts, smiles an inane smile at a century’s dimming experience, has the uncomfortable realisation that her century is the uncharted next, doesn’t wait for amber to sober to green, and dies a foot from the curb.

GABRIELLA ALEXANDER (U6)

DESIGN



Once again we have been overwhelmed by the innovation, creativity, skill and patience demonstrated by our examination students in their coursework assignments this year. The number of Stoics opting for this subject continues to rise resulting in the Design Department overseeing the Design, Manufacture and Evaluation of 132 projects across GCSE, AS and A2 level Resistant Materials or Graphic Design. The standard and quality of the products remains very high but it has been the detail and clarity of the written work that has been particularly impressive this year with all students demonstrating the high level use of ICT in their design folios.

It is hoped that the awarding of the grades in the summer will reflect the hard work of all the Stoics as well as the Staff who have guided them through the coursework and theory aspects of the subject. Although a tall order we must strive to improve upon last year's staggering statistic of 70% A or B grades.

As the photographs that this border this page show this year's Speech Day exhibition showcased many of the high quality products produced by the Stoics throughout the year with the introduction of AS and A2 only adding to the diversity and creative nature of the exhibition.

The creative styling, innovative use of materials and sure quality of the products produced made the awarding of prizes particularly difficult this year. Benjamin Forbes secured the Worsley Prize for his modern double bed that incorporates a wide range of manufacturing techniques as well as materials in order to create the illusion of a hovering bed. Ben's final product was accompanied by a through design folio that depicted how the product gradually evolved.

The Friends of Stowe Prize for Design in Wood was finally awarded to Charlotte Scott-Gray who manufactured a very high quality folding games table from beech. The product demonstrated a high attention to detail as well as being one that moved away from the more traditional games table designs.

The Andrew McAlpine Prize for Technical Graphics could have been awarded to a number of Stoics but it was felt that Caspar Sheppard's innovative piece of architectural design showed the most creativity, attention to detail and clarity of presentation. In addition, to these



TECHNOLOGY

Sixth Form prizes winners it is important to specifically mention some other Stoics who also produced some outstanding products.

- Georgina Budgett – Hexagonal Table
- Igor Tolstoy-Miloslavsky – Executive Table
- Henry Reid – Garden Bench
- Harry Egerton – Card Table
- Jeremy Walker – Shop Signage
- Chris Dalton – Athletics Track Concept
- Louise Coghlan – Postal Packaging
- Annabel Ritchie – Chest of Drawers
- Jack Brooksbank – Coffee Table
- Eliza Pritchard-Gordon – Silver Jewellery
- Edward Tang – Umbrella
- George Nissen – Product Promotion

The complexity and scale of the GCSE works continues to get ever closer to that produced in the Sixth Form so consequently the award of the Lower School Prize for Design proved to be difficult. The final winner was Dominic Merritt who produced an innovative design for a sofa bed using materials and basic design principals very effectively. Again it is important to recognise the work of other Stoics at this level as well as the prize winner.

- Stuart Randall – Workshop Bench
- Andrew Atherton – Garden Bench
- Elliot Holmes – Sofa Bed
- Philip Gallimore – Bookshelf
- Dylan Harbin – Musical Sofa

The Department is proud to celebrate and share the work of the Stoics and once again we find ourselves beginning to plan the projects for next year which already include many innovative projects.



Caspar Sheppard



Samantha Simmonds

SJP



Charlie Leet-Cook



Charlotte Scott-Gray

WHAT IF?

Robert K Lanpier, aged eight and almost three quarters, was a small, dark and timid boy. His family was in Spain, and as a result of young prep school boys not being the most thoughtful and accepting bunch, his floundering existence was not a particularly happy one. Unfortunately Robert K Lanpier was not of a mind intelligent enough to think about how to change his life – not yet. He could cope with his predicament, but it was hardly a sophisticated method, largely involving deserted classrooms, lonely corridors and small pointless toys, which, most of the time, got lost or stolen after a while.

The boys weren't actually mean to him; they didn't strip him down to his underwear and hang him up in the changing room, for example. Which is more than can be said about Johnny Smythe. However because he was a small, dark and quiet individual, they had no time for him: he was different.

It can be, and is, said that one's life up to thirteen is largely irrelevant. Until thirteen there is huge scope for change. This could even be pushed a couple of years down the line, and the theory would still work. Up until then, most have not had a thought or idea that they would keep for more than a few years or so. Even if bullied a single young mind could overcome and pull out.

I'm sure that if Lanpier looked back to when he was sixteen he would say, "That part of my life didn't matter in the slightest, I keep nothing of it to this day."

However, when you're that young, the future doesn't exist, the past is a vague recollection of meaningless pictures, but the present does matter hugely: you're there, it's real. Looking back, it might be a blur of soulless images, but at the time it is everything.

So this was Lanpier's mind, drifting from issue to issue with no definite long-term purpose, thinking of things to come in his next lesson. Yet another period of isolated boredom. His mind could find no purpose or hold to anything specific; not that he was aware of this. This was normal, every day was just that, another day of pointless events. An unpaid education that he was shoved into everyday to carry out menial tasks of repetitive futility. Sub-consciously he knew all this, but he didn't realise it. Not in the slightest.

Scuffing his feet along the floor, he rounded that corner for the hundredth time, still not taking in any of the details that made, that corner. His eyes flicked up from the floor in front of his sorry looking shoes to alight upon a scene of chaos.

A brown satchel, its contents scattered across the shiny hall floor, lay a few feet away. A boy, younger than Lanpier, who was obviously the owner, was pinned to the wall by a fourth year. Lanpier recognised both, and the small party of boys standing around. The victim, sandy haired and sharply built, was trying to put on a brave face, but kept faltering.

A boy standing further back than the rest with light

hair and a sporty look about him spotted Lanpier and made quickly to him.

"Hi," he said with an uneasy smile. "Listen this isn't actually what it looks like. Urm ... that guy has been really out of order and cocky, and rather than dob him in to the teachers and getting his name down on a record, we are teaching him a quiet lesson. We are doing him a favour, it is for his own good, really." Lanpier slowly closed his gaping mouth and without removing his eyes from the small boy, gormlessly nodded.

"Right, um ... don't think I quite caught your name mate?"

"Rob Lanpier," came the faded reply.

"Ok, Rob, now you're not going to tell anyone about this, er, little incident are you?"

"I thought you said this was a good thing," said Lanpier, finally setting eyes on the calm features of the speaker.

"Yes, yes, yes, it is a good thing, but the teachers don't listen properly, do they?"

"Mmm," came the confused agreement.

"Good, good, um ... but you really shouldn't tell anyone about what you have seen. Then his lesson wouldn't work as well." There followed a long silence, the five or so boys from earlier had now halted their assault on the unfortunate young one and were waiting on Lanpier's reply also.

It was then for perhaps the first time in his life that Lanpier began to think. His first thought was about the consequences of what he might say next, but then his mind was pulled aside into real life. Things began to make sense, a couple of the things his parents were constantly repeating to him, actually now sank in. He even had an idea of what they meant, why they said them, and strangest of all, he agreed. For the first time he really looked at his surroundings. He took it in, observed it all, posters and pictures as if they had never existed before. He felt like he was in a film, all was in slow motion.

He wondered if he stood up to these thugs, how badly they would hurt him. Probably not much he decided, they would just threaten and be all words and no action. Or would they? Perhaps they would go as far as it would take to get his secrecy, which most likely wouldn't be much.

However, just saying ok and walking away would be so easy, and if he wanted to, then sort out or look into the situation later, he would be free to do so.

Rob's eyes flicked to Simon scrambling frantically for his distributed books, and in this new enlightened state of mind he knew what he was going to say. He didn't know what the exact words would be, but he knew what he was going to say all the same: that's all you can ever know.

"No; how can you expect me to keep quiet about something I know nothing of yet. If what you say is true

then all well and good, but for all I know you could be bullying that guy and I don't really like that."

Some part of Rob's mind was screaming at him. You're talking as if you are a senior! But not a muscle moved on his face nor a bone in his body. He was aware of a pride and confidence in himself. He stared levelly at the other boy. His face not suggesting a thing.

Steve's face control was not as great as he would have liked to think and he could not conceal the surprise rooting in the base of his skull. The small nobody seemed to have changed before his eyes, the timid little boy had turned seriously cocky. Yet he didn't resent it at all.

All Steve's friends, grinning and murmuring, were advancing on Rob, but Steve cautiously held up his hand.

Rob noticed the superiority of this boy, as he watched the bewildered but obedient faces of the others as they backed off. The boy didn't look too sure of himself either, as he offered his hand.

"Steve," he said. The pair smiled awkwardly.

MARK STORMONT (4TH)

WINNER OF THE JUNIOR GAVIN MAXWELL ESSAY PRIZE

Poem of Fire

'Its up the hill,' the old man said
And the wise men followed on.
'It's that red light, straight ahead!'
And there in the middle of the throng,
Was a blood red, flaming, smoking rage
Hotter than the shining sun
Roaring like a bear in a cage,
And then the men did slowly come.

The wise ones asked his secret,
Each one in his turn-
'I simply rubbed two sticks together,
Then they began to burn!'
'Of course!' the wise ones said,
'A gift from our God!'

The women and the children came,
They thought it rather odd.
By now even the air was hot,
There was a fiery breeze.
And soon the fire spread
Up into the trees

'Help!' they screamed.

They did not know it then,
But those flames they did behold
Would mankind's future mould
As fire spread throughout the world.

FREDERICK WOJNAROWSKI (3RD)

Discovery

No Problem, They Said
Before the Event -
No way that it could be passed on,
Their confidence plain to see.

Their verdict was enough
For after all they were experts,
The very best in their field,
Almost a decade of tutoring behind them.
They had said what they thought

But not what they knew:
Proof must have been resting at the time.

Their judgement was acted upon -
Unsurprising given its confidence -
And what was wanted arrived,
The first of his type,
Normal as the specialists had said.

Only Two Years Later,
A discovery was made.
Confidence was revealed as arrogance
A thoughtless assumption
By those who should know better.

CHARLES REYNOLDS (4TH)

WINNER OF THE JUNIOR ROXBURGH VERSE PRIZE

Flowers

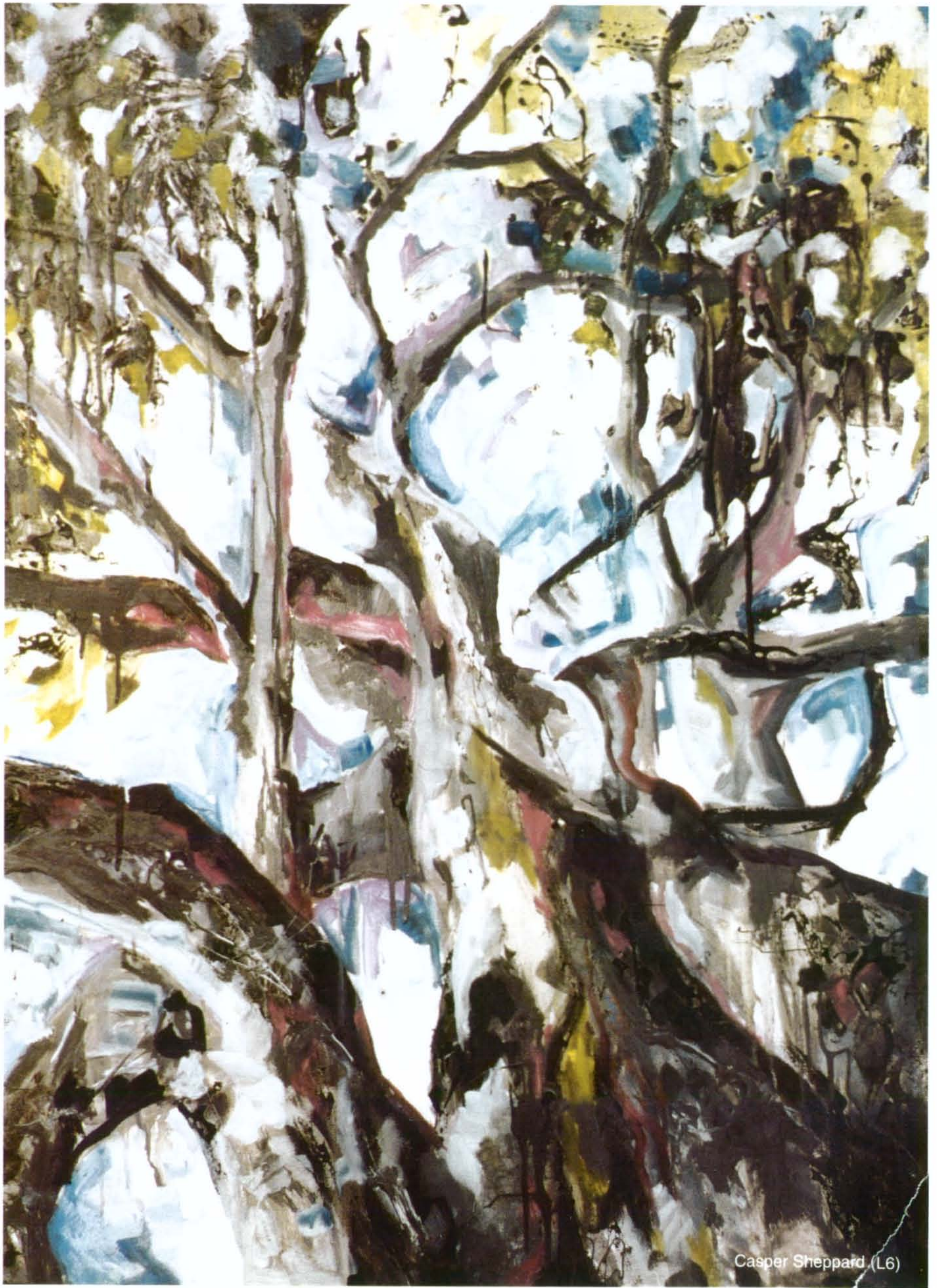
Flowers are what every garden has.
They sit in their soil
And look at you, as you walk past.

Flowers are what every house has:
They sit, wilting in their pots,
Begging for a drink, as you walk past.

Flowers, are what every graveyard has.
They stand proud, the guardians of those below them,
Working hard to ward off strangers,
As they walk past.

Flowers are what everyone has,
Whether they be in a garden, house or graveyard,
They make themselves recognised
As you walk past.

TOM MITCHELL (3RD)



Casper Sheppard (L6)



Eliza Ferguson



Jeremy Walker (U6)

I have a Dream

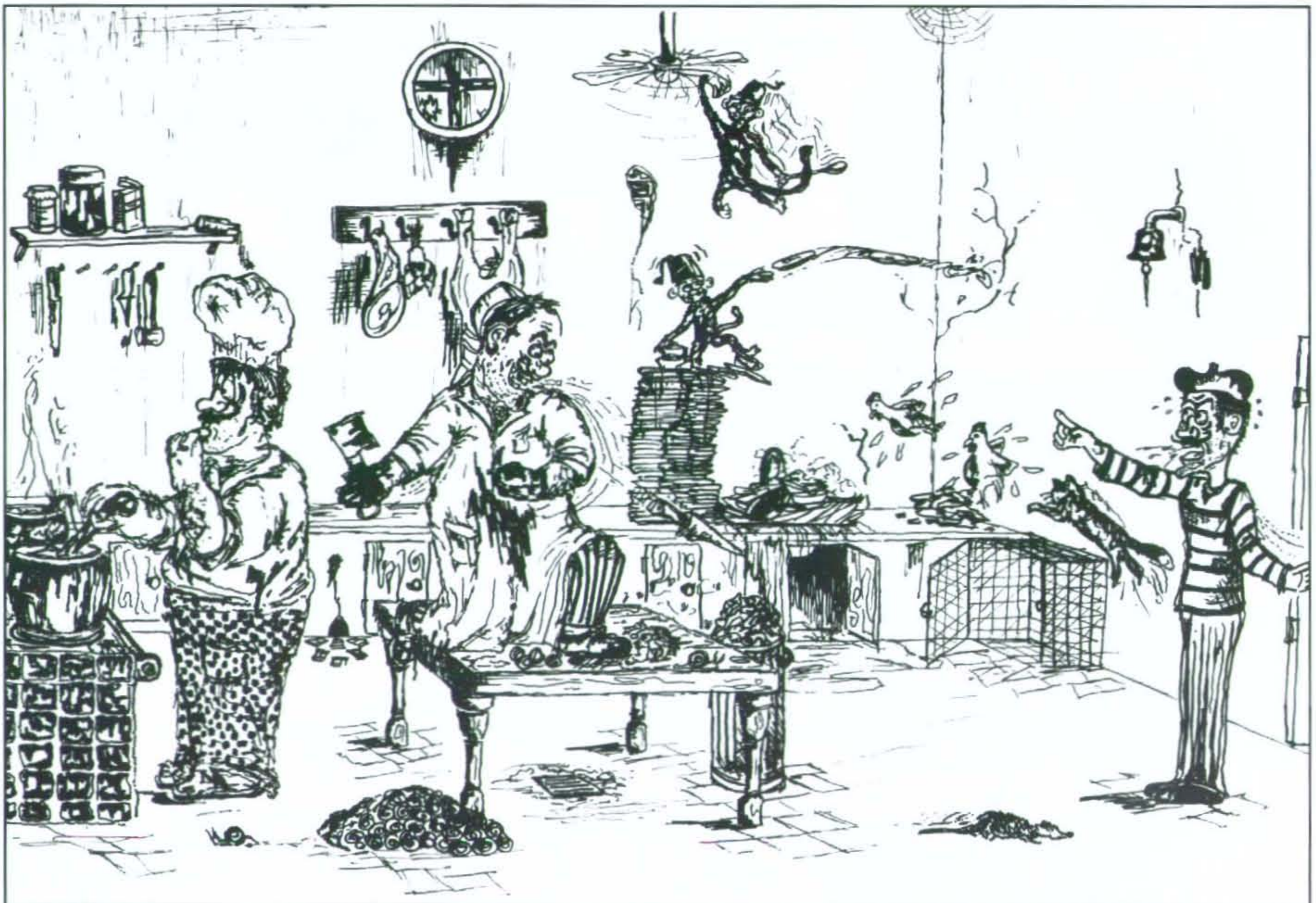
There are the times
I dream about floating,
Feathered and fearless alone in my flight.
Sometimes my waking
Finds you beside me,
And I close my eyes to fly on through the night.
Days are like songs –
We know about flying –
That you sang for me in the car.
Down by the water
We'll go in the evening,
Sing every song that we both know by heart.

I can't remember a time before knowing,
What it was like to call you my friend.
I would not trade one moment of growing
Closer to you like a wing to the wind.
Time, like a storm,
May scatter us over
And send us like sparks to the sky.

And down by the water
The stars are like fire,
Lighting the distance that burns in our eyes.

And these are the days
That we'll most remember,
The nights that we talked of plans to be made.
And we both know we could go on forever,
There'd be more days and more songs to be played.
Here is the place
We met in the summer,
When I was only a song in your ear.
Now by the still water
We'll go in the evening,
Sing songs about how true love found us here.
By the still water
We'll sing about islands,
Songs about how this love found us here.

LEONORA WEMYSS (L6)



Cartoon by Harry Darby

PRACTICE

I am standing on stage. You're watching. An apparently flawless performance of Shostakovich's violin concerto rings around the room, the orchestra playing around the solo violin, weaving in and out of the texture. It seems perfect.

