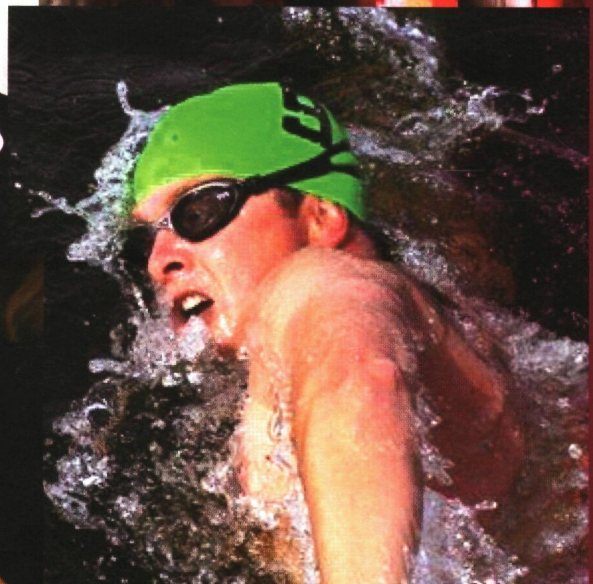
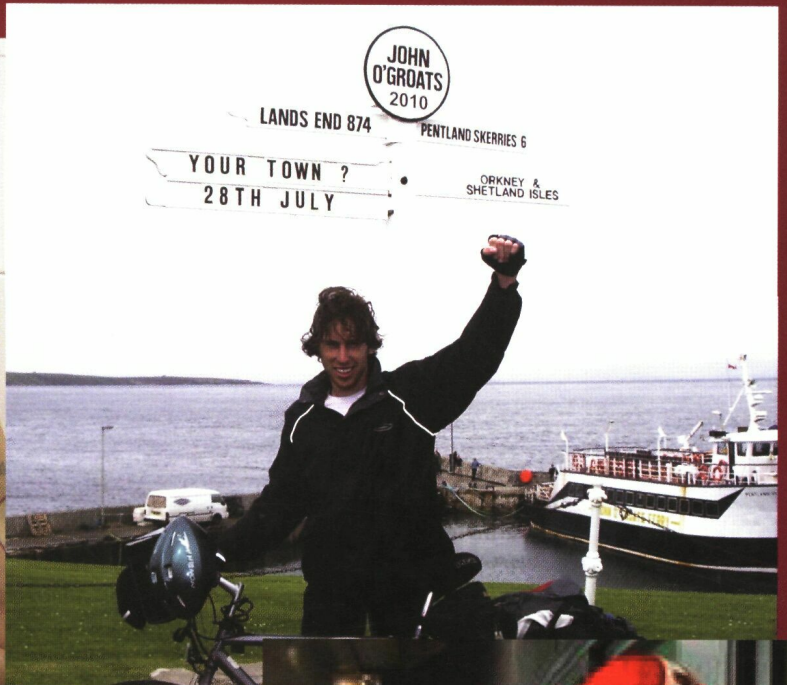


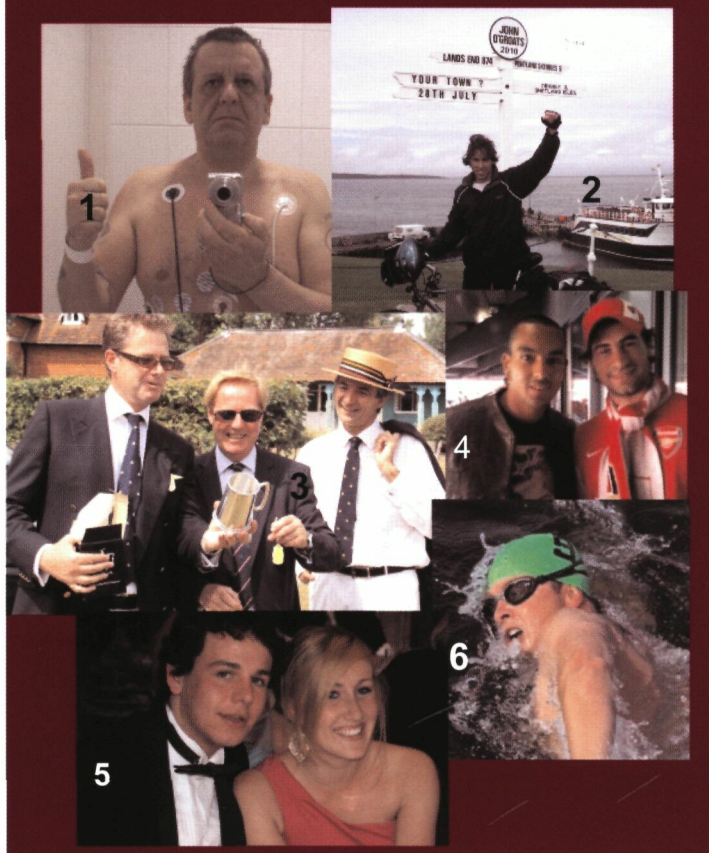
# The Old Viking Society

## *Magazine 2011*





# The Old Viking Society Magazine 2011



1. Titus Drummond gives a thumbs-up after his heart-attack. Full story in the OVS news section.

2. Charlie Ingham-Clark celebrates at the end of his Lands End to John O'Groats bike ride.

3. The 1st VIII of 1979 met at Henley Royal Regatta in 2010, more photos on the back cover.

4. Emilien Lesourd, fanatical Arsenal fan, snapped with Theo Walcott (Arsenal and England).

5. Ross McCafferty and Alice Brown (2010 Leavers) at the Girls' Sports Dinner.

6. John Polansky swimming the English Channel, more details in OVS News section.

Editor: Michael Edwards

Proof-reader: Lesley Lowndes

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Rounders early on Ascension Morning. A rite of passage for the Year 13 leavers.



# What's new?

## The more things change, the more things stay the same?

Times change. Every pupil is now allowed to walk through that heavy, imposing panelled door through to the Great Hall. Olives, rocket and sun-dried tomatoes sit on the salad bar at lunchtimes as well as a range of focaccio and ciabatta sandwiches.

I am writing this, with a pen, sat in a computer room, at 5 o'clock late afternoon, supervising 20 boys (no girls?) in Academic Priority Time. There isn't a computer left for me. Pupils are entered electronically in APT, to catch up on missed preps, on poor preps. More worrying for pupils is the fact that their parents can log into their online records and look up to check if they have been good boys and girls.

Along the corridor mathematics is running their daily forty five minute APT. No wonder there was just one GCSE maths failure last year. In an era of League Tables, Performance Review and targets there is no doubt that Shiplake pupils have to work harder than those of yesteryear. The art room is packed as Hema Gillings and her colleagues drive their charges towards another clutch of A\*s and As.

Work hard, play hard. Minutes ago a boy was trying to persuade his rugby coach that he was available for selection even though he has broken his collar-bone just last week; rugby and rowing, along with cricket, hockey and tennis dominate the boys' sporting horizon with hockey, netball and rowing for the girls. However the breadth of extra-curricular activities continues to grow. Pupils can try their hand at Fencing, Karate, Polo or Real Tennis.

Boarders will remember the Great Hall packed on a Sunday, even freezing out on the terrace, when the hall was overflowing for Remembrance Sunday. Far fewer boarders are in school on a Sunday in 2010 but Dragonboating at Maidenhead, Premiership Rugby at London Irish and bowling trips with Queen Anne's School girls all keep them occupied.

The Autumn Term began with 349 pupils, possibly a record, but these numbers are too high to cram into the Parish Church for whole school assemblies and services. At the end of each half-term the whole school gathers for a special service in the Sports Hall. Getting the school together takes organisation. Gregg Davies' innovation of Christmas Dinner for the whole school, in a festively decorated Sports Hall, has become a tradition, enhanced by the Headmasters' choir. It is a unique choir as the criterion for selection is never having been invited to sing in a choir before.

As Shiplake becomes the school of choice for Henley and its environs so day pupil numbers have increased. The Lower School, now with boys in both Year 7 and Year 8, is becoming a force to be reckoned with. Not only do their reports in assemblies record their sporting prowess they are presented with surprising eloquence and humour for boys so young. At the end of the day, buses jostle for position as they pick up day boys to return them home throughout Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

*The Headmaster's choir perform "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer" at the College Christmas Dinner in the Sports Hall*





# What's new?

Teachers are delighted that the old gruelling 7 day school duty has been reduced to two spells of three days, with a Housemaster taking responsibility for Sundays. An 11 day half-term provides a welcome break during the long autumn term. Writing reports on a computer, with no need to top and tail the reports with name and form, is quicker.

However expectations have risen in many ways. After examination results there is a whole season of re-marks, post-mortems and analysis leading into Development Plans, targets and objectives for the future.

E-mail encourages parents to pose questions and expect instant answers. Comments thrown out in the heat of a lesson return to haunt you by lunchtime, when an upset pupil has phoned them through to Mum.