Six months earlier I am sitting in my flat in London closed in by my white soundproofed walls, a halogen bulb buzzing gently above me. I remove my violin from its case and place the concerto on the stand. I pull out my tuner and softly blow an A, plucking my own A as an answer. I adjust the peg slightly until it sounds to the same pitch and then move onto my D, G and finally E. Having played a few scales, I open the concerto and look over the apparently indecipherable score. I sight read the first movement through and I gradually become separated from the world of taxes, mortgages and rehearsals and move into a realm of serene beauty. The movement is slow and comparatively easy and I glance at the orchestral score every now and again, trying to realise the concept behind this highly shrouded piece. I hear the harmonies around me as I play: faint whispers of the masterpiece it will be when you hear it. The rising anguished sequences in the violin derived from the horror and helplessness that the composer experienced, passed on to us as a last plea, rising to an angry scream and then returning to the distressed and quiet opening. Then it is over. I have played through the first movement, and I lean back in my chair for a few seconds, soaking up the enveloping silence, reacquainting myself with this world. I pick up the pencil lying on the floor to the side of me and begin writing in the various fingerings for the piece, especially the double-stopping in the middle, the climax of the movement. I play it through again, testing and changing each of my positions until I feel it works. The key to practicing is retaining the same fingering and bowing throughout your practice and not changing them whilst working towards a concert, or when the concert arrives and you are feeling tentative you may attempt to change them on stage, resulting in serious blunders. I work through the other three movements in the same manner, from the fast, frenetic second and fourth movements to the deeply moving third movement, the 'Passacaglia'. When I have got the piece perfected, note-wise and rhythmically, I begin to add my own nuances and phrasing, bearing in mind the markings of Shostakovich: the rallentandos and accelerandos, slight crescendos and diminuendos, which all make up a huge part of the impression of the piece and performance overall.

There are ten minutes before the performance begins and I am tuning my violin. The walls of this yellow, drab dressing room press around me, and the wild uncontrollable anxiety of the performance begins to edge its way into my mind. I play through the hardest sections of the last movement, knowing that they will be flawless, but still checking, just in case. I am interrupted by the first

violinist wishing me luck and I grin and thank him. My thoughts, however, are not in that grin but elsewhere while my body works on autopilot, dealing with the outside world until my return. A steward knocks politely on the door and I open it. I am asked to come to the passage leading up to the auditorium and I nod in response, frightened that speaking will reveal the apprehension I am feeling. I walk up the passage and find the conductor, Rostropovitch, waiting for me at the end.

"Are you ready?" he asks me, the tension clearly visible on his face.

"I'm ready," I answer, a smile breaking out on my face, relieved to see that even someone this great and accomplished can still feel nervous.

"OK" is all he says, and we walk up onto the stage as the applause breaks out across the concert hall. We ready ourselves and I nod to the conductor. He raises his arms, silence filling the hall and the orchestra raises their instruments in compliance. He gives the down beat and the string basses begin their melody, all in unison at the bottom of their register coming upwards to meet my lead. I should be playing this, I think anxiously, I should have begun. And, oddly enough, I can hear myself playing. And yes, the violin is under my chin and the bow in my hand, and I am.

SAM VANCE-LAW (4TH)

Discovery: Through a Lens

The fascinating mystery of stars
Made a thousand times greater
By the binocular lens;
Of motionless scrubland
That becomes enthralling
When magnification detects
A grey trunk, or lazily superior cat,
Or a horn in a concealed grazing herd.
The complexity of a morsel of dust
That becomes intricate when spied on through
Thick glass: a whole, more intimate world
Opening up its blank façade
When observed through zoom.
The suspicion of distant presence
That becomes indubitable
When watched through concaves.
The enchanting scene
Frozen in memorable dynamics,
In the blink of the eye of the Kodak.
The intimacy of losing oneself
On the horizon.

HARRY THUILLIER (L6)



Tom Williams (5th)



Lucy Clarke (U6)



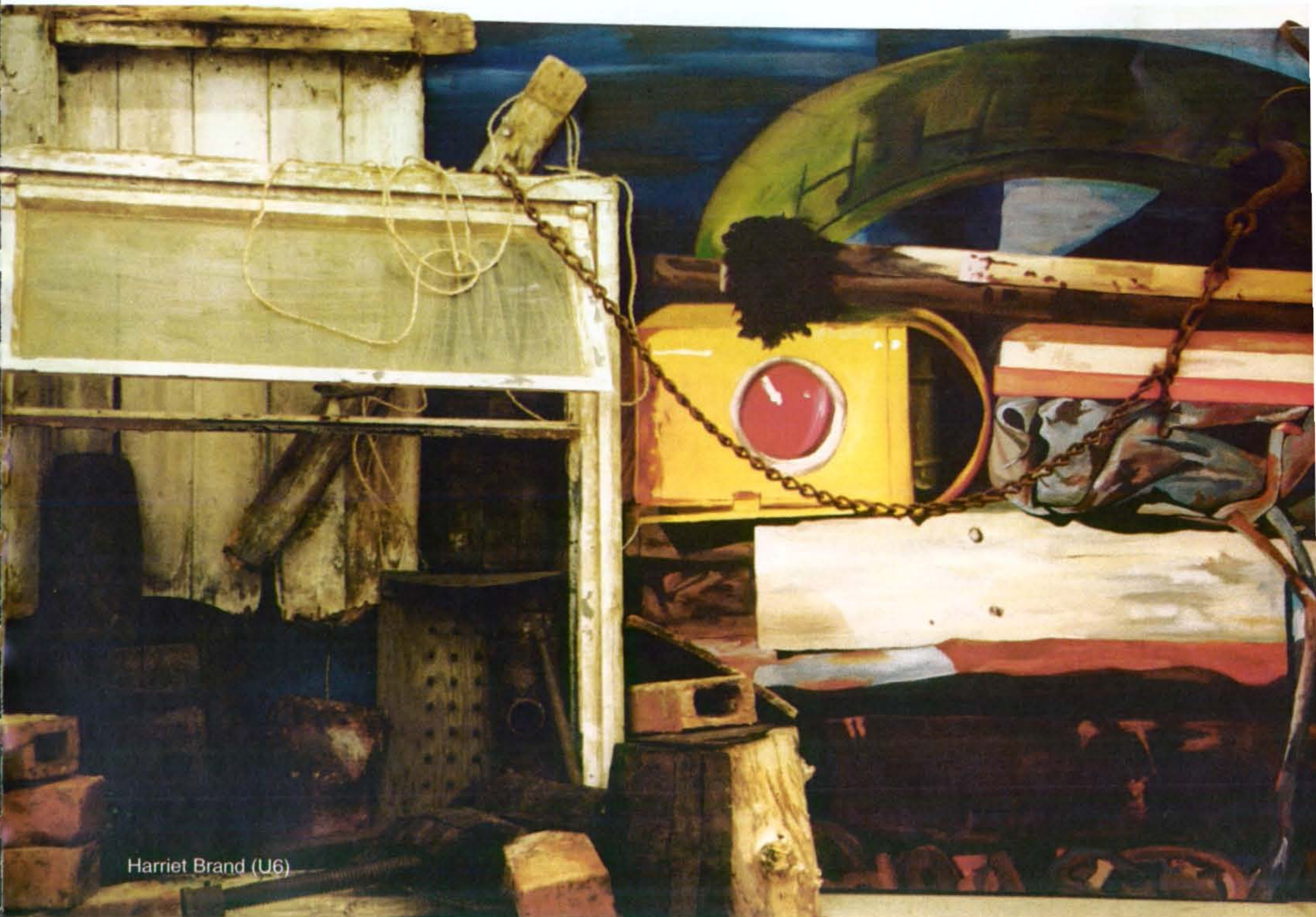
Ju Manomiphon (U6)



Rosanna Durham (L6)



Ollie Buckworth (L6)



Harriet Brand (U6)

Journeys – The track that was meant to be

The track that was spun out of the earth itself,
Where green plants tall and slender sprang up,
Now crushed underfoot by a Tyrannosaurus Rex chasing its weary prey,
Later by deer hunted by early Neanderthal Man.

The track that was meant to be,
Where men wandered aimlessly from settlement to settlement,
Until they drifted as far as Land's End or John O'Groats.
The ancient path that later still offered matchless views
across the deep rolling Downs.

The track that was meant to be,
The worn and weary, lost and lorn track,
That gave birth in Winter to
The wet and muddy path where men
Trode in their hordes, hurrying by with
Unique stories to tell:
The hungry hunters, the precise Roman legions,
The willowy Druids, the Saxon warriors,
The pilgrims to Canterbury, the wool traders from Norwich
and the little orphan boy.
The thieves, the murderers,
The smugglers, the drunk wife-beater,
The madman, the hangman, the prostitute,
And the devil incarnate of the roads himself, the highwayman.
The meek man, the handsome gent, the fair lady, the priest,
The friar, the pauper, the leper, the prophet,
The sleek messenger, the merry man making his music,
And the adventurer – all passing by.
The Kings and Queens in their horses and carriages riding by,
The many peasants and workers of the land who died on foot,
Exhausted, starved and frozen on cold snowy nights,
No one to care, trampling uncaringly on their rotting bodies,
Or looking straight ahead on the dark shadow,
Swinging with the bitter wind on the gibbet,
Or falling down a dark pothole.

The track that was meant to be,
Winter gone, and in Summer the brown slither
Turns to a fine green carpet glazed with flowers.
Soft colours and subtle smells arise,
Wild fruit plentiful to greedy roaming hands.
Now, the soft mouldings of the English landscape
Shine effortlessly, dreamily acknowledging those
Who pass: The Romany gypsies and their bright and gay fairs
Come out of their hibernation. They stop
Under the old Oak and the mile stone and delight
Passers- by with their magical antics.

The track now meant to be a spectacular motorway.
Alas, in the 20th century, the rich British soil
Is wasted with a suffusion of tar.
Lanky bridges, cheap service stations with plastic meals
And dizzy roundabouts bury the old

British Elms which once graced the skies.
 The Combustion Engines race by with no time to spare,
 Rush, rush, rush, who can get to Liverpool in 2 hours, 23 minutes?
 Nervous, self-obsessed, time-obsessed, possessed,
 Little British men stare at their watches,
 Racing against time as they collide headlong
 Into an Astra lorry going from Cardiff to Manchester.
 No one sees the skies; no one sees the scenic views,
 No one sees the light,
 Only the tired, hurt, crushed and wasted soil sees all:
 The journeys people have made,
 The road that was meant to be.

ALEX ORCHARD-LISLE (5TH)

Seeing the Light?

It has seemed to me
 Futility – to believe not
 In what is there,
 But in what we wish would be.

As death I patiently await,
 Distant from my now youthful state,
 I wonder at the minds of men
 That grasp at absent glory:

Repelled within their time of breath,
 Embraced upon their final death.

What is it that their gaunt eyes see?
 That has remained so blind to me
 When, in my hour of dark despair,
 I had witnessed nothing there?

Is there something within these scenes
 That I have yet to feel?
 Or do these men of cowards blood,
 In their hour of final death reveal
 A life of 'sin' now in decline?
 A life not far removed from mine?

Yet until I step up to that brink,
 I will stand my ground to think
 That until I have been all I can,
 I will remain the man I am.

DANIELLE GOODGER (U6)

Worlds within Worlds

(On the occasion of an American scholar's leaving
 Oxford University to continue his research
 into South Africa's recent history)

Lost in a world of other's intentions,
 Shaped or created, and moulded to see,
 A world within worlds, a new forming nation,
 Divided by skin and ethnicity.

Now back to my own world, within the same planet,
 The same world, but new world with separate decree,
 The place where the lost go to find a new living,
 The land of new thinking, the land of the free.

Today and today and today never ceases,
 Tomorrow's a truth which I never shall see,
 Though yesterday leads to a past of forgetting,
 Now is the need to enslave slavery.

So henceforth I go to the world of engagement,
 To study and learn what time can't forget,
 With heavier questions than answers can answer,
 To write of the troubles and changes I met.

And now, here today is a new-found discovery,
 My college at Oxford from whence I must go,
 Whilst yesterday winds to a path of new meaning,
 Tomorrow's a world that I now better know.

EDWARD CORAM JONES (4TH)

A TOUGH CALL

Split Through the Heart.

The world we live in involves making choices every day of our lives. Some are essential as they could affect us for the rest of our lives and often situations arise when you have to choose between doing what is right and what is wrong. The question is: what is right and wrong? It is hard to know where the line should be drawn. So what do you do when the line needs to be drawn?

This is the question I have been asking myself ever since I started my own radio help line for people in need of assistance in their lives, tragic or not. Perhaps I wanted to help myself as well but the satisfaction of helping others is a far greater achievement for me; it helps me to understand different people's situations better. This is what I tried to do when one 17-year-old black boy confided in me to help him make the most difficult decision of his whole life. He had to choose between the law and his own conscience.

One day I received a call from this youth. I introduced myself simply as Amy, nothing more, nothing less. I only asked for his first name. His name was Sam. As I was on a unique and less eminent frequency I guess he must have learnt of my help line through a friend or someone living around the same area in the state of California. This is where my home is and where I try to help people. Like most people he had a problem which deeply affected him and like most people he had a story to tell to show how he got into this situation.

Of course, like others previously, he was quite reluctant to share his story at first; but I believe this was because he was shy and didn't know how to reveal his information to a complete stranger. This is why I had to try to help him understand I was there to help him, not to make him feel uncomfortable.

We would talk about small pleasures or things that we'd like to do, to begin with. I think he felt like he had a friend and he told me he was glad he had rung, but I also helped him in forgetting about his problem, so after a while I asked him if he had any troubles that he wanted to talk about. But he lost his nerve and said, "... no... uh... I have to go, I can't do this", and hung up. I have to admit I didn't think he would call again, but he did. This time he told me the whole story. As he began, I did try to help him like others, but here was a situation where I suddenly felt I could do nothing to convince him to make a choice: I felt I had let him down enormously.

Now usually I would be the one to ask the questions but he asked me the kind of question that I was afraid of and found difficult to answer. He asked me if I had ever had to choose between breaking the law or my own conscience. I did not lie but I wanted him to feel he could relate to me and that he was not on his own, though I believed we were as different as were the colour of our skins.

After some hesitation on my part I just joked a little in answer to his question, "Not exactly but, yeah, sure, I have broken the law... I stole a doll from this local toy store when I was a little girl which I had wanted since for ever and I knew I would never have enough money for it so I just stole it." This made him laugh a little. I wasn't sure if it was a nervous laugh or whether he felt it was funny that I was a thief when I was only a little girl. I continued, "Unfortunately my mom found out and made me take it back to the shop. I had to apologise to the shop-keeper as well." Then I told him, "and yes I do have a conscience but I have never had to choose between the two... Is this something that you want to talk about?"

He told me that when he was younger; "This friend of mine, Scott, saved my skin when we were only fifteen. We had robbed a food store, as we never had any money. But the police came real soon, so we had to split. They were following me on foot since I was slower, but Scott had got in our car. But he did not leave me; he saw those pigs chasing me, so he decided to try to get them off my track...he distracted them and succeeded but they came after him and caught him instead. To this day he has never told them who the other boy was, who was me. When I visited him in jail one time I told him that one day I would honour him and repay the debt of loyalty. We have been good friends ever since. He calls me his 'boy'.

Ever since then I have worked hard at school and have stayed out of trouble. But over the years we have built up a hatred for some white boys that live near to us. They shot one of our close friends, Davy, and now Scott wants his revenge. Being the kind of person he is, he said that we should go to their place and take them out. He wants me as his 'number two man'. Without thought I interrupted and asked Sam if he had tried to persuade him to stop.

"I did - I told him to reconsider: 'Scott we don't need to do this.' I said: 'It doesn't have to be this way. Come back to school, you can make a go of it; you can succeed in life, but whatever you do please don't do this; it will be dangerous.' But he wouldn't listen: 'Don't give me that,' he said. 'I'm not like you; I can't get educated now, I can't become a doctor or a fireman now... let's just do it! I seem to remember you saying you would honour me one day and repay the loyalty I showed to you that day. Remember? Are you with me or not?' I said I needed to think about it but he told me I'd better think real soon because I owed this to him. Even my girl friend doesn't seem to understand. She couldn't even believe that I was considering doing it. She says that if I do this 'We're finished.' I told her I loved her but I also loved Scott like a brother but she would not listen."

Then Sam said to me, "I know what you're thinking. You think that I'm stupid to do such a thing... but when someone shows true loyalty like that for you and then

asks you to do something like this, it's so hard to let them down. Ethics just don't matter – he's my brother. He needs me there as a backup. I don't want to lose a good friend. If he died I would blame myself. But then if we get caught I would be letting down my family too. I just don't know what to do!"

I felt angry with Scott for taking advantage of his friend's loyalty and for putting him in this situation, especially as after speaking to Sam I knew he was an intelligent boy. I wanted to tell him that he should let him do whatever he has to do but to leave Sam out of it. But I couldn't because I realised how much Sam loved Scott. So I tried to make him feel there was a way out. I asked him if he had tried to talk Scott to make him realise the situation that he had put Sam in. Not surprisingly Sam defended Scott when I said this. "Scott did something that only a true friend would do and now he wants me to go with him to take these white boys out. They killed a good friend of mine." At this point Sam started to cry. I realised that he felt alone; I had never heard a grown boy cry before. He was despairing.

For the first time in my own life I felt that I could not help this person, that I was insignificant and no matter what I tried to say it was he that had to make his own decision. I could not directly help him in this. There was no use saying what was moral, because I knew that a word of honour was equally important to him. I could not teach him what was right and wrong because I did not know myself.

He left shortly after he told me this. I am sad to say my efforts in comforting him had little effect. This boy went away feeling just as he had when he first spoke to me. It was his choice and no one could have persuaded him either way. I guess people believe that others can help them make choices but when it comes to the point when you have to make a decision, you can only rely on one person, you can only rely on yourself. Young though he was, Sam realised that in life you have to make your own choices. It is ironic that we have to make important decisions when seemingly we have 'no choice' in these matters.

LAURA GAZE (U6)

25th March 2003

A fight for liberation,
A present day crusade,
With much procrastination
From those left in the shade.

America, the super power,
The self-elected moral force,
Have set us in this early hour,
Snowballing on this course

Of missiles, tanks and dessert sand;
The terror of the very real.
Footage of the Merry Band
Of Brothers can't conceal

The uncivilised rejection
Of laws which were agreed,
Brought about by the election
Of an insane immoral greed.

The poignant discovery
That from the days of rolled barbed wire,
No progression; no recovery
From the ironic 'Friendly Fire.'