Risk Assessments prior to taking a trip require considerable time spent form-filling. Inspections are far more frequent and rigorous. Expectations of tutors providing a much higher level of pastoral care have risen. Virtually every sixth former applies to University, and last year 92% got in to their first or second choice. Achieving such success requires careful advice on course and university selection as well as carefully crafted personal statements, from the pupil, and references from the staff.

Trips to businesses, exhibition and galleries, lectures and revision days are increasingly greeted with howls of complaint from teachers having to teach half-empty classes so there are far fewer interruptions to lessons nowadays.

Yet in some ways pupils and teachers get out more. There is an established pattern for sports tours. Year 9 begin with a West Country rugby tour every November, Hockey head for a Barcelona tour early in 2011, the 1st XV depart for South Africa for the Summer and I am investigating an U16 cricket tour to the United Arab Emirates for Easter 2012. The girls are happy with their netball slot in the Caribbean every second Easter, first to Barbados and then St Lucia; whilst the Boat Club's Senior Squad has just returned from competing in Boston and Philadelphia.

The musicians have performed in Notre Dame, Paris as well as more locally at Queen Anne's School. The Drama Department has taken a production to Oxford University's Botanical Gardens for the last two summers and Catherine Saker is in negotiation with Lord McAlpine about performing "The Railway Children" in his garden in Lower Shiplake.

So much has changed but so much remains the same.

*Michael Edwards*

*Old Vikings Freddie Greaves and Jenny Unwin rejoined the College's Mad Dogs Theatre Company to take The Hunting of the Snark to Oxford University's Botanical Gardens.*





## Clare Harris 1946 - 2009

It was Judy Smail's friendship that brought Clare to Shiplake. "I never thought I'd be a Matron," Clare once said, but Clare, who joined the College in 1989, became an outstanding Matron.

Life in a boarding House is hard work. The boarders are there 24 hours a day, creating problems and opportunities throughout those hours. Clare began with Andrew Smail, outlasted Andrew Cheadle and finally 18 years later retired during Charly Lowndes' benign reign.

During those years Shiplake, Burr and the Matron's job changed. Burr became the House for long distance boarders be they from Scarborough or Hong Kong. Some of the boys came from a very long way and they were dependent on Clare to mend a hole in a shirt, find a spare jacket and provide emotional support too. At times Clare took on the duties of a mother as well.

From her immaculately ordered room in Burr, Clare dispensed wisdom, kindness, practical support and toasties to countless Burr boys. The small things mean a lot to a House and Clare was always able to rise to any challenge whether it be a flooded boys' bathroom or on one occasion, providing sufficient kit for a visiting cricket team of trainee priests. Clare will be remembered with deep affection by both staff of Shiplake and the boys of Burr House.

## Sir Bob Phillis 1945 - 2009

Sir Bob Phillis brought immense business, education and life acumen in his eleven years as a governor of Shiplake College. His acquaintance with Shiplake had begun in 1984 when his eldest son Martin arrived and it continued until twins Ben and Tim left in 1992. During those years Sir Bob was a familiar and encouraging figure at College sporting events. He took a great interest in sport, was a member of the Lawn Tennis Association Board and championed the Manchester Commonwealth Games.

Sir Bob was too approachable and warm-hearted to be described as a media mogul, yet that was what he was. He began in printing and after a spell in academia, lecturing in Industrial Relations at Edinburgh University and the Scottish Business School, he returned to printing in 1976. ITV beckoned in 1979, then he became Managing Director of Central Television in 1981.

His spell as Chief Executive of ITN from 1991 was challenging to say the least. Reporting foreign wars had sent costs soaring, advertising revenue was dropping and ITN had to develop into a commercial body capable of surviving and competing. In 1993 he moved to the BBC as deputy Director General, taking on responsibility for the World Service and for the BBC's commercial arm, BBC enterprises.

Yet Sir Bob still found time to become a Shiplake Governor in 1995. He brought the same perceptive insight to education that was apparent in his media career and he had a great desire to get things done, to achieve and take the College onwards. When Governors' meetings were over he did not rush off to the next appointment, instead he stayed, shared a drink with staff and got to know what was on their mind and what was happening at grass roots level at the College.

Four years after joining the BBC, Sir Bob was approached by the Guardian Media Group and he guided the company through to more secure times. During the Hutton Inquiry, Sir Bob was mentioned as a possible future chairman of the BBC. Sadly illness struck in 2006 and Sir Bob relinquished many of his responsibilities, including his position at Shiplake College. Throughout his time as parent and governor his wife Jean was a great support and this support continued through his long illness. He fought cancer with bravery and determination; during a short period of remission he went skiing and visited the Galapagos Islands.