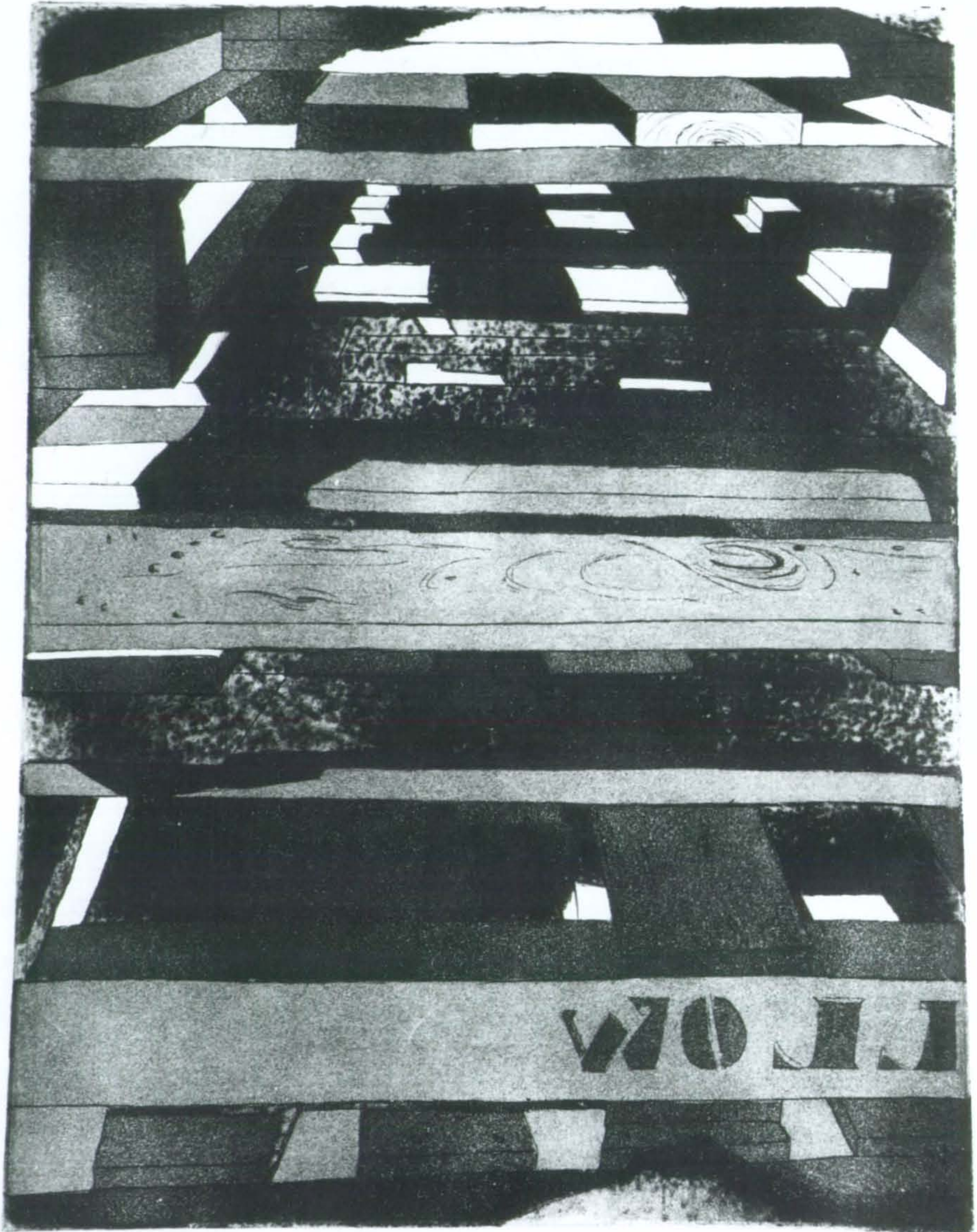
The Wheels of Time and History turn
Full circle; this is war again.
Yet still humanity fails to learn
The lesson that it's all in vain.

ARABELLA MYERSON (U6)

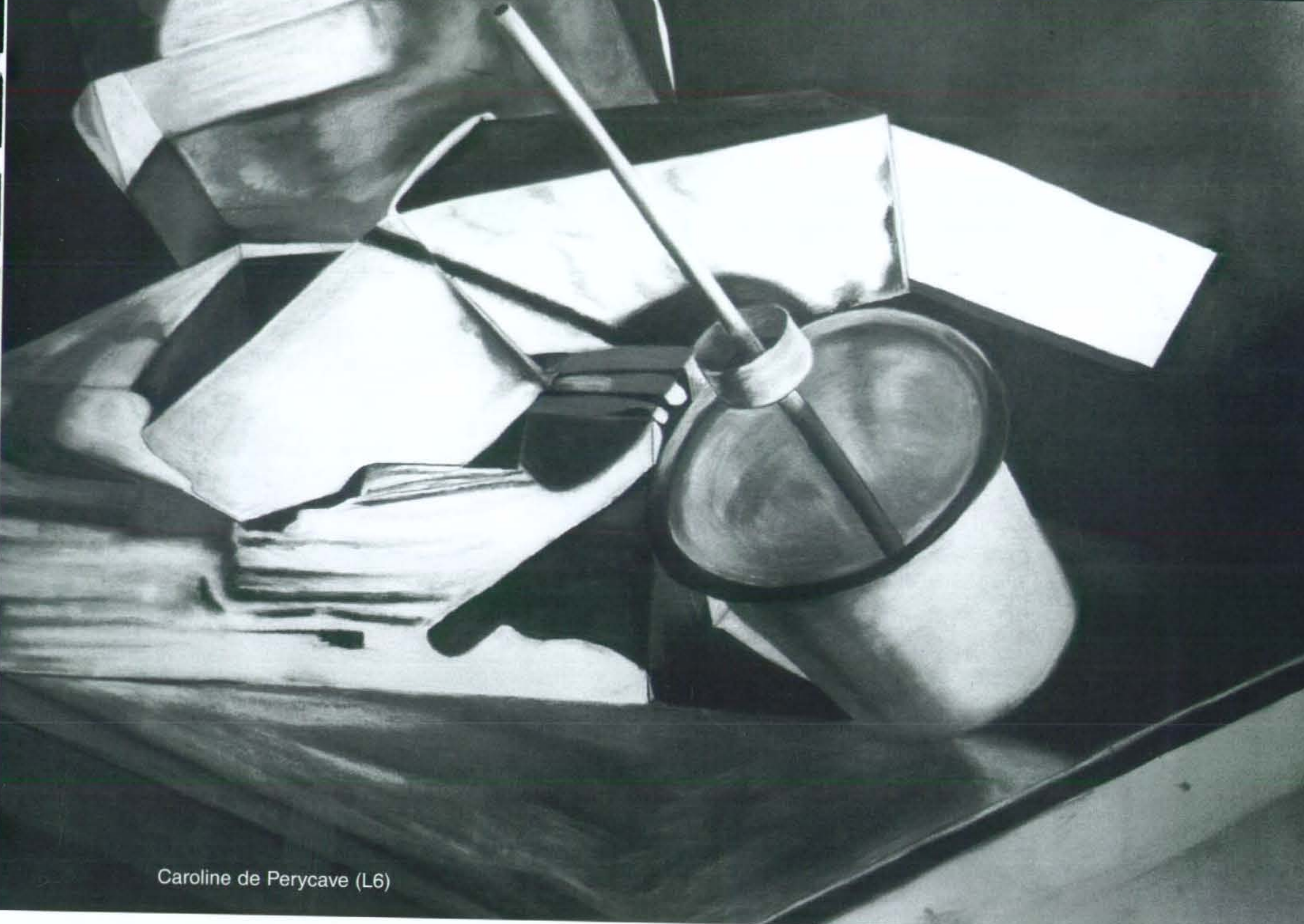
Discovery: Disenchantment at the
Midnight Realisation

Dark, revealing shapes writhe in the
Suggestive blur of throbbing sound.
Flashes of skin flaunt in my sight,
Swift, pointed glances invite me.
I move with the beat, in the sound.
Limbs stray to brush with other limbs.
Led aside from the myriad
Of bodies by a friendly arm,
Smoke-oozing Marlboro attached,
I am challenged. A sambouka
For the one who: "Gets the most pulls".
Like a black wave, the sickening
Thought wells up in my naïve mind.
This throng of dancing, of moving,
Of coy smiles and sweet alcohol,
All simply insinuations,
Method to bodily pleasure,
Gratification, lust, desire.
My blonde peer slides through a male group,
Gazing expectantly up, and
Drawing the lips of her chosen one
To her own vodka reeking breath,
Of course, he is not special, she
Performs the same animal-like
Ceremony with her next play.
The crudity of the night place,
Where I am a drop in the sea,
Is immediately appalling.

HARRY THUILLIER (L6)



Sofie Tachuk (U6)



Caroline de Perycave (L6)

Third form etching prints



WHERE'S MOTHER?

Upon receiving word that his elderly mother was moving house, respectable businessman Richard Wells decided to pay his mother a visit. The house, he had been informed, was a large country estate in Yorkshire, or thereabouts, and his mother had sold her house in London, having decided to end her long career as a Music teacher. It was the money from this valuable property that enabled her to afford such a majestic abode, as the money could hardly have come from teaching. The house itself was described to Mrs. Wells as being previously owned by a wealthy widower, whose wife left him in a mysterious accident, and local superstition had given rise to the theory that something sinister may have happened to the poor lady at the hands of her husband. Upon the widower's death the house was put up for sale by his relatives, and remained that way for some years, until Mrs. Wells had graciously bought it for well over its asking price, claiming that Murphy's law proclaimed that if she spent "any less on the old rotter than someone else was bound to come along and dislodge it from my grasp". Richard was told this excitedly over the phone by his mother, who barely stopped for breath, as she loved an old gossip and felt that if anything was left out then the house would lose its ancient charm upon first sight, for she believed that the history of a house has everything to do with your perception of it. Richard disagreed, and they both hung up the phone exasperated by the other's lack of understanding.

It was with this in his head that Richard swept around the windy country roads, occasionally swearing at a tractor for not allowing his flashy BMW to show off its full potential in a manner that they do in the adverts. Thinking over what his mother had told him, his imagination set to work with amazing inaccuracy over what the house was to look like. Having never spent much of his life in the country, he had trouble imagining any estate there without conjuring up a picture of something with the grandeur and finesse of Buckingham Palace. Of course, anyone who has been to Yorkshire will know that a large country house, although fit for a King, has no room for finesse, as rain and wind play a large factor in the construction of a home, and so the external appearance is of no consequence to the buyer. By the time Richard pulled up at the house, he was first overcome by an overwhelming feeling of disappointment, as the rough stone walls, overgrown with ivy and moss, had not a hint of Buckingham Palace about them. In truth, the house was in enormous disrepair, as several slates from the top of the roof were missing, and the wood around the doors and window panes was cracking. There was hardly a trace of the white paint that used to cover these aged necessities, as it had flaked away over the years it had been there, and no one thought to replace it. The House,

it seemed, was on the verge of crumbling away, as the rough hewn stone that constituted it gave the impression of apathy, and the gloom from within the many rooms expressed a feeling of lethargy. Even the door gave groans of disapproval when Richard pushed it open.

The inside of the house was no more rewarding than the out. The walls showed signs of dust and damp. In some places the dirty white ceilings had obvious cracks in them, with plaster as further evidence on the floor. Many rooms were filled with dustsheets and the place appeared deserted. The creaks in the floorboards did not stir the house, and one got the feeling that it was waiting in expectancy, and Richard was afraid to make a noise.

"Hello," he called out loud, hoping for some answer. None came.

"Hello!" he called again, louder this time. Still nothing. All he heard back was the patronising echo of his own voice, reverberating off the empty corridors and bare wooden stair cases. He launched his broad body into pursuit of the silence that lurked above the stairs, powering up 2 steps at a time. He reached the first floor, panting slightly, and now able to hear something. He was not quite sure what. As he advanced hurriedly through the dusty, dirty corridors in the direction of the noise, it became music.

"She's in," he said to himself.

He pushed open a heavy door, flatly pasted onto the slime green corridor it belonged to. The door creaked loudly and Richard was only able to push it slowly, the burden of its weight holding him back. He poked his head round the door cautiously, expecting a mass of ornate furniture, on which his mother rested. He was wrong again. Instead a lonely table stood in the middle of a room, faces by peeling wallpaper, tastelessly decorated with small, uneven tulips, decorated with large spots of damp, which stretched to the tar stained ceiling. Upon the table stood a small, fairly modern radio, on Classic FM. It rested on the lip of the table, looking in danger of falling, due to the broken floorboard the table rested on. Richard creaked to the table, straightened it and turned off the radio. He considered it odd, that the house seemed completely empty, and yet there was an unlocked door and a radio still on. It was unlike Mary to leave anything unlocked or on if she was out. He hoped that nothing bad had happened to her, to cause this strange circumstance.

Richard stepped back out into the corridor, and felt that the house was trying to get rid of him. The walls somehow seemed strangely closer together and the silence was impenetrable. As he advanced down the long corridor he noticed a strange green light, looming at the other end of the passage. It was now that Richard began to remember what his mother had told him about the

house. An image of the supernatural suddenly struck his imagination, and he gave a cold shiver. The house, now he thought about it, was freezing, and the theoretical presence of Ghosts suddenly became sharper. Perhaps the widower did kill his wife, and she was back to have her vengeance. He felt more afraid with every step he took. He was certain that the green light was a ghoully shadow of some unspeakable thing in the room directly to his left. It was with trembling hands that he pushed the door further ajar, and cautiously stepped into the room, expecting something unimaginable. It was, therefore, with a shock that he opened the door, to see nothing but a dust coated room, with peeling wallpaper, containing nothing but dirt and a large tinted window, beneath which, two storeys below was a bushy flowerbed.

Richard came to his senses. He knew that a man of 30 should not be thinking of such childish things as ghosts and haunted houses. Anyway, the rumour that the widower had killed his wife was still only a rumour. There would be a much more logical and business-like explanation, without resorting to fairy tales.

From upstairs Richard heard a bang. Like someone or something had fallen over. He dashed upstairs and ran in the direction of the sound. As he ran through endless corridors, more and more doors were open, to disclose in one room a ripped suitcase, in another, a phone unhooked on a nearby table. Evidence mounted as he got closer and closer, but evidence of what? Surely she can't have been robbed? He ran with more urgency, his echoing footsteps resounding through the now resonant corridors, his pinstripe suit now getting dustier and dustier as he brushed against forgotten walls. He only stopped when he reached a large bedroom, containing a four poster, and a dusty bookshelf, presenting a leather bound book which had probably never been opened. More importantly for Richard though, was a sheet – and a snapped kitchen knife, and they were both coated in red – blood red.

Suddenly a panic lurched through Richard, filling him from top to bottom like a warm bath. He suddenly saw the whole situation. A thief, or a murderer, came in. Hence the unlocked door. Mary was in the room with the radio, and got chased up stairs. On the way she tried to enter the room with the tinted window, hoping to jump down onto the bushes below, but had no time, hence the open door. From there she got to where Richard was now, and was stabbed, snapping the knife in the process. The murderer dropped the knife and pursued Mary... to where? Richard quickly looked round the room, and saw two big wood panelled doors. He took the first, and it led him into a bathroom, containing a mouldering bath and a tall Victorian toilet. It was a dead end. He retraced his steps and took the second door, back into the dark corridor.

Another bang followed, from the opposite room. Richard dashed in and almost fell over in shock.

“Mum!” he exclaimed. She was painting another bedroom red – blood red.

“Richard.” She beamed back at him, embracing him firmly. “I’m sorry, I didn’t hear you come in. Do you want some tea?”

“Y-yes,” he stammered.

Richard embraced his mother on the drive one last time, giving one last look at the house, which was now winking a yellow glow at him through its many eyes. And then he drove away; his experience still locked up in his mind. Maybe your knowledge of a house does change your perception of it.

EDMUND JONES (4TH)

The Clergyman

The arching slope of hand on thigh,
That distant point of view,
The angles of a sloping brow
That ever downward grew.

The sacred robes of black and white
And scented, aged room,
With wiser words of worlds beyond
And a death devoid of doom.

For is this man a greater soul
Than I can ever be?
For truth within his telling tales
Has withheld itself from me.

For as a sinful sceptic states,
As she sits and contemplates
A life devoid of saving fate
And “what is meant to be”,
That even were I in that Place,
That holy land of Light and Grace
To see my Master face to face,
I would still have yet to see

How men of wealth and sin and stance
Can judge you apart from all the rest –
Who are but more secret than me –
Yet one must trust that ‘He knows best’.

But who is He? If in a man
Is no more perfect than I am,
Yet men who just refuse to fight
Give in to this, and not what’s right.

DANIELLE GOODGER (L6)

A DESERTED MIND

White. All was white. These were the first thoughts of Edwin Ambrose for nearly five weeks, as he opened his eyes onto the murky white wall of Room 5G Ward 4 in the coma wing of the John Rudd Memorial Hospital. He studied his surroundings carefully; yet everything from the shabby white curtains to the warped and dusty bedside table stared back at him with the same strange look of unfamiliarity. He felt his mind had been constricted by a barbed wire fence and every time he tried to access it the wire tightened leaving a scar of confusion in its wake.

In the back of his skull he could feel a dull pain. He grasped his head and felt a thick cloth bandage slightly damp with what he assumed was his own perspiration. He attempted to get out of bed, but his efforts were sharply arrested by the previously invisible restraints that were tethering his feet to the bed. Struggling against the leather straps he began to panic and wildly thrash about. Theories went through his head, each one more farcical than the last: was he a spy captured by the enemy who...? No, that was too ridiculous, he concluded. Eventually he stopped flailing and with a sigh lay still on the synthetic covered infirmary bed.

He went through everything he could remember about the pokey room in which he was lying, the thoughts bouncing round his empty memory like a herd of space-hoppers set free. Edwin Ambrose could not remember any reason why he was tied to a bed in a room empty except for his small warped and dusty bedside table upon which a solitary glass of water was resting precariously. He turned his head and stretched out an arm towards his glass, gasping at the sight of his thin, wasted arm riddled with the hideous scars of lacerations. As he did this he noticed for the first time a thin red cord. He grabbed his lead to enlightenment and heaved it down. Nothing happened. He sighed and picked up his glass.

As he poured the first drops of water into his arid mouth, a large man with a beard pushed open the door in the corner of the room, checking beforehand through the shatterproof fibreglass window that he had the right room.

He took a few hefty strides into the room and then stood at the foot of the bed his podgy digits gripping the cold steel framework.

"Mr Ambrose!" he moaned jovially.

"Hello, Mr Ambrose, where am I?" replied the man in the bed to the vast beard that stood before him. The beard chuckled and then boomed

"No you are Mr Ambrose! I am Dr Leonard Mountjoy. You are in hospital, Mr Ambrose; you had a little accident." A shiver went down Edwin Ambrose's spine. He hadn't thought about it before but he suddenly realised he hadn't known his own name. The name the doctor called him was alien to him. Doctor Leonard Mountjoy stayed in the room for a further twenty minutes slowly explaining to his patient how he had ended up where he was. Then he left Edwin Ambrose to rest

and said he would return later to conduct a few tests. The tests came and went.

The eyelids of Edwin Ambrose were firmly shut at 11:32 am on the cold spring morning of March 16th but by 11:33 they were open and slowly adjusting to the inundation of light that swamped his eyeballs and squeezed his pupils until they looked like the tadpoles in the murky frogspawn of his eyes. When he had fully adjusted to the shocking brightness that confronted him, he noticed a small grey haired woman standing by the window. He called out to her, his raspy voice slightly muting his words: "Excuse me can I help you?" The woman turned, her eyes were crimson betraying the morning's tears.

"Oh Edwin," she said, her squeak matching her mouse-like proportions. Edwin Ambrose assumed the stranger was the nurse who had nurtured him through his injuries.