## Forty terms on one side of the door

For a long time Everett was the only House where boarders and the Housemaster's family shared the same roof. An open study door was important, if no one within look elsewhere, otherwise tap and come in. Possibly if it was really important, "Come back in a few minutes and we can talk about it." In those pre Children Act days a closed door meant some confidential talk within.

The kindest thing said to me in retirement has been, "You were always there," from Chapel and assembly; getting out the post; keeping an eye on meals; home fixtures, evening events – the routine never seemed dull.

Leaving Everett in 1982 brought changes. As a full-time Second Master I may have had more time in the evening but the matters I looked after increased from about four to 30. Most of it was about getting the balance right; not too many expeditions cancelling classes; not too many evening events during prep time.

Changes have a knock-on effect. If the Master i/c timetable is non-resident someone on campus has to fix staff absences and cover before 8 am. As a result I did this for two decades. Staff phoning to report illness often spoke to my wife – they probably got a lot kinder reception and some free medical advice.

Walking a dog after lunch gave me a chance to watch the coaching of rowing. I had ceased to referee rugby when the new waterproof ball made the game too fast for me! However, "Admin" meant I could watch much less hockey and cricket than I had done. As far as teaching was concerned there was just enough time to see a set in each year. In the 1970s the College had more money and I was involved in expanding the number of day expeditions but after 1980 I rarely seemed free to go on them.

Old Vikings in mid-career may rightly assume I was in the Stone Age of Admin; wandering about the place looking and talking while ladies in our offices were mastering new technologies.

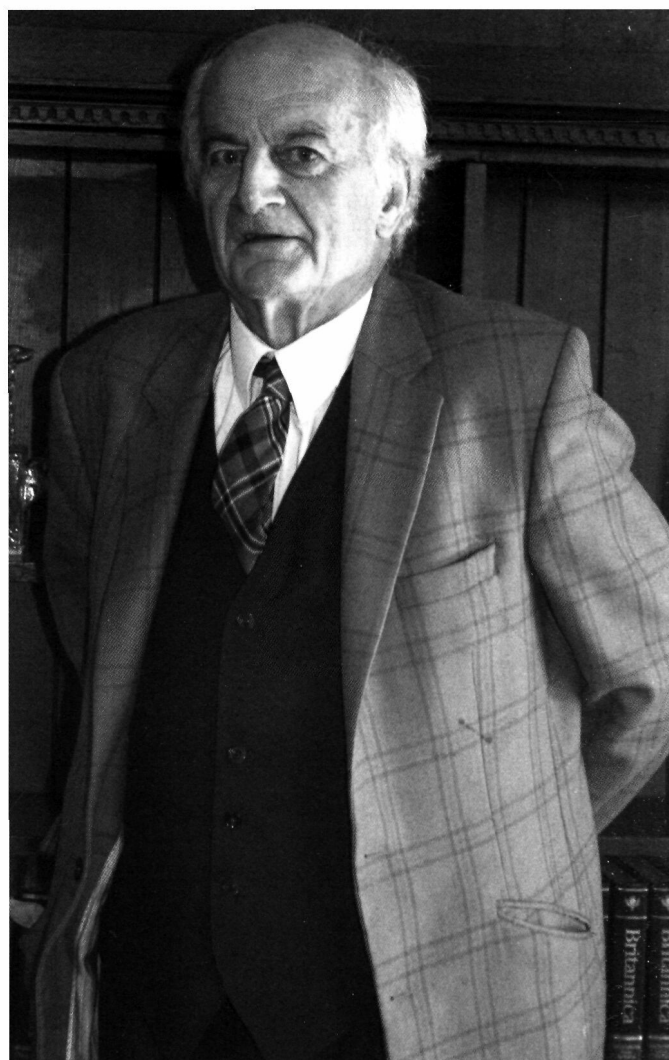
The classroom was the place from which one was safe for a while; one taught and explained and enjoyed helping young people. As I write extending VAT to Food and Books is being mentioned. I hope some readers will recall classes on Repeal of the Corn Law – no taxes on food – a battle last fought in 1906. Another battle was "No taxes on knowledge", the modern budget began as a device to remove taxes on paper.

But I digress. I began with an open door, sadly as Second Master much that was confidential came my way for 12 years and I had to lock my office/study door but there is still a door fully open - the ability of all who were at Shiplake to return or make contact by a variety of modern technologies. So tell us what you are doing; let us know about any informal get together and above all tell us what kind of meetings and events will interest you.

**Hans Wells-Furby**

**Everett Housemaster 1970 - 1982**

**Second Master 1980 - 1993**





# The President

## A past contact reviving?

Pickering College has just celebrated a hundred years since it moved to Newmarket, Ontario. We heard all about this at a reunion organised by Chris Campbell, Pickering and Shiplake staff.

A number of people working at Pickering were present on an early March evening and we were assured that the present Junior Associate Staff at Pickering is a scheme based on the contribution of our "Junior Masters" made between 1986 and the mid 90s.

Pickering has of course changed; larger, no longer mainly boarding, with girls and a primary department as well but our 150th anniversary gifts to Pickering in 1992 hang prominently in the main hall.

And how did it all begin as far as Shiplake was concerned? The fifth and final stage of my Sabbatical was visiting Boarding Schools in Ontario. I chose to visit schools between my base in Montreal and Toronto and semi-rural Pickering was easy to reach.



*Douglas McArthur, Michael Baker, Hans Wells-Furby  
Richard Aldrick and Philip Lawson.*

## Old unhappy things and battles long ago\*

A sign of the times during our Jubilee celebrations in 2009 was no mention made of the international background to our first thirty years post World War 2 and The Cold War.

A unifying factor in the very early years was, from Chairman of Governors to Headmaster; senior staff and many parents – active service during the war years 1939 – 45. As recently as the mid 1980s – with demonstrations against Cruise Missiles quite close, a number of our pupils felt depressed about the World's general future.

A few more light-hearted anecdotes from these years are not intended to make the OVS in anyway political.

1961 and an early example of the quick Shiplake quip when the Soviet Union had just put a man into space. An astronomic skier: "Shiplake puts cricket ball in orbit" said one of our 1st XI cricketers.

One of our early Speech Days was on June 6th 1964, just twenty years after D Day. A Housemaster to a parent, "John where were you twenty years ago?" "Just back from bombing Cherbourg," was the reply.

Skipwith Housemaster in conversation with John Eggar. A sixth former approaches, "Excuse me Sir, that's my file you have got. I have been looking for it everywhere." John Eggar took the file from Skipwith's Housemaster. It was covered with swastikas. "You know young man your father and I spent six very unpleasant years putting an end to this nonsense."

Hans Wells-Furby

\* William Wordsworth



# OVS Events and Committee

## **Cricket: OVS v Staff**

1730 Friday 24th June 2011

Drinks and refreshments available for OVS spectators too.

## **Cricket: OVS v 1st XI**

1330 Saturday 25th June 2011

Spectators will be welcome for this one too!

## **OVS London Reunion 2011**

1830 Tuesday 8th November

Blanca Bar, Jewel at Covent Garden

## **OVS Committee and contacts**

### **Hans Wells-Furby (President)**

Via College

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### **Peter Webb**

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### **Richard Alldrick**

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### **Malcolm Woodcock**

Via College

### **Max Tilney**

maxtilney@mac.com



Above: Henry Summers, Treasurer, with daughter Clementine

Below: The OVS Committee in action



## Where's the money come from? Where does it go?

This year the OVS should receive just over £15,000 income. Nearly all of that will come from the College in terms of a contribution that the College makes for every pupil currently at Shiplake. The days of opting in and out of OVS subscriptions are gone. Unfortunately interest on the Society's reserves of £31,000 has plummeted in recent years, reducing income from interest.

Several years ago the Committee established a principle of targeting assets three times greater than the annual income. Expenditure on the 50th anniversary celebrations has depleted reserves to £31,000. By the time the College celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2019 the Society aims to have restored this rule of thumb. The aim is to achieve a surplus of between £2,000 to £3,000 per year.

As with most organisations labour is the most significant cost with over £4,000 spent on secretarial fees and support as well as book-keeping. Just over £3,000 is spent on publishing and posting the annual newsletter; many OVs cannot travel to reunions at Shiplake or in London but the newsletter gives them the opportunity to keep in touch with their former school.

The London Reunion is a major social event and the OVS usually subsidises this by around £1,000. Similarly hospitality for OVS Cricket and Hockey will cost around £600 with, hopefully, large numbers of supporters to cater for as well as the players.

With a large number of long-serving teachers leaving the College in the summer of 2010 the bill for leaving presents was exceptionally high at £1,600. Fortunately it was balanced by a reduction in Committee travel expenses to just over £800. (The Committee had travelled many a mile in 2009 as they met to plan the 50th anniversary celebrations.)