"I know I don't remember but thank you for everything Nurse."

At this the woman gasped in so much air it was remarkable that she had not inflated slightly. Her face turned the colour of the wall behind her and she staggered back into it as if there was a sheer drop in the floor in front of her.

"Oh, Eddy," she squeaked only just within the human hearing range. "It's all true, it's all true. How can it be...?" Her voice became indecipherable and she collapsed in the windowsill. At that moment the generously proportioned frame of Dr Leonard Mountjoy ambled in.

"Ah Mr Ambrose, I thought you'd be pleased to see your mother," he said jovially, mistaking the look of complete confusion and fear for one of content.

Edwin Ambrose could feel his body slowly stiffening with the blow that had shattered the already cracked pane of glass that was his hope. He knew now that the full nightmare of his thoughts was true. He was an amnesiac doomed for the rest of his life to be hounded by glimpses of a previous life, which he would never know. He wondered if he had a wife or any children. The words of the Doctor were getting the same treatment as the nagging pain in the back of his skull; they were being ignored.

From where Edwin Ambrose was standing, he could see everything for miles around. He could see all of the beautiful grounds stretching out before him. The sun was dying, the jaws of night were firmly clasped around it. Wrenched slowly downwards it bled its beautiful pink blood all over the bread-like clouds, which mopped up the remaining soup in the bowl that was the early evening sky. He saw the newly born lambs cavorting in the fields, embracing their new life. He took two eternal strides onto the projection and looked down at the concrete five storeys below. This would help him embrace his new life. His third that year.

CHARLES REYNOLDS (4TH)

SPANISH EXCHANGE

Well what can we say about the Spanish exchange? So many things to learn, so many places to visit, people to meet, food to taste, we could go on forever, but, no unfortunately there isn't enough time to tell you everything, not enough time to tell you how Dr Masters, Miss Kouyoumdjian, Kelly and Vicky counted the wolf whistles they received in Madrid, not enough time to tell you how Kelly made Charlie carry all her bags, or how Vicky got her very own personal Spanish stalker, about how Charlie insisted on counting the people in red trousers to prove that he was in fact cool, or how the four Stoics struggled through lessons, being forced to actually speak in front of thirty 16 year old Spanish students.

So we'll start from the beginning. On Wednesday 16th October 2002 four intrepid AS Spanish students, a Chilean Spanish assistant – Miss Kouyoumdjian – and our glorious leader, Dr. Masters flew from Heathrow to Madrid and drove on to San Lorenzo de El Escorial. San Lorenzo is a small town outside Madrid centred around the monastery of El Escorial. The monastery itself, a building that would make Stowe look comparatively small is now divided into a monastery, a tourist museum, a cathedral and a boarding school named after a former King of Spain, Alfonso XII. This was where we were to make our home for the next week. Having arrived late into the evening we unpacked quickly, giving Vicky and Kelly enough time to gloat about how they had a lovely guest room while the boys were forced to make do with a boarding house room and communal bathroom, before going to dinner – an experience imprinted in our memories for all the wrong reasons! As we walked in silence fell and this was the moment Dr. Masters decided to inform us in her casual, offhand manner that no, none of the girls that attend Alfonso XII board – wonderful. Trying to ignore the staring of the curious students we ate our dinner and went to bed early, wondering what the next day was to bring.

At breakfast we had luckily lost some of our mystery and the stares were less intense. The school exploded into life at eight thirty as students ranging from the ages of three to eighteen bounded down the echoing stone corridors. Vicky, Kelly and Dr. Masters joined Cuarto Eso A for religion and English, while the boys, Charlie and Harry, and Miss Kouyoumdjian began the day with classics and religion. The lessons were difficult to follow with the speed at which the teachers talk, not to mention the distraction of the intricate note-passing system employed by the students. However we tried very hard and managed to distinguish that the teacher was discussing the moral implications of cloning. Dr. Masters ended up joining in and just as she got going the lesson ended and it was time for inglés – much easier, or so Vicky and Kelly thought. At first the students practiced their English by asking us questions in English but soon the tables turned and we were forced to show off our linguistic skills – much easier when one is in a Stowe classroom, not so much when you are being put on the spot.

So that was our first morning in a Spanish school, interesting, scary and very different to what we had anticipated. We all met to go over our first morning and talk about the coming afternoon. We then had one more lesson, before eating lunch and then going into town with our new Spanish friends who couldn't wait for us to teach them some useful English words.

After lunch it was time for some culture and we began our tour of the palace/museum section of El Escorial. It was fascinating, we saw the state rooms, the King and Queen's bedroom and the dazzling green marble and gold vault in which almost every King and Queen of Spain has been laid to rest. We visited the cathedral, with its spectacular altar, huge pieces of religious art and its stunning statues in the courtyard outside. Being released into the town for the afternoon, we students went exploring, discovering the local pizza place, the sweet shop, the clothes shop and the market. After another slightly uncomfortable dinner, we attempted to make friends with some of the boarders before going to bed, exhausted after a day where we had learnt and done more than we could ever have expected. The following six days in El Escorial followed a similar pattern though our cultural trips became further afield and even more fascinating. We visited Avila, one of the highest towns in Spain, Segovia, Toledo, Valle de los Caidos. Franco's tomb and of course Madrid where we saw Picasso's Guernica, Las Meninas and pictures by Dali, we shopped until we dropped and finished the day with dinner in the beautiful Plaza Mayor, as the sun set on a beautiful, hot day. These trips were not only fascinating but they allowed us to practice communicating in Spanish. We translated the Spanish guidebooks, asked for directions and spoke to shop assistants in Spanish, allowing us to become more confident in communicating with Spanish speaking people, making the idea of doing this much less intimidating. We made many friends at El Escorial who are excited at the prospect of visiting Stowe, some of whom we are still in contact with, we learnt unbelievable amounts of Spanish history and experienced the reality of Spanish culture whether it be through eating paella, or by trying to work out the public transport system (not as easy as it sounds!) These people showed us great hospitality and we are looking forward to doing the same.

By the end of our stay we didn't want to come home, we felt as though we were just beginning to become confident in our Spanish alter-egos and Charlie was sure that in another two weeks he'd be fluent! An exchange like this teaches you more than new vocabulary, it teaches you how to use a language in a way that makes people understand, it teaches how language shouldn't be a barrier between people and that learning about the history and a culture of another country can be just as fascinating, if not more so than learning about your own.

KELLY KERRUISH AND VICKY STIRLING

VIENNA TRIP, AUTUMN 2002

By a stroke of great good fortune we were able to take some musicians on an exchange trip to Vienna in the autumn term 2002. Thanks to Dr James who made the arrangements our end and to Heike Putz of the Theresianische Akademie who made all our arrangements at the Vienna end and went far beyond the call of duty in all she did for us. The students who came on the trip were Ryan Coughlan and Hubert Bourke-Burrows (both studying German at Stowe), Edmund Jones, Sam Vance-Law, Edward Cowan, Gabriella Alexander, Sarah Turner, Jonathan Howse and George Walker (musicians). In addition to myself (RJSS) we were accompanied by BJD and Christina Thompson-Jones. The trip was, without fear of any hyperbole, a life-changing experience for all of us. No price can be put on the experience of taking part in such a trip – the sheer beauty and magnificence of the Schloss Schönbrunn or St. Stephan's Cathedral, or knowing that one was walking on the same ground as Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mahler to name but four musicians yet alone painters, philosophers – the list is endless. The students had many wonderful experiences – performing in a church with the same organ that Mozart had used to direct a performance of one of his masses when he was twelve years old, experiencing a boat trip on the Danube – the list is endless. I asked Edmund Jones to keep a diary, the edited highlights of which follow.

Vienna Diary: Friday, Day 1

We had to have an early start to catch our flight from Heathrow. On arrival at Vienna we were greeted by all of our exchange partners on behalf of their school, The Theresianische Akademie (the buildings of which were donated by Maria Theresia in 1746). We were then taken

to the school and given a guided tour by our exchange partners and given a brief outline as to what we were going to do by Heike Putz, the Austrian organizer. We then retired to an Austrian Cafe for Almdudler (an exclusively Austrian Fizzy drink) and cake. We split up in the evening and had supper with our host families.

Saturday, Day 2

For a lucky few of our number Saturday morning at around 6.30am was their first taste of an Austrian breakfast, which normally consists of buns with cheese and salami and perhaps Nutella. We arrived at school at 8.00 and had a short look at Vienna, by going round "The Ring" on a tram. (The Ring is a road which encircles the centre of Vienna). Following the tram ride we went to Anna Kirche, a baroque church in which the musicians were to do their first concert. There we rehearsed until we were met by our exchange partners for lunch. The previous day, we had been given our tickets to the Vienna Philharmonic's concert at a concert hall called the Musikverein. This is where we were to go after lunch. The concert turned out to be fantastic we went back to Anna Kirche to perform a concert of our own. After the concert we went out into Vienna with our exchange partners to have a party.

Sunday, Day 3

After a lazy morning, in the afternoon we went out with our host families. One of the things suggested was to go to the Prater wheel, an old version of the London Eye. My hosts took me to a big hill out side Vienna called Kahlenberg, which has immense significance in the history of Vienna. Others went to the Vienna Woods, a large section of Woodland. It was only at 5.00pm that

Outside the Schönbrunn Palace





The String Quartet: Edward Cowan, Gabriella Alexander, Sam Vance Law and Edmund Jones at the Waisenhaus Kirche

we had any thing that we had to do, and so we arrived at Theresianum to have a rehearsal for a concert we were playing in that evening. The performance was in the Waisenhaus Kirche, a beautiful big Church, built in the Baroque style. Mozart played the organ when he conducted his first mass there when he was only 12 years of age!

Monday, Day 4

We went to the Bösendorfer piano factory in the morning. We all soon realized how much skill and time it takes to make a piano. For a grand piano it takes about three years to make including time for wood drying. Free time then followed and many of us found a particular Pizza parlor in Stephanes platz where we would soon find that it was about the only place that we actually knew how to get to. In the afternoon we went to the Schönbrunn Palace, the home of the dynasty of Austria.



Edmund Jones with two technicians at the Bösendorfer piano factory

Tuesday, Day 5

Another early start that we now knew as routine was required today, as we were going to the wine growing area of Austria, the Wachau, accompanied by a whole 2 years of the school. To start with, we went to a monastery at Melk. The monastery used to be a residence of Maria Theresia, and is built in the Baroque style. As a bit of a side track, if you do not know what Baroque style is then I will tell you that it is highly elaborate and decorative. We had a guided tour that was very interesting, and we learnt much about its history. After the monastery the troop retired to a very new small restaurant. In the afternoon we went to see the ruin of a fortress which held our King Richard the Lionheart, on the way back from the crusades. The visit was preceded by a Danube boat ride and a visit to the ghost town Spitz. In the evening we went to a horn and harp recital given by Roland Horvath and Julia Reth. The concert was given in the "früstückspavillon des Kaisers" in the zoo. The concert was followed by a wonderful meal.

Wednesday, Day 6

The day began with us seeing a collection of ancient musical instruments. In the afternoon we took part in a rehearsal with the Theresianum school orchestra. Following the rehearsal we went to the opening day of an art exhibition of the works of Gustav Klimpt. In the evening we went to the Opera. The performance was of Romeo and Juliet by Gounod which was fantastic, wonderful singers and a very contemporary production.

Thursday, Day 7

We gave a concert in the morning after which RJSS decided that to treat us we should go to the cafe. The place he chose was The Hotel Sasha where we were able to sample Sasha Torte. We then went to a Steinway shop that we had spotted on the way back from the Bösendorfer Factory. Mr. Davey demonstrated his skill on a piano that was chosen and played by Arthur Rubenstein himself. In the afternoon we visited Mozart's House. The night was a lot of fun for all of us as we went out again.

Friday, Day 8

Our last day and we played a concert for the year sevens, the equivalent of our Sixth form. The concert went well and as a final bit of sight seeing, we went to the Votiv Kirche. Deciding that it would be best to do a bit of final souvenir shopping, we were allowed some free time. It was our last glimpse of the beautiful city before we departed on a hair-raising flight back to Heathrow, landing in appallingly wet and windy conditions. The trip was well enjoyed by all of us, and I would like to take the opportunity to say thanks to all the teachers for making the trip possible.

EDMUND JONES

MODEL EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Dublin 2002

Meeting all the other members of the UK delegation for the first time I was admittedly a little nervous, after all I'd be spending the whole week working with them. The initial run through of the procedures for drafting measures and clauses together got us all talking, and it was good to get to know each other a bit before going off the next morning to face the rest of Europe together!

On arrival at St. Andrews College we met some of the delegations from the other countries and mixed a little before being taken to our host houses. Most of us lived pretty close together on two estates and on the same bus route, making it easy to meet up. Everyone seemed to have great hosts, and our roommates (all from different countries) were 'interesting' too.

Each person from the delegation was on a different committee, mine being "Development and Co-operation." The next day we were to meet the rest of our committee: composed of a delegate from each of the member countries. These were the groups we'd be working with to draft our bills which we'd fight to get through the parliament. Teambuilding for us consisted of abseiling, which was fun even when it started raining torrentially!—something it seemed to do a lot in Ireland! Other teambuilding games we did in school too, and it was hard not to make friends.

For the next few days our programme consisted of committee meetings where we would attempt to draft our bills. Our committee's brief was to introduce measures to tackle the spread of infectious diseases in developing countries, as well as general development objectives. This was admittedly a long process, there is so much to do and everyone has his or her own agenda for saving the world! Everyone speaking in English helped, but there were still a lot of 'misunderstandings' which the native speakers had to help sort out – it needed patience but it was funny though! After a few days of meetings we had finally got the draft of our bill prepared and were ready to go before the General Assembly.

Interspersed with these meetings were trips out. Visiting historic houses/sites, Dublin, shopping, pubs and cafés, which all helped us mix a bit more and relax too.

One evening we also got to go for a dinner at the British embassy, and to meet the Ambassador! It was a pleasant night, with some interesting table talk too.

Before the General Assembly we returned to our UK delegation to go over points we wanted to raise concerning all the bills that would be introduced in the parliamentary session. It can make you really nervous when they go over your committee's bill, but at least you find out what you need to prepare for to defend your bill.

The days of the General Assembly were probably the best we had. Getting to go to the plush Irish Parliament with all the concierge, guards, and getting your own microphone made you feel really important (or maybe that was just me!). Sitting with your delegation to hear speeches in favour, against, amendments to bills and then voting on them was interesting. Resisting the temptation not to block vote against an annoying country is difficult, especially when they did it to you. Sitting in the hot seat with your own committee to defend your own bill it becomes a bit different! Answering all questions and criticisms about the most minute details of a bill can be nerve racking, but it was a great challenge. It's amazing how passionate you get about defending the bill you drafted so painstakingly. In the end, though my committee's bill didn't pass (by 6 votes!) it was a great experience.

Packing up to go, we all looked back over the great week we'd had; making new friends and swapping addresses, pubbing, shopping, chilling in the Cafés (Bewley's Irish Café was the best – a kind of Irish Starbucks) and doing a little work as well: You don't really say no to work when Mrs Andrew and Dr. James are on the case; but really, they were great throughout the week and kept us out of trouble pretty well too! It was a great time, an experience none of us will forget.

PETER TROMANS

MODEL EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Helsinki 2003

In March, Verity Taylor, Oliver Hogg and George Margesson were selected to join seven others from schools around Britain to represent the country in the Model European Parliament in Finland.

As we stepped out of the airport, we were pleasantly surprised that the climate was not quite so cold as we had expected. However, the worse was to come, with the mercury plummeting to -20° C during the next week! We were picked up and whisked through the wintry landscape to the team-building centre, where we savoured the delights of midnight tobogganing, and a sauna followed by a dive in a frozen lake. We quickly got to know many of the 150 other delegates from the other 14 EU countries and 3 of the applicant nations. On the Sunday evening we each met our host family who were generously putting up with us for the week!

On Monday we had to navigate our way around Helsinki for the opening ceremony, before starting our committee meetings. These were in groups of around 15, one person from each country, and throughout the week we each debated a different topic, from European defence policy to pollution in our seas. In four days we had to come up with formal resolutions of our policies, some of which were realistic, others more controversial, such as the one which proposed the legalisation of heroin (this policy was eventually removed before the vote!) All were a combination of co-operation and teamwork.

On the Friday and Saturday, all the delegates came together in the main chamber of the Finnish Parliament to debate the resolutions in their final form.

Each was debated for around an hour before being voted on, and everyone had the chance to speak, with the UK delegation being one of the most vocal! We were also typically conservative and "British," unanimously opposing the majority of opinion on numerous occasions. On my resolution, we all abstained in protest at a statement made by a Belgian that Britain wanted a war in Iraq!

It was not all work, though. On the Monday we were invited to a reception with the Finnish President, Mrs Halonen, who gave an interesting address about the role of young people in the future. The next evening we had dinner at the British embassy, which was a fascinating experience and insight into the life of international diplomacy. We enjoyed a Finnish disco and evening of culture with local dancing and revelations about the unintelligibility of the Finnish language.

All too soon it was over and we were heading back to the warmer British climate, leaving behind many friends we had made along the way. An amazing sense of community built up very quickly, and it was sad to leave. However, e-mail communication has continued!

I would like to thank everybody who has worked so hard to give so many young people such an unforgettable experience, particularly Mrs Andrews, Dr James and Mr Delaney, who put in a lot of time and effort. My thanks also go to Mrs. van Sminia, the Secretary-General of the Model European Parliament foundation, and all the host families in Finland, who made such an experience possible.

GEORGE MARGESSON

A GAP YEAR IN COSTA RICA

I remember well the day I decided to spend my Gap year in Costa Rica. It was winter, a wet, miserable Monday. I had dashed over from Lyttelton to the careers office in torrential rain. As I squelched in and tried to wring myself out Doc James asked me where I planned to go in my Gap year. Looking out to the grey sky and biblical scale downpour I rolled my eyes and muttered with discontent, "Anywhere where it doesn't do that."

A year later I found myself living in Atenas, a small town in the central valley of Costa Rica whose one and only claim to fame is that a 1994 National Geographic Survey decided it had "el mejor climat del mundo", the best climate in the world: mission accomplished then!

Costa Rica is a small country, about the size of Wales, its name translates as "Rich Coast" and I was to discover it is just that. Sandwiched between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean at the southern end of the Central American isthmus there are 12 distinct ecological zones and seven active volcanoes, an exciting prospect, having studied Geology and Biology to A-level. I had also enjoyed community service in a local primary school so decided a 4-month teaching English to children placement, organised by i-to-i, followed by some independent travel would be my challenge.

Before I left I spent a weekend in London on a TEFL course. In San José the Costa Rican capital, I had a week of intensive Spanish lessons (so much for two years of French A level), before travelling to my placement in Atenas, where I met my local host family and began teaching.

The school was a government funded primary school with just over a thousand pupils. The day began at 7am and ended at 2pm. I taught five classes a day, two to the Kindergarten, where the children broke into spontaneous applause when I arrived as they were so excited at the prospect of having a lesson with me, it's hard being popular! The remaining three lessons were with children between 7 and 12 years of age. When I learned I was the first volunteer ever to have been placed in the school, I decided to do an introductory talk about the UK and myself. My first task was to explain to the children that England was not, as many of them believed, a city in the USA but a country! I might have overplayed the "It's very cold in England" card slightly though, as they asked if we had Eskimos, igloos or polar bears!