In 2010 the OVS made a donation to the Netball Tour to St Lucia, with just seven girls travelling; the OVS donation made the difference between a tour taking place and its cancellation.

A similar contribution to a World Class Start rower enabled the Boat Club to take a stronger 1st VIII squad to their East Coast, USA training camp.

*Michael Edwards*

*An OVS donation to the College Sports Tour fund helped to ensure that the planned girls' netball tour to St Lucia was able to proceed.*





# OVS Cricket



*Two different teams of Old Vikings enjoyed wonderful weather and a few beers as they returned to Shiplake. On the Friday evening the staff clinched victory in the final over and on the Saturday afternoon the Old Vikings fell just 11 runs short after a dramatic run chase.*



*Note the corner of the marquee at the front of the school. Increasing numbers mean that it is no longer possible to fit a marquee of the required size on the lawn overlooking the Thames for Prize Giving.*



*Shiplake's 1st XI square is a wonderful place to play cricket. Richard Evans, Groundsman, enjoyed an Oscar-style awards ceremony at the Emirates Stadium when Shiplake received an award for the **Independent Schools Grounds of the Year** in 2009 and has just retained his title for 2010.*

## Last ball thriller

Old Viking cricketers, returned wearing a motley collection of club, university and Shiplake shirts, to provide a thrilling match for the first Old Vikings versus staff match.

Toby Raper, captaining, and Tom Caston, gave the OV's a great start as Tom helped some short bowling round to fine-leg for a succession of boundaries. Jonnie Howarth, not joining the Shiplake staff until the next term, helped to slow the OV's run rate.

Chris Alcock's curving run-up may have distracted the batsman but losing Jack Broome and Sasha Burgess in successive balls put the brakes on the OV innings. Rob Berry played some aggressive shots with the OV's finishing on 133 from their 16 overs.

Andy Dix and Simon Cane-Hardy began the innings with intent as they edged the staff ahead of the asking rate. Chris Cracknell produced a slower bouncer. A huge appeal was controversially upheld by the umpire as Jack Broome claimed the catch. Tight bowling from Sam Imlay pegged the staff back as he bowled both Derek Mackey and Brendan Pavey.

Fielders sledging their own bowler Pip Webb edged his pace up but Andy Dix, struggling with a pulled muscle from over-eager strokeplay, played the shot of the day, pinging Webb back into the sightscreen for a six that brought up the only fifty of the evening.

Nick Brown perished, soon after a glorious straight drive for four to be replaced by son Ian, who had rapidly gained the status of a member of staff for the evening. Ian cleared Pip Webb on the mid wicket boundary to bring the required rate down to 9 for the last over. A succession of scampered 2s, a wide and a boundary left Dan Swan on strike to Josh Raper for the final ball of the innings.

A dot ball would give the OV's victory. A single for the staff would produce a tied match and a 2 would give victory to the staff.



*James Paice, a regular cricketer with Harpsden Cricket Club, provided some difficult overs for the 1st XI batsman in the Saturday game*

Chris Cracknell gave some advice to Raper, "I've been in a lot of these pressure situations and the only thing you can ever say is don't !@#! it up."

Raper bowled straight and true. Swan, whose batting bears no resemblance to Graham Swann's, skied it to mid on, a nameless fielder dropped what can only be classed as a sitter. However, there was still a chance of a run-out. The throw hit Swan as he scampered back for a match-winning two.



*Rob Berry - one of the few OV's with the stamina to play in both games.*



# Shiplake from the air

## Helicopter treat for hard-working boys

After a year of application, hard work and exceptional progress in the Learning Development Department it was time for a treat for Kallum Dixon-Mylum and Matt Butler. The statistics of their test results demonstrated that impressive improvement in reading and comprehension was worthy of a thrilling helicopter flight over their homes.

Bill, an Old Viking from the College's early days in the 1960s, flew the boys at 1,500 feet towards their homes. Dropping down to 1,000 feet, Matt was able to wave at his Mum and Dad as they emerged from their Burghfield Common House. On the way back Matt was able to snap photos of the Madejski Stadium. For Kallum it was a longer flight to Newbury; even though his home is close to a restricted fly zone, he was still able to fly directly overhead.



Then Bill took the passenger door off, using a pair of pliers borrowed from the Design and Technology Department, and your less-than-fearless Newsletter editor took to the skies to snap some shots of how Shiplake looks in 2010.