Teaching was great fun.

At weekends and in the weeks following my teaching placement I explored the country. Highlights of these excursions include going to a political rally and shaking hands with the Leader of the Opposition: calmly gliding over the rainforest canopy on the unique aerial tram project where the only problem was not knowing where to look, up, down, left, right, because as far as the eye could see was virgin rainforest: basking in the sun on beautiful white sand beaches; swimming in warm sparkling seas and watching the clouds turn every colour in the spectrum as the sun set over the Pacific Ocean: peering over into the crater of a live volcano as the sulphurous fumes emitted from the fumaroles filled my nostrils: experiencing an earthquake: watching wild dolphins leap about playfully in the sea: seeing toucans on the walk to school, walking through the rainforest and spotting poison dart tree frogs: catching a glimpse of a family of monkeys as they swung through the canopy: swimming under an ice cold waterfall high up in the mountains. Happy memories...

But it's not just the extraordinary things that were so special, experiencing the ordinary day to dayness of living and being a member of a Tica (Costa Rican) family, arriving home to be greeted by a hyperactive Maripaz (5) and Jorge Antonio (3) yelling "Ailsa, Ailsa, can we play?!", waking up to see the flea ridden family boxer dog, Brawlie, chasing 4 cows and a white horse round the garden (OK, that's not that ordinary!), improving my Spanish by chatting with Karen (my host) whilst sat on the balcony of their house with a view that overlooks the central valley.

Costa Rica is indeed a rich coast, richly blessed with warm hearted, kind and generous people.

I arrived as a stranger and left as a friend. My host family took me into their hearts and lives, so by the time I left they had become a second family. What an experience!

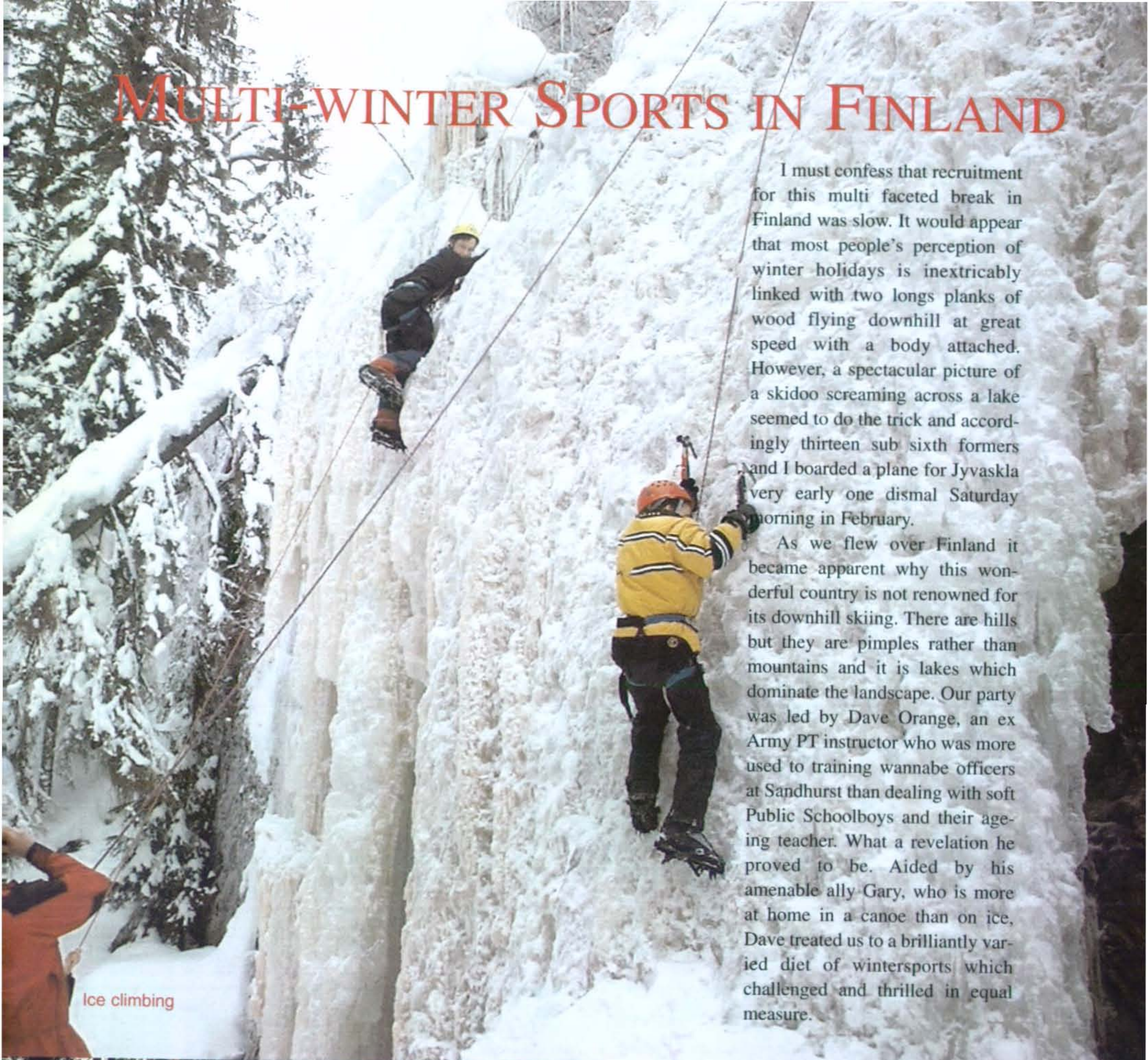
It is impossible to sum up five of the best months of my life in a short article. I experienced and learnt so much in Costa Rica and on top of that had a lot of fun, have some priceless memories and made many life long friends. A massive thank you to the Old Stoic Society for their generous contribution towards my trip. And thanks especially to Doc James and Doc Waldman for their inspiration.

AILSA COLE

MULTI-WINTER SPORTS IN FINLAND

I must confess that recruitment for this multi faceted break in Finland was slow. It would appear that most people's perception of winter holidays is inextricably linked with two long planks of wood flying downhill at great speed with a body attached. However, a spectacular picture of a skidoo screaming across a lake seemed to do the trick and accordingly thirteen sub sixth formers and I boarded a plane for Jyvaskla very early one dismal Saturday morning in February.

As we flew over Finland it became apparent why this wonderful country is not renowned for its downhill skiing. There are hills but they are pimples rather than mountains and it is lakes which dominate the landscape. Our party was led by Dave Orange, an ex Army PT instructor who was more used to training wannabe officers at Sandhurst than dealing with soft Public Schoolboys and their ageing teacher. What a revelation he proved to be. Aided by his amenable ally Gary, who is more at home in a canoe than on ice, Dave treated us to a brilliantly varied diet of wintersports which challenged and thrilled in equal measure.



Ice climbing



Snow boarding



Snow-shoe walking

Having settled into our basic but comfortable university style accommodation we spent the first evening letting off steam with a game of indoor football in the gym and by sledging down the steep and treacherous footpath to our rooms. The following morning we were greeted by brilliant sunshine and crisp snow as we headed off for our first conventional day skiing down the only local slope. This gave kamikaze Zhang the opportunity to learn how to fell an entire line of beginners with the minimum of effort and the more experienced trio of Tom Bailey, Guy Trevor-Jones and Ed Cookson the chance to hone up their snow boarding skills.

The second day saw the party divided into two groups as we set off to try our luck at first cross country skiing and then snow shoe walking. The former proved exceedingly entertaining as we were supplied with inadequate wellington boots which seemed to slip their way off the narrow skies at every opportunity. As we trekked our way around the edge of a lake we soon realised that this is a very different skill where control seems to be invested in the snow rather than the wearer of the wellington boots. Hilarious scenarios ensued as we slowly climbed to the top of the steep edges to the lake only to speed head first into deep drifts as we attempted to return to the flat surfaces below. Snow shoe walking was surprisingly enjoyable allowing us to wander into many otherwise inaccessible areas of forest.

Ice hockey and ice climbing dominated the third day. Here we discovered that trendy Prendy had stolen a march on us by keeping quiet about his skating expertise as he scored goal after goal past the luckless Richard Hill. A frozen marsh overspill provided the venue for ice climbing, without doubt our most physically challenging activity of the week. Donning crampons and safety ropes we trusted each other to break the inevitable falls as we strove to find secure crevices to wedge our two ice picks. Although short, these climbs proved to be exhausting and gave us an insight into the difficulties facing conquerors of such giants as Mt Everest. During the afternoon we returned to the lakes for our second taste of cross-country skiing, this time with top quality equipment. What a difference this made, though it didn't seem to stop the intrepid Rupert Rowling from making the most spectacular high speed fall of the week. Quite how he survived without broken bones remains a mystery.

We had eagerly awaited our rendez vous with the husky dog teams but had not expected them to be so friendly. Their characteristic howls filled the air as we arrived but these eerie sounds were not due to stress as their licks and slobber were to prove. It soon became clear that these dogs love work. Immediately the sleds appeared and they were released from their leads they gathered round the musher apparently pleading to be harnessed. Teams of ten pack quite a punch and the acceleration they produced when pulling three of us in a sled was truly impressive.

Living in such a cold, snow bound wilderness for prolonged periods clearly provided the ancestral Finns with limited access to fresh food. Learning how to ice fish by rod and net was fascinating. Drilling two holes in the ice twenty metres apart, threading a net between them and then waiting for twenty four hours before drawing the net in again does not sound like a recipe for success. Imagine our surprise therefore when we hauled in four large pike in one such net at our first attempt. That evening a special disco was organised for us with a local school in a nearby hotel. Hugely outnumbered by girls and outwitted by their male peers our boys nevertheless made their mark with Peter Ross-Beeby leading the way gaining a clear advantage with his distinctive, and locally attractive, coloured hair.

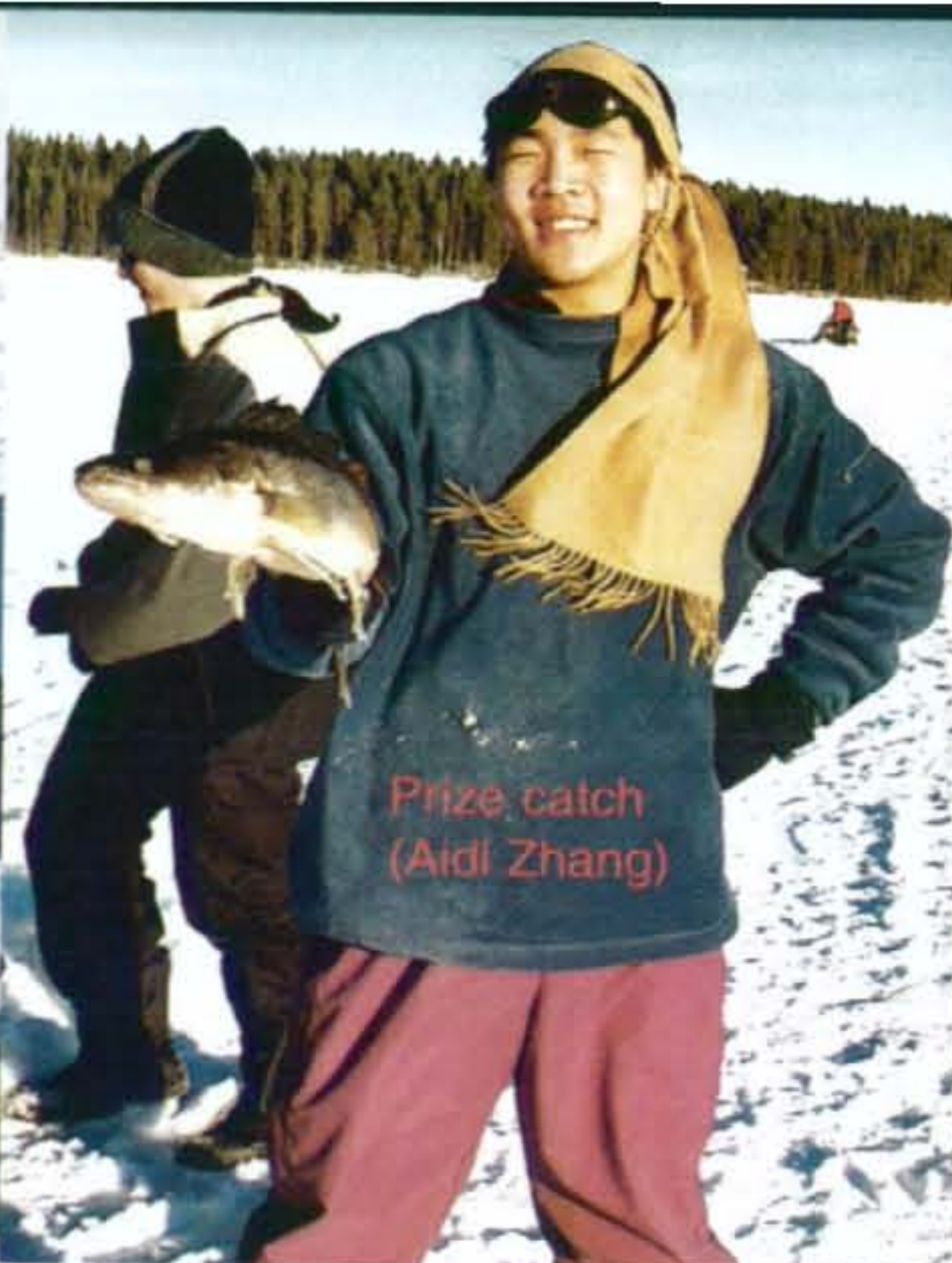
I suppose that many of us had been looking forward to the skidoo safari on the last day more than any other activity. We were not to be disappointed as nothing could have prepared us for the sheer exhilaration of flying across the frozen lakes on these machines. After an initial training run and exhortations to take care to cling on to the skidoo at all times, our instructor set off across the ice at breakneck speed. Travelling in convoys of six we bounced across the ice frequently reaching speeds of 120 kph. Julian Nesbitt was so keen to catch up with the skidoo ahead that he accelerated beyond the stress limits of the skidoo's drive belt and was left stranded. Whilst waiting for our turn on the skidoos we were urged to compete as teams in a series of unusual winter games which included log sawing, firing catapults and throwing the tomahawk. The final bizarre challenge was, however, kept until, last. Finns are renowned of course for their saunas followed by beating each other with birch twigs before finally plunging into a hole in the ice containing freezing lake water. The concept of an ice sauna was, however, beyond me. How can an igloo carefully constructed from beautifully clear blocks of ice carved from frozen lakes survive clouds of steam emanating from hot rocks all winter. The secret is in the outside temperature which falls to minus 20°C or below for most of the night. Tom Mitchell, Aidi Zhang, Julian Nesbitt, Guy Bonsall and Ben Gaffney all deserve medals for following local traditions but were particularly glad to gather around the fire immediately afterwards for delicious fillets of salmon cooked slowly on a board in front of the fire.

I don't think that any of us wanted this week to end. The sheer variety of experiences on offer, the pace of the week and the friendliness of the people we met would be difficult to match in most winter resorts. Everyone vowed to return one day. Many thanks to 'Open Doors' and 'Activities Abroad' for organising such a superb holiday. Who's for next year?

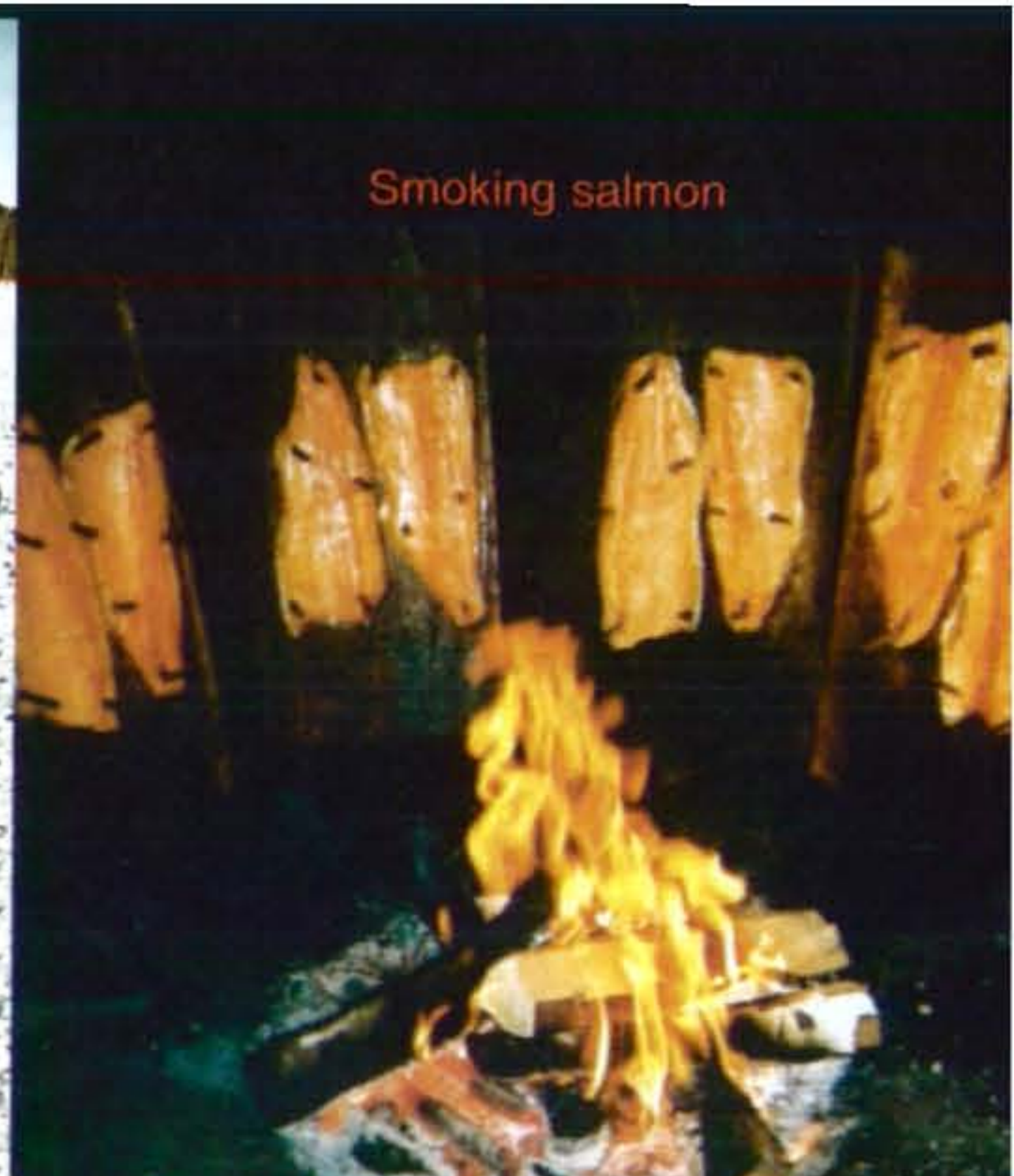
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Ice fishing
(Guy Trevor-Jones)



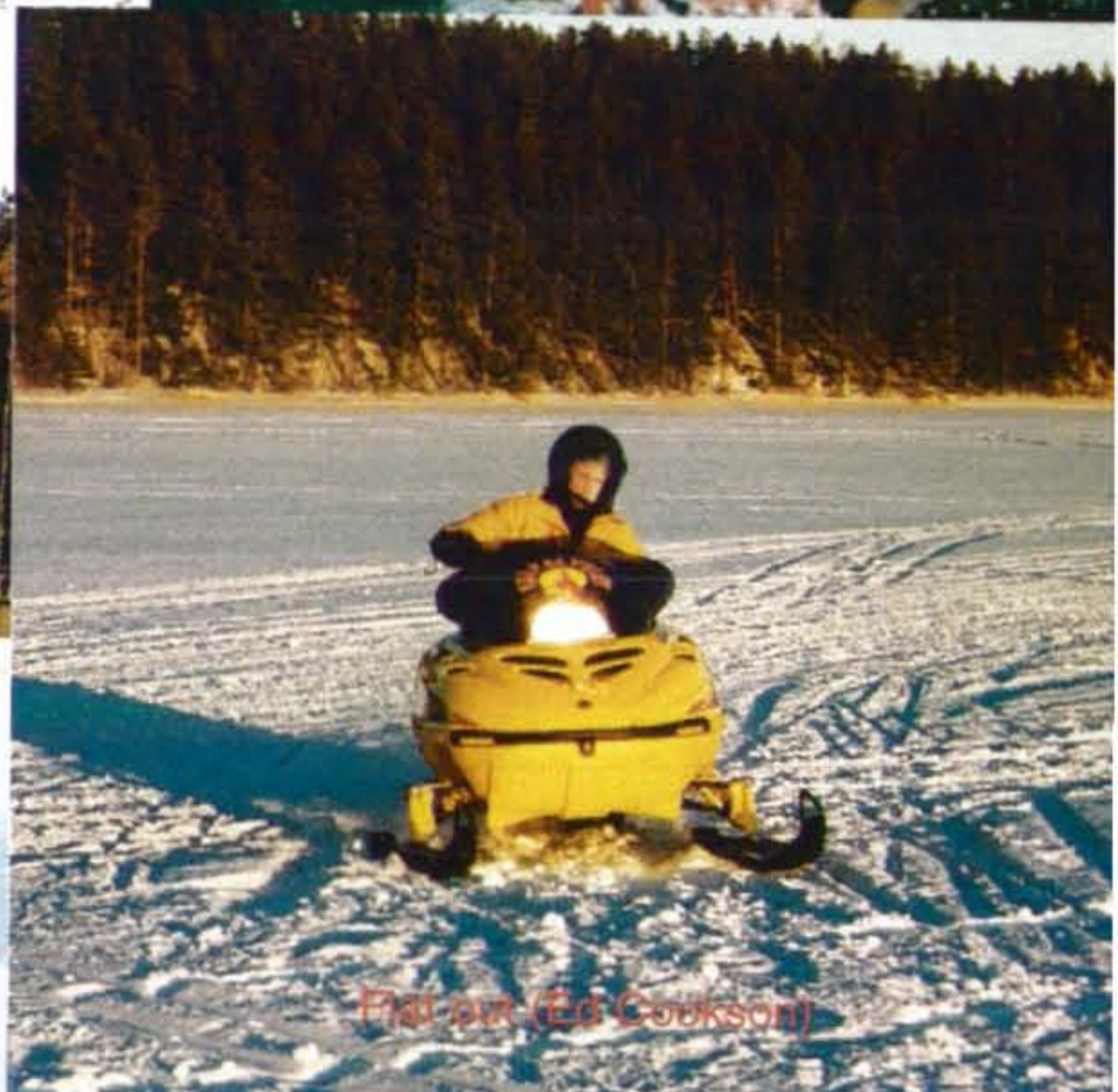
Prize catch
(Aidi Zhang)



Smoking salmon



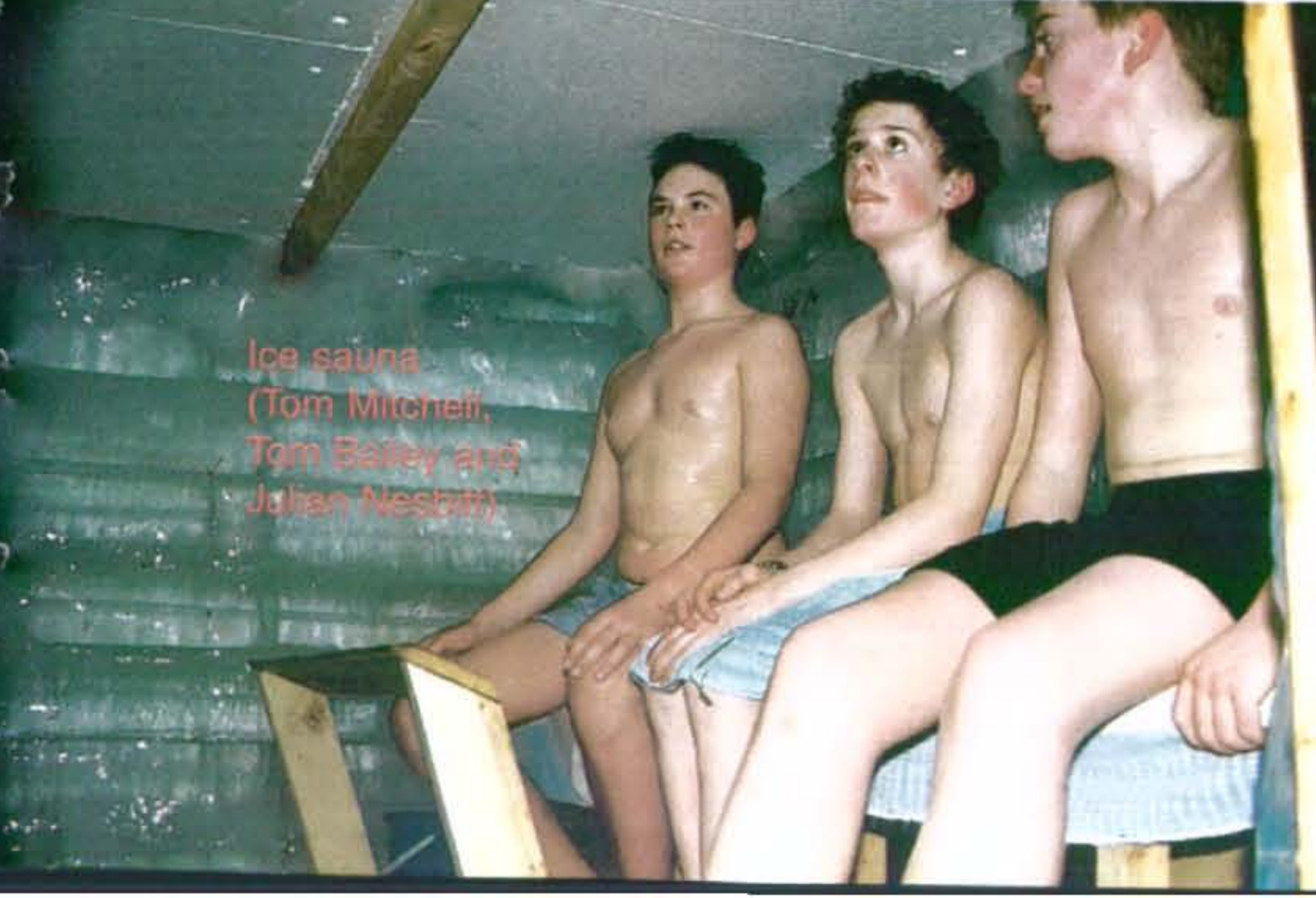
First day on Skidoos



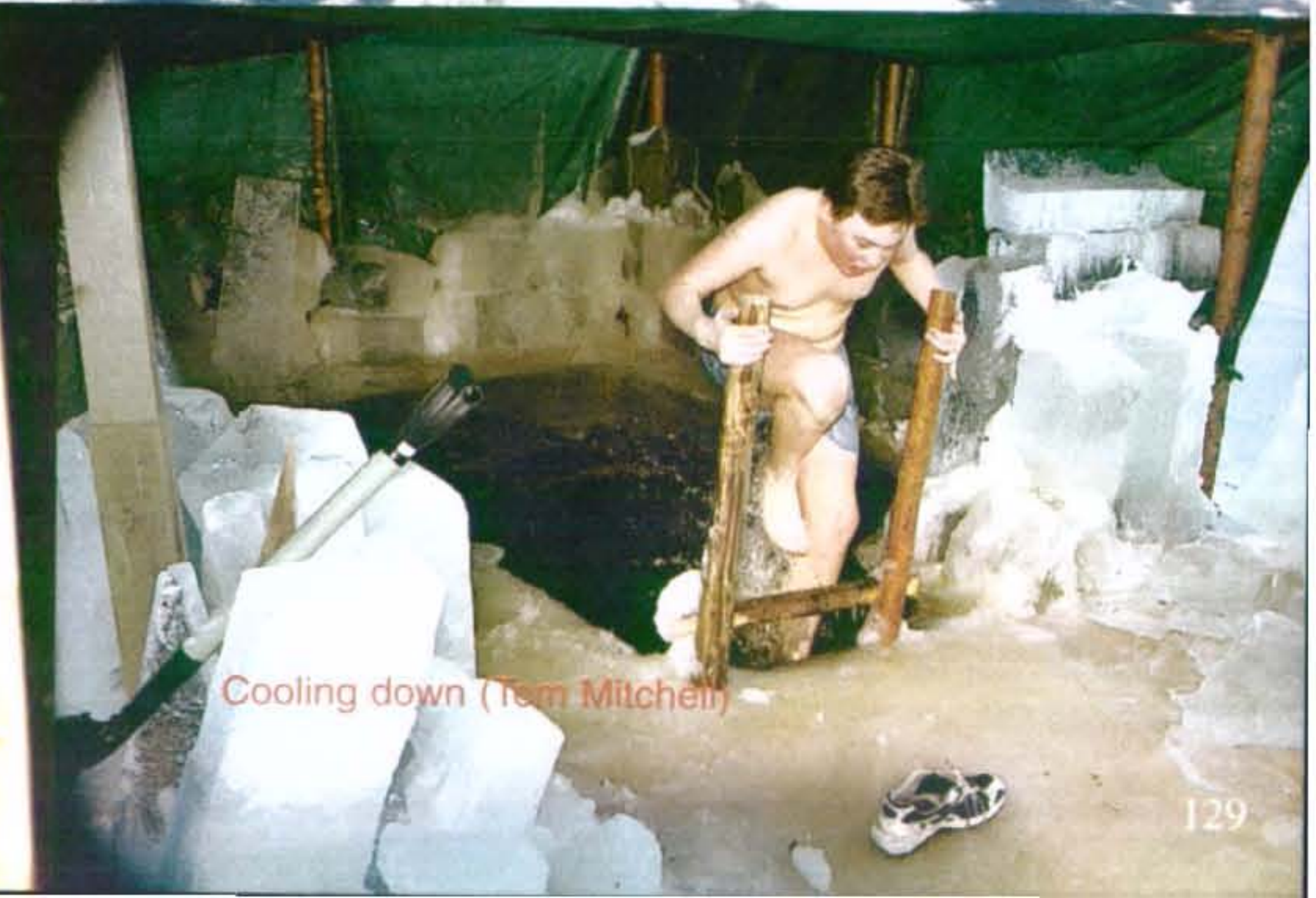
Flat out (Ed Cookson)



Husky driving



Ice sauna
(Tom Mitchell,
Tom Bailey and
Julian Nestor)



Cooling down (Tom Mitchell)

Alex Pike and Merlin Hanbury-Tenison

reveal all about the

MYLES HENRY AWARD 2002



We arrived in Manzini international Airport 'which was no bigger than the North front pavilion with a tarmac runway' in true style on the Kingdoms own airline 'Airlink Swaziland'. The airline consisted of one aeroplane that flew to all of two destinations, Durban and Johannesburg, and only twice a week, so it was paramount that we didn't miss the flight. Once we had landed we were greeted with a man standing on the tarmac with a sign saying 'Money Laundering meeting' at which point most of the plane disembarked and walked towards him.

Once through customs, which consisted of a wooden table and an old man, we met our mentor and manager of Mbuluzi Game Reserve, Gustav. Mbuluzi Game reserve is situated in the north-eastern corner of Swaziland on the foothills of the Lobombo Mountains and less than an hours drive away from Mozambique. It is approximately 15,000 hectares of mainly bush felt and has all the game apart from Lion, Elephant and Rhino which we saw later on in our trip.

Surrounding the game reserve were huge estates planted with the main cash crop of Swaziland: Sugar Cane. It is all artificially irrigated by thousands of sprinklers that remain on 365 days a year. It is so productive that it is harvested twice a year. We went to visit a mill for one of the estates where they crush hundreds of thousands of cane every year and turn it into white and brown sugar, molasses and alcohol.

Upon reaching were we were to stay for the next two weeks we found a palace compared to the mud hut we were expecting. It even had a fridge, air-conditioning and a maid as standard. We were kindly being put up in the garden of the manager of the local cane estate. Before Gustav left he told us that we would be picked up at 6am tomorrow morning and to have our lunches and everything we needed ready as we would be in the bush all day! We became aquatinted with the family dogs Bonnie and Red who did a good job every night of scarring away the monkeys as well as waking us up!

The main purpose of our trip and the reason for our charity run was to go out and set up a project to deal with the massive ecological problem of Chromoleana Odorata (more commonly known as Chromilina or the Triffid weed) and employ and train 12 locals. Chromilina was brought to Southern Africa on a cargo ships in 1945 during the Second World War but did not take a grip of the region until about 1995 and has since began devastating the natural bush lands of southern Africa by out competing and dominating the indigenous plants for water and

light. The weed originates from South and Central America. It grows up to 8 feet high and releases approx. 1.3 million seeds a year. The advantages of setting up the project in conjunction with Mbuluzi Game Reserve was that all the money that we raised went strait to the workers as the infrastructure was already set up with a similar programme.

Our 5:30 start came as quite a shock to the system but we were none the less just about ready by the time Gustav arrived. We were taken to the reserve's offices where we met by the 12 guys that were about to employ. Before we arrived in Swaziland Gustav had gone to the local chief of an area called Maphaptula, which is one of the poorest areas in Swaziland and had been hit particularly badly by the drought which was still ongoing when we arrived. He hired 12 men form the worst affected families. They were all registered, and had the rules of the game reserve explained to them, which mainly revolved around no poaching and dealing with animals before we entered the reserve. They were all very shy to begin with but soon became open and friendly after a couple of days.

Each of the men who we employed was among the poorest in their areas. Most of the men came from an area called Maphaptula which was about half a mile from the Mozambique border. Some of them had to walk up to 25 km to get to the reserve in the morning to start work at 7.00, this meant leaving their homesteads at 4.00AM. They then had to work an 8-hour day and walk the same again to get home at night. They were the only men working in their families which ranged from 15 to 8 people and as Swaziland is in the middle of a major famine they were definitely on the edge of starvation. When we looked inside their homesteads it became apparent how little they owned. They just lived in mud-huts; sometimes there would be a window, but usually it would just be a shack or a circular building with a door. Most of these men just had one of these buildings which they had built themselves and they and their entire family had to live inside. There would literally be an empty floor with nothing save for a fireplace, which was nearly always not lit because none of them had any food. They mainly ate the over ripe fruit that had fallen from the trees in the citrus plantations as they walked to work and their other staple food source was maize. They were being paid 25 rand a day which is the equivalent of £1.60. This was actually very good because the average wage was 19 rand a day. They couldn't believe it when we told them that even the poorest people in England

were paid more than 4 times that an hour.

The two main methods of eradicating *Chromoleana* we used were 'slash and paint' and 'pulling'. Slash and Paint was the more common method, it involves using large bush and cane knives. We would hack away at the base of the larger plants with our knives and then some men would be following the group behind with bottles full of 'chopper' this is an industrial weed killer dyed red so that no-one drunk it. The chopper was doused on the cut off roots so that the plants didn't grow back in the following months. Pulling was a method employed on the smaller plants where we would simply grip the plant at the base and pull so that the entire plant came out with the roots still attached. As there were twelve of us the slashers would spread out in a group of eight with four painters behind. Using this formation the team would work up and down all day like a lawn mower covering vast areas. We were supposed to be indunas, this is Siswati for leader. The other induna was a man named Lucky who spoke very good English. Most of the time instead of merely watching and making sure that the work was being done we would join in and slash as well. So much so that Lucky would have to tell us to calm down because he didn't think that two white boys would be able to keep up with his strong team.

Our average working day on the reserve started at a very unpleasant 5:30am when our alarm would attempt to wake us up. We soon learnt how to deal with this though by throwing it on the floor, much to the non-amusement of Gustav, who often arrive to find us still half dressed. We would arrive at the reserve by about 6:10 and take our morning stroll in the reserve scaring away any game that we saw before the guests arrived. These early morning walks quite often set the tone for the day. The workers would then arrive at about 7am and we would then be driven off into the bush and left there for the rest of the day. We would be picked up at 3pm and return to the office.

On the first morning out with our *Chromoleana* crew we were taken to one of the most idyllic spots on the reserve where we would be working. As we were being taught what we would be doing while we were working with the crew. One of the workers ran up and started jabbering to us excitedly in Siswati. We, of course, didn't understand a word that he was saying, but with Gustav's help we were able to divulge that he had found a huge snake. We followed him for about a mile through the bush until we came across a little circle of men who were all poking at something on the ground with their bush knives. It turned out to be a 4 and a half metre long python. Fortunately for them it wasn't feeling hungry as it had been attacked by a baboon and was in rather bad shape. Gustav said he knew a vet who might be able to deal with it so with all of us heaving together we lifted the poor creature, which we named Jerome, into the back of his pick up. Unfortunately when we came home at the end of the day we found that Jerome had been beyond repair and had had to be put down. The vet had done this

by chopping off his head with an axe. Gustav said, with a slight smirk on his face, that he needed two volunteers to help skin and gut the body, as the reserve wanted to use it for educational purposes. We were actually very keen having never skinned a snake before and set about it with gusto. It was strange because even though Jerome had been executed at 9:30 that morning, and we were skinning at 5:30 that afternoon, his nervous system still seemed to be working. At every point that you cut through the skin the muscles would contract and this mammoth python would start wriggling about. This was quite disturbing and more than a little off-putting as snakes of this size are quite strong! It actually took Merlin a long time to persuade Alex that it was really dead, even though it had no head! The skeleton was obtained by wrapping the body in chicken wire and leaving it out in the middle of the bush. The ants in Africa worked industriously and by the end of our stay not much was left.

About 2 days latter while working along the same stretch of river some of the workers came across a sleeping python. This caused great excitement, as they were particularly scared of it. We managed to persuade them to leave it while I got my camera. When it was all in focus one of the workers gave it a short sharp jab with the end of his cane knife. It rose faster than anyone could ever have imagined and sprinted through the undergrowth with us in hot pursuit until hitting the river, it was easily bigger than Jerome at about 6m and its central waist about the same size as a football.

After this Gustav took us out culling and Merlin shot a baboon. Normally when things are culled the reserve sells the meat, but Gustav gave the baboon to our workers because they weren't going to be paid until they had finished their first two weeks and a few of them were very hungry. Baboons are the bane of the reserve; they are vermin like squirrels but far worse. They move about in families raiding the sugar cane. Because they have such a staple supply of food there are a lot of them because there are no predators to them in the reserve and they don't have to worry about hunger.