# Shiplake from the air





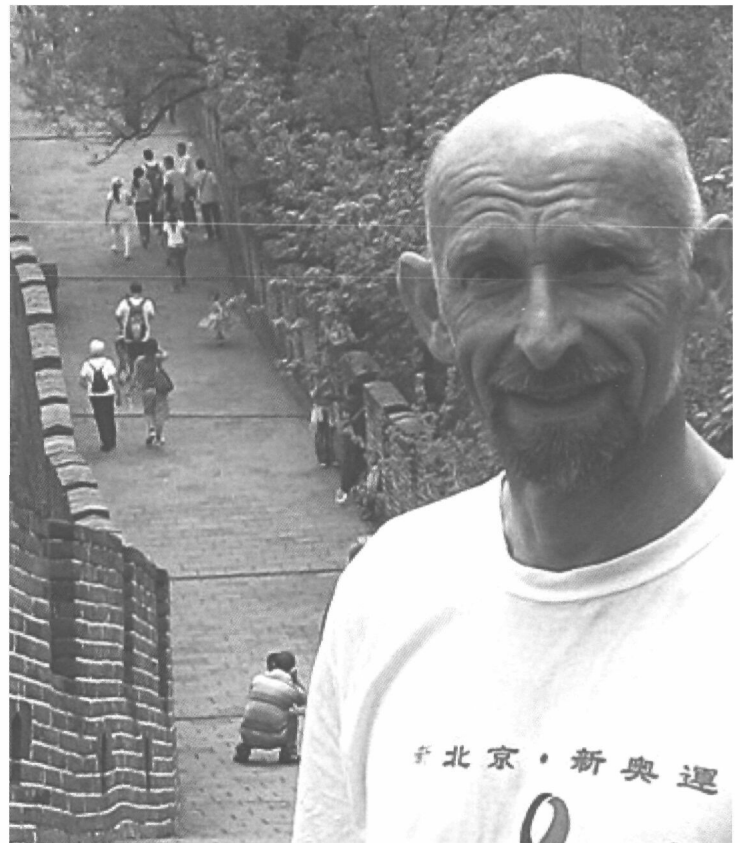
## It's all a matter of face

A teenager spends a lot of their life worrying that 'everyone' is looking at them; try being a foreigner in China. Visit somewhere out of the way, and you discover what being stared at means. I've caused people to fall off their bicycles just by being in the same street. My first set of colleagues here included a Kenyan and a Pakistani. On the several occasions that we would go out in the city together we would forever be stopped for photographs. I was in the street with my Kenyan colleague late one night, being stared at as usual when he pointed out that I was collecting more stares than him, where as in daylight it was the other way around. We both saw what was funny about this and the couple immediately facing us leapt in surprise as a pair of previously unseen teeth sprang into being right in front of them. Which made us both laugh all the harder.

Concerned about racism? Britain is a multi-cultural society and is pretty well balanced and tolerant. In China there are 50 recognised minorities and I have more than once heard the comment "She's doing quite well for a minority student" – as if the non-Han are somehow disadvantaged. Try this in Britain and there will be trouble soon.

The eastern meaning of face is, however, quite different. It is a difficult idea to understand because its concept runs through the whole society and remains largely unexplained. Quite often what I would rather call a cultural difference is described as a face issue, when I can see no possible connection with my (up to that point) understanding of the term.

I give you an example for the classroom. Your revered teacher is perfect, therefore you will not ask questions; because the teacher is perfect so there must be no questions to ask, because asking a question indicates that the teaching is not perfect and so is an insult. So you do not ask questions. You don't need me telling you how this affects western-style teaching, but the word for 'lesson' has a quite different resonance.



The reverence for teachers follows from Confucius – and in modern China I see just how thin that veneer of reverence is, although there are still no questions.

This example applies to all situations where respect is required, which means that you see problems with talking to your parents, to your boss and so on. Conversely, you have no issues with being direct (rude, to western eyes and ears) to people in a position 'below' you, such as shop assistants and waiters – anyone in the service industries. In turn, this makes the service industries not provide service, but whatever it is perceived that the customer wants.

Losing face is a far bigger issue than gaining it. Indeed, when I ask at length of my Chinese friends it appears that there are many ways to lose face (and describe that peril) but few ways to gain it; you can only find ways to **not** lose (what we call 'save face') and in Chinese this is to gain reputation, which is not quite the same thing. Westerners tend to break the mould – we disregard face to a large extent. It is a bad thing to disregard Chinese face, so I am often welcomed to disregard my own 'face' but not that of the people with whom I speak.