But they are good meat and we watched the workers skin it at the end of the day. It was really fascinating to watch because they left nothing behind. First they removed the skin, all in one; they were going to make it into a loincloth for ceremonial purposes. Then they took ALL the meat, even the genitals, and divided it among each of them. One man who I thought was quite unfortunate was given the head as his portion of meat, this meant all he really got was the brain and the eyeballs, which are nutritious but not that appetising. It is extremely important to keep the numbers of animals in the Reserve under check because there are no real predators in Mbuluzi. Also the *Chromoleana* means that there is not that much grass and therefore if there are too many animals they will all start starving. That day Alex shot a prize Impala and a wart hog and Merlin also shot a wart hog.



On one of our weekends we were invited to help out at a school for children who couldn't otherwise afford to go to. It was run by a very happy clappy church, which was inside an old mechanics warehouse and could easily fit a couple of hundred people inside. Up on the stage at the front was some of the largest speakers we had ever seen along with a full drum kit a couple of electric guitars and a big electronic notice board were the words of the songs would run across it, just like in an airport. The school was attended by about 60 children, all between 5 and 7 and with us being the entertainment of the day. We had the pleasure of painting faces with requests such as David Beckham and Madonna we didn't really know what to do we sent them away looking like clowns or pirates as our artistic skills don't stretch particularly far. This did make it a lot easier though when choosing the football teams. We also played pass the parcel and musical chairs after Merlin found about the only non-electrical instrument in the church, a tambourine. We did notice them getting very competitive by the end and so we decided to have a sac race with some old plastic bags that were in the back of the church. Alex shamefully lost his race which comprised of three girls and a five-year-old boy. After having experienced teaching for the day we vowed never to again or have children, but we did bring some books and stationery which we gave to the head teacher.

To protect the reserve from the threat of poachers there were 8 full time rangers. On one of our days we

decided to take a break from the now rather repetitive slash, paint and pull routine so that we could check out what being a ranger was like. Poaching is a huge problem on the reserve as there was a large drought and famine going on while we were there. When we were working we sometimes came across snares and cast fishing lines that had been set by the poachers but when out with the rangers we found about 30 all along the fence line that had been set recently. They asked us if we would like to do a stake out of the area, getting up at 3am and waiting for the poacher to come and check his traps, we kindly turned down the offer and were very glad when he eventually did not turn up. Snares are a particularly cruel way of catching animals as when they get entangled the wire cuts into them leaving them crippled, open to infection and scavengers, most die of starvation or dehydration before the poacher returns to check his traps every couple of days. If they do get away most will die of infection. Unfortunately we do not have photos of the anti poaching squad, as they were very uneasy about cameras, they said that if anyone found out who they were their families might be put in danger.

Upon finishing our time at Mbuluzi game reserve we were presented with a Knobkerrie each. These are the Swazi fighting weapons and they usually have 2. One to defend and one to hit. The Swazis are a warrior race and often fight just for fun between friends to show who is the strongest. It is a bit like boxing but using their knobkerries and unlike ours, they often have sharpened

ridges and spikes on them and can draw blood very easily. The fight ends when the person remains unconscious for a good five minutes.

Our first point of call after Mbuluzi was Hlane national Game Park which had the big five. Elephant, Lion, Leopard, Rhino and Buffalo. Hlane was one of 2 national game parks and was by far the biggest. We stayed in an encampment about 50 miles into the reserve and slept in traditional reed hut with oil lamps and cold showers. We were able to take guided game walks and drives but not go off on our own. We soon learnt why as on one of our first game walks we came across a group of elephants. Just as we were approaching our guide turned to us and said 'elephants can run at 50mph so if they charge we also have to run'. This made us a little nervous but we still carried on. We were still at a safe distance when they noticed us. At first they didn't mind and carried on eating, soon one though they began smelling us with their trunks and flaring their ears, we noticed that our guide Henry was slowly edging away when the ground beneath us started to rumble and the crashing of trees gave us a clear indication to vacate the area, PRONTO. We carried on running for our lives long after the crashing had stopped resting only when we reached the jeep. With the adrenaline still pumping the only thing Henry could think to say to us was 'O, you're still here'. Our second encounter with an elephant came when driving down the road we found our path blocked by this. Appearing fairly relaxed we turned the engine off to observe. As if sensing this the elephant then thundered towards us stopping feet from the jeep. He then walked around us. We were frozen to our seats as we had been told that even the smallest things could make an elephant flip out and turn our jeep into a tin of sardines. He stopped and stared at each of us and came no further away from us than a couple of centimetres, almost touching us. Elephants appeared to be the only animals threatened by us and even rhinos with babies merely observed us and trotted off. Even the lions took no notice of us. We found quite a lot of animals blocking the roads without any respect for the highway code, including giraffes and turtles that can live for up to 200 years and reach up to a foot high. They are the biggest turtle species but often die in the bush fires. There were also hundreds of impala, Zebra, warthog, Buffalo, terrapin, bushbucks, kudus, hippo, ostrich and many more. We also came across multi-coloured lizards and sleeping fruit bats. We saw almost everything apart from the leopard. At the entrance to Hlane there is a reminder of how much of a problem poaching is. Until the international community and the WWF helped pay for a new fence around the reserve in the early 1990's they were losing a Black rhino every 2 weeks and an elephant every month. Some species such as lion and leopard were poached to extinction and had to be reintroduced.

After leaving Hlane we then caught a taxi down to the central region of Swaziland. Finally we arrived at our destination which was a backpackers called Sondzela.



We were only meaning to stay there for four days, but we had such a good time and made so many new friends that we ended up staying there for the rest of our trip, which was six days.

At Sondzela there were a wide range of activities which we were able to have organised. There was even a hot spring within walking distance of the lodge. The lodge also had a football pitch, a swimming pool, a pool table, table tennis, sky and a fully stocked bar, so we would have been quite happy to stay there all day. We soon discovered that this was not an option as the next few days were action packed. We went White water rafting in the morning with about 15 other people from the lodge, all of whom we were now great friends with. We went down the Usutu River which is the only place in Swaziland for rafting. The rapids were massive and we spent more time in the water than we did in the rafts. We stopped for lunch on a sandy beach on the edge of the river. Our guide was a South African called Glen who did some other activities with us in the following days. Glen then took us down river a few hundred metres on foot. The rocks in that area are all an amazing pink granite which was perfect for climbing and also made striking scenery. We came to 20 metre high waterfall where foam just filled the air and you couldn't hear anything because of the thunder that the water made. Here we did the second activity of the day where we abseiled right down the edge of the waterfall. It was quite nerve wracking because a lot of the kit which Glen had was old and frayed and looked like it might snap at any moment. But Glen told us that it was OK because we would definitely die when we hit the rocks just under the water at the bottom so we didn't have to worry about feeling any pain. He also pointed out that there were no crocs in this part of the river so they would be able to retrieve our bodies for a decent Christian burial.

After this we went even closer to the waterfall, where the water was deeper and did some 'cliff jumping'. This was by far the most exciting activity of the day because all you can do is just grit your teeth and do a running jump. The fall was about 20 metres right down the edge of the waterfall. When you hit the water you had to swim as quickly as you could to get to the other side before the undercurrent would suck you back under the waterfall to face the rocks on the other side. This caused a slight problem for Merlin, not being able to swim. But he didn't tell Glen and tried praying instead. It obviously worked because each time he jumped he was miraculously sucked to safety by the top current.

The next day we were fetched at 8:15 to go caving and ferreting. To us the prospect of crawling around in tight confined spaces with thousands of tonnes of rock on either side of us wasn't the most appealing when all we wanted to do was nurse our heads. But we went anyway and were very glad that we did at the end of it. Our main guide was Timba. The caves were very rare in that they are made out of granite and you don't normally find granite caves. They were also full of bats which was fas-

inating as you could go right up to these huge 'pods' hanging from the ceiling which turned out to be hundreds of bats all clumped together. We scabbled all the way down to an ancient under ground river and then went all the way back to the top to finally emerge in the sunlight. We then ate lunch and went to meet up with Glen for our afternoon activity.

We met Glen at the bottom of this boulder. It is called Sibebe rock and is the second largest boulder in the world. It is also the steepest walk in the world. Sibebe is entirely granite and there is next to nothing growing on it, it is about 600 metres high and about 200 metres across. We started walking up and the moment we left the tree line I began to feel a little peculiar. I had never suffered from vertigo before but there was something about the exposure and the bareness that just gave me the willies! We had no harnesses or anything we were just climbing up on all fours. After about 100 metres I looked back and began to feel very panicky. I carried on and tried not to look back again. The only thing stopping me from falling straight down to certain death was rather worn out grip on the toes of my boots. When I got to 300 metres I, stupidly, looked back again. This was where I freaked out. I froze, hugged the bare rock face, shut my eyes and just wanted it all to be over. My whole body was tense and I had painful cramp in about four different places. While this was going on Alex and Glen were calmly climbing on and nearly at the top. Only Timba had stayed back with me. He had climbed the rock nearly every day for about four years so he was having no problems. He asked me if I wanted to go back or to keep on going. Pointing out that going down would be just as hard. I wasn't going to give up no matter what so I said to keep on going. From now on Timba would climb just behind me supporting my feet all the time. He sang to me as well to try and calm me down. Every time we got to a bush or a tree that was growing out of the rock I would cling to it and just ask for mummy. When we finally got to the top I was physically and mentally drained. I had had cramp all over my body permanently for about the last hour, it took me an hour and a half to get up, and I had actually managed to strain my thigh muscles. Alex was fine and seemed very cheerful that I had had such a rough time! It was worth it though because the views from the top were breath taking. The terrain was like something from another planet with huge mountains and open plains everywhere. I had been parachuting with the Army earlier in the holidays and that was pretty scary, especially when you have to pack your own parachute, but Sibebe was definitely the most terrifying thing I've ever done.

The next day we went out bass fishing with Gustav and some friends of his. They took it very seriously and had fully kitted out boats with ultrasound to find the fish and everything. We were going out for a full day so we had to get up at five in the morning, we were on the water at 7:30 and we didn't get off the boats until 5:30 in the afternoon. This meant we spent a full 10 hours on the

water. In this time we fished constantly and each of Gustav's friends caught at least 8 fish each. We were not quite so lucky and came away empty handed.

In Swaziland polygamy is not illegal but very much encouraged. They will allow you to have as many wives as you like just as long as you can support them. The Umhlanga (Reed) Dance is one of the most sacred ceremonies of the Swazi people. Its function is to draw the nation together and remind the people of their relationship to the king but in reality it is more like catwalk from which the King may choose his new wife. Traditionally the King chooses at least one new wife every year. They come from all over the kingdom to help repair the queen mother's palace at the royal kraal. This is a sign of respect as the Queen Mum rules in unison with the King. After arriving at the Kraal they spend the day resting, then set off in search of reeds, some not returning until the fourth night. On the sixth day the reed dance is performed as they carry their reeds to the queen mother. The dance is repeated the next day. We were able to go on both days with some other people from the backpackers and made the effort to get dressed up in all our attire. Not only were we about the only tourists there but we were also just about the only ones dressed up apart from the maidens. We were interviewed by the Swazi Times the Swazi Observer, the BBC and broadcast live on one of South Africa's largest networks. When we bought the newspaper the next day it pictured Merlin as Alexander Poke and somebody we had never seen before as Mulin Handbunny-Tendision.

There were approximately 30,000 maidens that taken part every year and they didn't wear much. Everything they did wear held great significance. The different coloured pom-poms and bands they wore indicated how old they were, from what tribal area they were from and that they were obviously virgins, as otherwise they couldn't take part. You could tell if they had royal blood. This was indicated with how many red feathers they had in their hair. The more the better.

We were very lucky when we were at the Reed dance to be able to get very close to the King. Because we were wearing traditional attire he seemed to take a liking to us and whilst we never actually met him, we were able to get about as close as any stranger would ever be allowed. Swaziland is the last country in the world which has a total monarch. This means that the King can do whatever he wants and he answers to no one. The last King, Sobhuza the Second, had 600 wives and up to 3000 children. His title is the Bull of Africa and this is certainly appropriate when you think of Sobhuza. He was the longest reigning monarch ever, reigning for 82 years, assuming the crown at 16. He has also conceived more children in recorded history than anyone alive or dead. This king, Mswati III, is 35 and has been reigning for 19 years. He went to Sherbourne but had to leave after his GCSEs to become King. He only has 9 wives which is pretty poor pay as he is supposed to choose at least one for every year that he is king. He has made up some very

strange laws. For example, it is illegal for anyone in the kingdom to drive a limousine on any day other than a Sunday because this is a privilege that only the King has. Also if you have a criminal record, it is illegal for anyone to employ you, which is a ridiculous concept because that means that criminals have no way of reforming.

When we were at the Reed Dance we thought we would see if we could attract the King's attention. Merlin loitered beneath his enclosure for ages getting a lot of very dodgy looks from his royal guard, all of whom were armed to the teeth. After a while the King spotted us and Merlin started waving frantically. He burst out laughing when he saw us and waved back, then he tapped his mother on the shoulder and she laughed at us too. We couldn't figure out what was so funny we thought that we looked very respectable and smart in our loincloths.

The Queen Mother is the second most important person in Swaziland. Her title is the Elephant of Africa which I always thought would be very insulting but apparently it's a great honour. We were very impressed when we saw her car. It is a reinforced Jeep and the registration plate is simply a gold elephant. At the Reed Dance she chooses 500 potential wives for the King and then he gets to choose from these potentials.

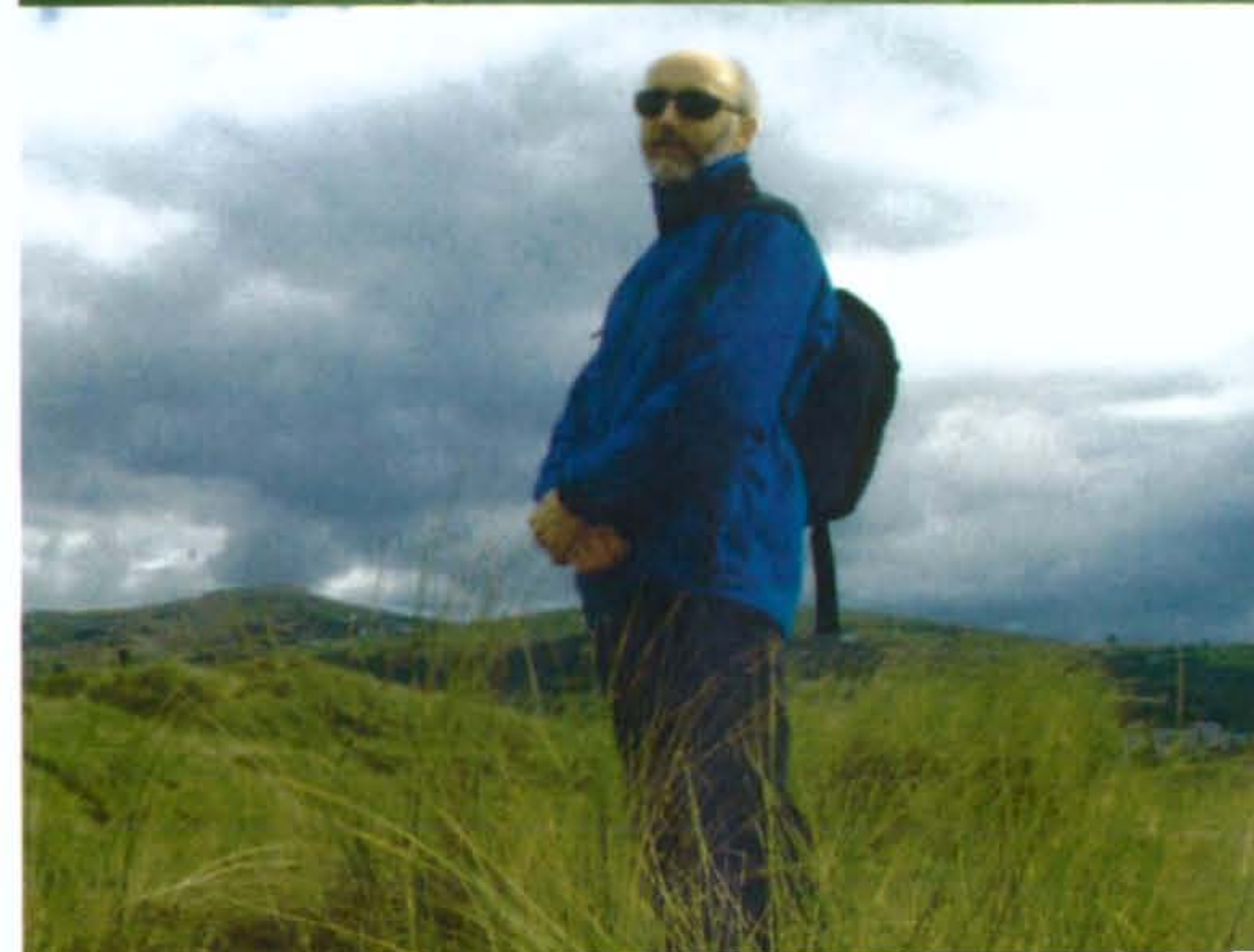
On our last day at the Reed Dance we started chatting with some of the members of the King's royal regiment. These are the King's central bodyguard. We told them that we would love to go out into the arena and dance with them because this was what they were allowed to do at the ceremony. They said, 'No problem', and off we went. We ran right out into the centre of the arena and because we were the only white people out there everyone's attention was on us. The King even stood up and started cheering. The entire crowd and all of the maidens all started cheering us and we did a full circuit of the arena paying respect to each group of maidens as we came to them. When we got back we were exhausted and were about ready to return to Sondzela when one of the bodyguard came and asked us if we would like to help them escort the King back to his royal kraal. We leapt at the opportunity and the next thing we knew we were running alongside the guards with the King only a few metres ahead. When we got to the kraal everyone had to do a strange ceremonial dance and chant outside, we had no clue what we were doing but everyone was very helpful and we soon got the knack of it. This lasted for about an hour and during it the King's new wife and some sacrificial meat were paraded in front of us. The King had chosen Miss Swaziland 2002 for his new wife. All the time we were being filmed for Swazi TV because it was very rare for westerners to be allowed to do this. We danced for about an hour, we were never more than 10 metres from the King and he kept smiling and waving to encourage us.

The icing on the cake came when we met the eldest son of the eldest brother of the King. He offered us if we would like to be initiated into the King's Royal regiment.

We were quite wary about what this entailed but there was no way we were going to turn down an offer like that and so he told us to meet him at the Royal Kraal at 8 the next morning in our traditional attire. When we arrived we were greeted by 2 of his personal guard who were going to take us through the process. To begin with we had to remove our tops, roll them up, put them on our heads and stand by the entrance to the regiments Kraal. We also had to remove anything that we were wearing other than our loincloths, so it was very revealing. We were then told to shout at the top of our voices in Siswati: 'Nyagootsega' which means, WE HAVE ARRIVED. We had to shout it about 5 times before they took any notice and signalled for us to enter. Unfortunately we were not allowed to take any photos of the inside which was made up of about 20 perfectly crafted beehive huts. Our first task was to go and fetch water from the river with two rusty old oil drums that we had to balance on our head. Not only was the stadium still full of maidens from the day before preparing to leave but the buckets had hundreds of holes in them so they spilt all over us. By the time we had returned there was virtually no water in them and we were bright red from being laughed at by so many girls, but we were spared a second trip as the Prince had told them that we were guests of the King. We then had to perform a number of war dances which involved a lot of screaming jumping and stamping on the ground. We had to perform this all the way around the inside of the Kraal. While we were doing this the elders of the regiment were deciding what our new Siswati names would be. Before they told us our names they made us sit on the floor in front of the chiefs hut while they explained the hierarchy and rules of the regiment which turned out to be that as we were the last to join we were now the dogsbodies of the regiment. On the other had we are now entitled to own land free of charge in Swaziland and have as many wives as we like, which is exactly what we went and got. Merlin was named Mlilwane after the game reserve and Alex was called Mabile meaning twice as he had shouted one of the war cries twice by mistake. We inherited the surname of the regiment, which was Ndaba, and were officially made a member of the Inkanyete regiment by receiving our necklaces from the chef. We had a very strong suspicion that our influential friends had made our inauguration easier.

Unfortunately the immigration control in England wouldn't let us bring our two new wives back into the country so we had to leave them on our new homesteads to keep our beds warm!

We would like to finish by thanking the Myles Henry family for very kindly letting us go on this amazing trip which has definitely been one of the greatest of our lives so far and Mr. Brandt for spurring us and organising everything. We would also like to thank all of the Stoics, teachers and family members who sponsored us on our run. And to remind those who haven't yet paid up of their commitment to us. Pay or we will come and get you!



GEOGRAPHY TRIP TO NORTH WALES

As we packed our bags for the adventure ahead many had mixed opinions. "It's going to be so cold", "There are lots of sheep in Wales, why can't we go to London?" etc. Despite these comments and others, we awoke on a Sunday morning ready for what lay ahead, the famous Geography trip.

On the coach we prepared ourselves for a four to five hour journey. Looking back on it, the conversations that were heard from a distance were really quite amusing. People were conjuring up images of cramped shack houses, with no heating. Others were even questioning the possible need for a tent. We soon arrived, to find a fairly remarkable looking place that stood boldly on a hillside called 'Plas Tan Y Bwlch'

We were greeted warmly in an amazing stateroom inside the mansion and were later shown to our rooms. The rooms consisted of comfortable beds and calming interior. They were the perfect places to unwind after a very hard day's work out on various sites. Once shown to our bedrooms we had a hearty dinner and then made our way to one of the complex's lecture rooms in order to receive a briefing on what lay ahead. We received introductory handouts, whilst taking down notes ourselves.

After a rapid breakfast we made our way to our assigned locations. Each of the three days started with the 'Identification of a question'. Here we decided on a suitable project title/question to examine. We then underwent the 'development of a strategy', where we decided on tactics, objectives, the study area and also considered the possible constraints, limitations and risk assessments. After a morning of hard work we went out to our chosen

sites and collected the relevant data, fitting a quick lunch break into our schedule. We had roughly two to three hours on the site, before heading back to 'Plas Tan Y Bwlch'. Once we had arrived back, we went into one of the many lecture rooms and began organising our data and representing it in various different ways. We used a number of different methods, such as the Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient and the Mann Whitney U test, to find different correlations within our results. We then began to analyse and evaluate, and even possibly conclude our investigations before going to dinner, and then finished our investigations for that day after we had eaten.

At night the Stoics made merry in the establishment's bar and leisure room and headed off for a much needed rest.

Throughout the trip various different groups went to a different location on each of the three days. One of the days consisted of a trip to 'Porthmadog', a bustling town full of individual shops and places to eat. It has a strong and proud heritage and community; Welsh is commonly spoken and its people are warm and friendly. In the town our aim was to investigate how and why land use varies in Porthmadog.

A second day consisted of a visit to 'Morfa Harlech' where our aim was to study vegetation succession within a Psammosere (a sand dune system). 'Morfa Harlech' holds some of the most prestigious sand dunes in the United Kingdom. They are carefully preserved, and look very stable and healthy due to this. The 'Morfa Harlech' coastline is also fairly amazing, stretching vast distances.

Thirdly we went to 'Criccieth' beach. Here we investigated how and why sediment roundness and sediment size differs between the west and east of the beach.

'Criccieth' beach is a long shingle coastal ridge on the south of the Llyn peninsula in Northwest Wales. The origin of this depositional landform is not clear but the coastline was spectacular to look at and contained some amazing features.

Overall the trip was a huge success. Stoics, despite the vast amounts of work, even managed to have an element of fun. An annual welly throwing competition went ahead, the Welsh beat Italy in the football and the weather was mild.

OLIVER D HAMILTON



McELWEE TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

Barcelona by Fred Raikes and Will Consett

At the beginning of the summer holidays we were privileged enough to visit Barcelona. The City has so much to see and do. Amongst its famous sites are a 14th Century Cathedral, the Stadium for the 1992 Olympics, the largest football stadium in Europe, beaches, a port and many of Gaudi's masterpieces.

The main aim of our trip was to see the work of Antonio Gaudi. Gaudi, the most famous Catalan architect is known world-wide for his bizarre architecture. This year many events were being planned in the city to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of his birth.

In the city there are about 15 examples of his work. We visited most of them. The internationally renowned Sagrada Familia has come to be a symbol of Barcelona and Spain. Gaudi devoted much of his life to this project, the size is startling, and eight spires rise to over 100m. The cathedral still has another 19 years of work remaining before completion, which stunned us. We found this one of the most amazing buildings we had ever seen, due to its shape, incredible attention to detail and the towering presence it has over the city.

We visited the Casa Mila, the building is said to be like steep cliff walls in Africa, where tribes had their cave dwellings. The roof is extremely impressive with some bizarre chimneystacks, one of Gaudi's trademark features. The building is very typical of Gaudi as there are no straight lines and there is a continuous alternation between darkness and light. Despite this Gaudi was extremely practical and his underground garage (the first ever built) would turn out to be ground breaking not only in Spain but all over the world.

One of our favourite buildings was the Casa Batllo, completed in 1906. Gaudi transformed this humble town house, into an extra-ordinary piece of architecture, with

amazing patterns on the buildings and a roof that is meant to look like the backbone of a dragon. Park Guell was designed for a wealthy Barcelonan Businessman, who wanted an English style garden. Gaudi transformed a barren spot of land into a lush green garden, with wonderful views over Barcelona, with hints of his unique architecture all around.

After we had visited most of Gaudi's work, we visited the NUI camp and the Ramblas. The Ramblas is one of the liveliest streets in Barcelona, and is well known for its sophisticated pickpockets.

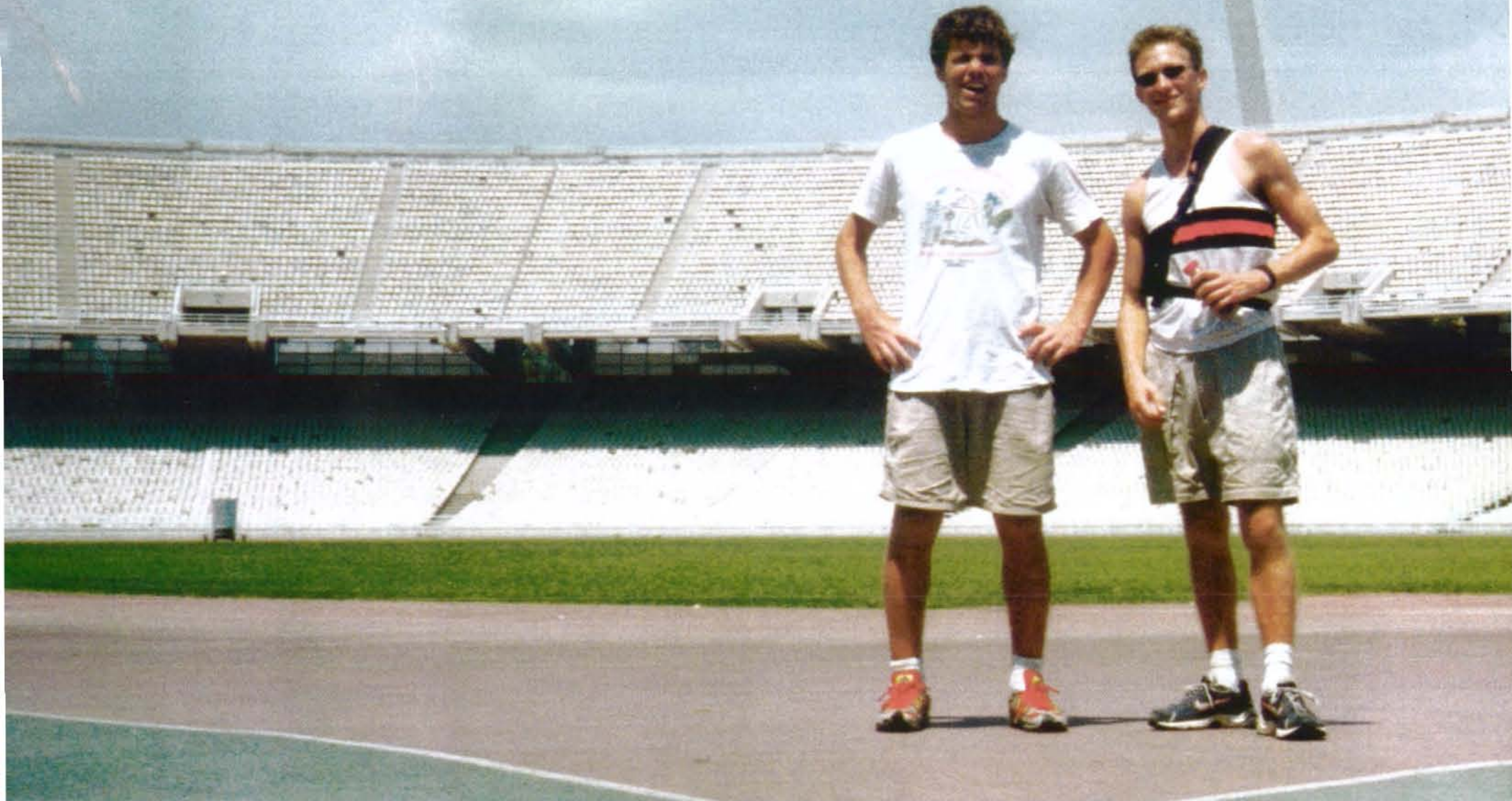
During our stay we ate Catalan food, including Paellas, which we began to appreciate by the end of our stay.

We both enjoyed Barcelona, and would certainly go back and visit again, although it was extremely challenging locating all Gaudi's work when neither of us spoke very good Spanish. There was so much to see and do in Barcelona and it has an interesting culture. We gained much from our trip including a better understanding of Spain and the Euro, although we has some difficulties with currency conversion.



McELWEE TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

Greece by Chris McGee and Andreas Ugland



We decided to go to Greece to study ancient sites dating from the Mycenaen Age to the end of the Roman rule, spanning from 1900 BC to 324AD. This was so that we could see a cross-section of the development in technology and architecture during this period in Greece. Our other interests were: to discover to what extent Ancient Greek Mythology was prevalent during this period; and the current Greek culture and cuisine.

We based ourselves in Athens for six days where we were able to visit the Acropolis, Ancient Agora, Roman Agora, the Temple of Hephaestus and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. We stayed in a small hotel in the centre, and, when we weren't visiting the sites, we absorbed the busy cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The last six days were spent in complete contrast to the bustling city. We stayed in a campsite on the outskirts of Tolo, a small coastal town in the Peloponnese. We chose to stay here since it was in the centre of a multitude of relevant archaeological remains, such as the Mycenaen Acropolis of Tiryns; a citadel built with stones weighing up to 19 tonnes, Epidavros which is the best preserved Greek theatre, dating from the fourth century BC and boasting phenomenal acoustics; Argos; the oldest town in Greece with the dominating Fortress of Larissa; and finally the Citadel of Mycenae. This was the most impressive site we visited. In 1500 BC it ruled the majority of the Mediterranean world. We were surprised

at how incredibly well preserved it was, with its original 13 metre high, 7 metre thick walls, and one of the burial chambers completely intact.

We then travelled back to Athens to run the route of the original Marathon-Athens marathon, following in the footsteps of Pheidippides, before we left. Arriving in Marathon at 8:00am after being taken to the port instead of the bus station and then walking the last 5 kilometres since we got off too early, we discovered how stiflingly hot it would get. The whole route was along what seemed to be the fastest and most popular main road in Athens, which meant we were black with the fumes, blinded by the reflection of the sun on tarmac, parched – even though we drank 10 litres of water each and dizzy with the heat. Dodging cars and pedestrians only added to the excitement, as did getting lost in the centre of Athens. As we finished at the Stadium itself, we passed a sign declaring the temperature to be the hottest day of the year so far – and it was the end of July!

The McElwee scholarship not only enabled us to visit an amazing country to study its history and culture, but also gave us total independence, and taught us how to budget, organise and use one's initiative when things inevitably go wrong! We would like to thank the committee for awarding us with the scholarship, and would encourage any present Stoics to take advantage of this opportunity of a lifetime.

NEW YORK ART STUDY TOUR

This was a wonderful opportunity for sixth form students from the Art School to visit some of the most exceptional collections of art in the world, including the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Guggenheim, and the Frick Collection.

It is a cultural city that combines artefacts of the utmost historical significance with a kaleidoscope of the most exciting, dynamic contemporary art to be seen anywhere. Better still our students were afforded an inside track through our contact with artists, visiting Lenore Tawney in her studio was unforgettable, a huge privilege. New York artist Janice Gordon facilitated our visit hugely with information on which were the most notable commercial art gallery shows to see and how to fit them into our busy itinerary. Another remarkable highlight was visiting John Richardson, old stoic, friend and biographer of Picasso, in his amazing 5th Avenue apartment with its collection of works by Picasso, Braque, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Freud and Auerbach.

Of course it is also such an exciting city to visit in its own right, taking in the extraordinary architecture, the exquisite street atmosphere that is a combination of its sophisticated and cosmopolitan inhabitants, marvellous shops, a vibrant energy, at once startling and yet strangely familiar to us through film. We experienced temperatures of minus ten, and record snowfalls that only added to the excitement and beauty of being there. This was not the only thing it added; we were snowed in by an overnight snowfall that amounted to 22", creating a state of emergency and a 24 hour delay to our return. It cost the city a million dollars an inch to clear the roads and airports, providing the television stations with a non stop focus to dwell upon, repeated hourly, for the duration,

The trip was such a success that we are planning to go to New York again next year.

BLJ



5th Avenue



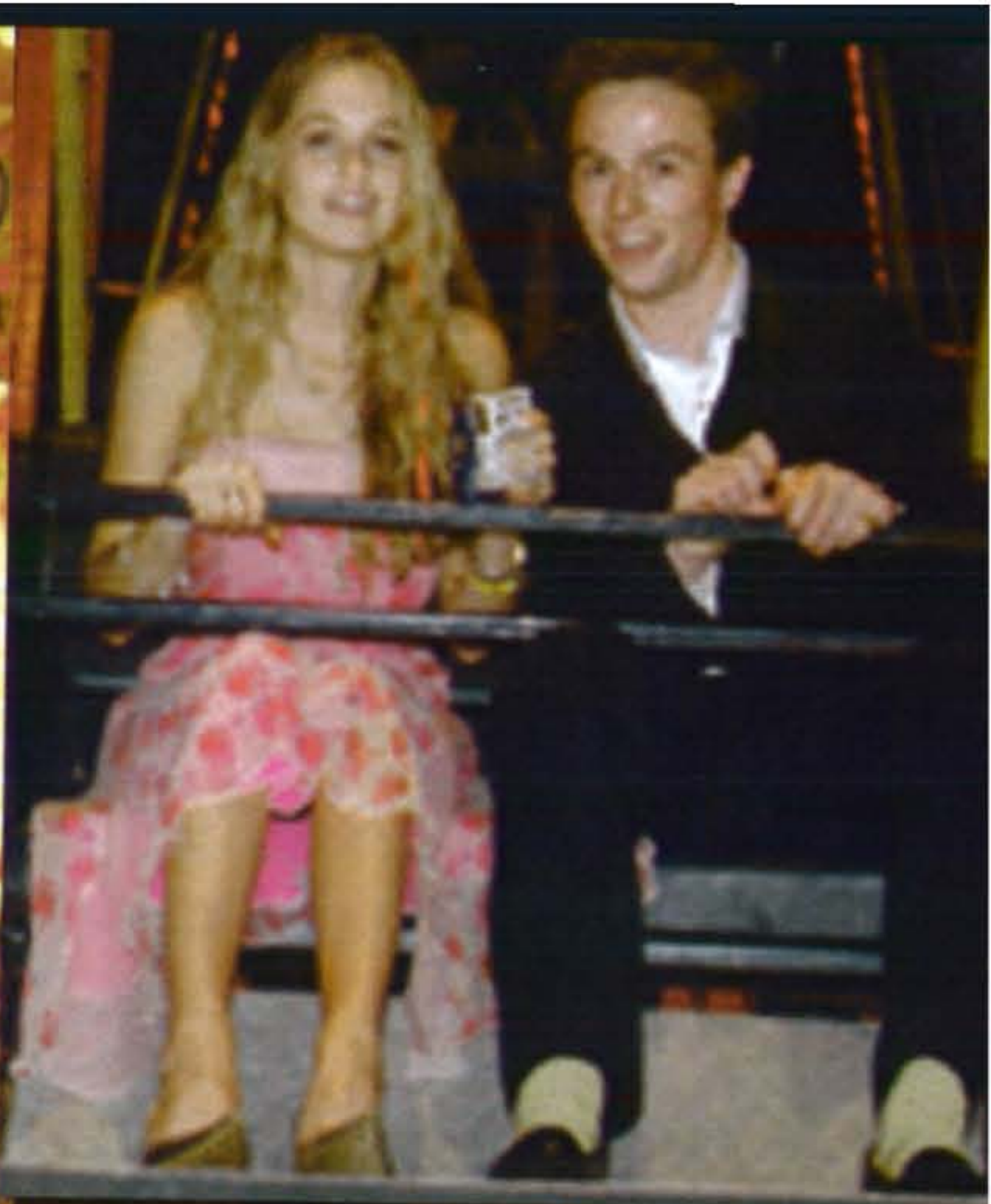
Rockefeller Building



Metropolitan Museum



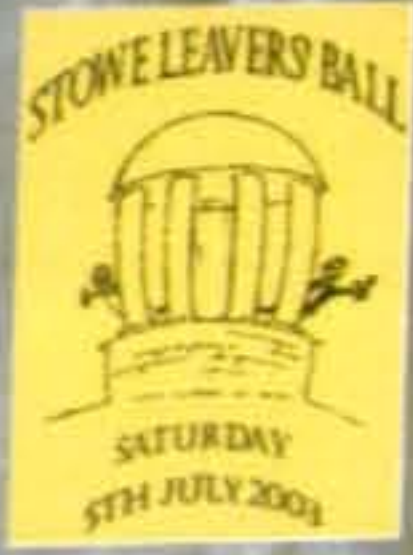
Stoics in John Richardson's apartment



LEAVERS' BALL

Photos by Mike Kirby





SURVIVORS'



PHOTOGRAPH









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