# David Scoins in China

All of this makes China an exciting, challenging place to be – on a daily basis. Every time you think you have grasped an idea, it runs away (far too much like my teaching). This confusion can be described (often by those about to leave) as having foundations on sand, but for some of us that same confusion just lends to the excitement. Because one is always learning something new, the older China hands' response to your own 'new' discovery is "Welcome to China".

Problems, problems. This cultural facet, trying not to lose face, does little for the economy of the country. It is not appropriate to criticise your boss, so the typical worker will make no suggestions, ever. Nor will most workers offer information, so it is all too easy for any boss to think all is wonderful. In consequence many firms are quite ridiculously underproductive, even when undercutting the international competition ferociously. Discovering useful, 'real' data to establish any sort of quality control is very difficult.

And therein lies another story; the pure mathematics in China is out of sight compared to Britain; a typical final year student at a good school is well into 2nd year undergraduate study (e.g. continuity of functions).

On the other hand, even those with Masters' degrees in mathematics still have no statistics, not even at the level of every GCSE student. So, where at one level a British mathematician would find school work extremely challenging, on the applied front it is challenging in an opposite sense.

Welcome to China.

*David Scoins*

*A familiar sight for those who remember David's days as Director of Activities at Shiplake in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He would start off the Junior Cross Country, overtake every pupil, and record the results. Then he would start the Senior race, finish first and record the results again. It must also be said that the Cross Country courses were considerably longer in those days.*





# Old Vikings' News

**Peter Kingstone (68E):** "After leaving Shiplake I joined British Transport Hotels as a trainee manager. Started in the kitchens and worked all the departments, training in England, Scotland and three years in Geneva and three years in Logrono, capital of Spanish wine and The Canaries. (Very different in the early 70s!!)

After a year at The Manor House Hotel Moretonhampstead, I spent four years at The Welcome Hotel, Stratford upon Avon as Deputy and Acting Manager, after which I was appointed Deputy General Manager of Gleneagles Hotel, and then Turnberry Hotel. After denationalisation by Margaret Thatcher I joined David Murray and remained with him in Scotland for 25 years."

**Peter Morpuss (75W)** who now works in Prague would love to have some photographs of his time at Shiplake. If you have any photographs featuring Peter he would be very grateful if you could send them to pmorp@vol.cz - a copy to medwards@shiplake.org.uk for next year's newsletter would be much appreciated too!



**Titus Drummond (75E)** "I just thought I'd write and tell all my millions of buddies about my heart attack in the Falkland Islands in April - and how the RAF doctors treated me for indigestion for three days and finally got pissed off with me so they gave me a bollocking for being a malingering git and sent me to KEMH in Stanley - where I was told I was iller than the MoD realised - and then I was sent to Chile where I had a stent fitted, fell in love, got a pet dog - and no one contacted me for two weeks so I was quite sorry when a doctor and nurse appeared and took me home again.

And then I was going to mention that after all that, in June/July, I did 5,000 miles on my eleven year old Harley Davidson, over 16 days, when I went round The Crimea.

My fork seals blew, my rack fell off and, in Romania, I made starter clutch rollers from drill bits. Also, did I, previously, tell you that, Dec 2008, I got a BSc from the Open University? Just because I can, I attach two photos: me in South Georgia a month before my heart went doolally-bonko and me after all the heart nonsense - in the Ukraine.

Titus Drummond, old boy, more knackered than last time I wrote."

# Old Vikings' News

**Betty Cosgrove (Mathematics teacher 1970s and early 1980s)** "Many thanks for the splendid Old Viking Magazine 2010. Everything therein is of interest.

I particularly liked the contributions from Hans. The obituaries brought much sadness, as I knew them all. Part of me seems to have died with them.

I am afraid I don't get back to Shiplake, as I live beside my family in Aberdeenshire, and care for my husband who has Alzheimers. My new job at 80+ is to be a full time carer!"

**Michael Nops (77W)** apologised for his absence from the London Reunion on the very acceptable premise that he lives in Bahrain.

"I have attached two photos that may be of interest. I can only remember the names of some of the people in the photos, however the 1975 one is of the rugby Second XV and I think that the hockey one is the 1974 Under 15 team. Both teams were very successful - the 2nd XV won all its matches - this was seen as almost a first at the time for Shiplake."





# Old Vikings' News

**Ossie Swaine (80S)** sent in a letter home that has survived over thirty years.

*Dear Mum & Dad,*

*Hope you are well. The Elizabethan evening went well along with the little plays and sketches and me. Everybody thought I was very funny in my costume and large bust, with my lover placing his hand on them and I slapping his hand.*

*The dancing was good with dances such as "Strip the Willow", "The Gay Gordons" all done with lady partners, age 11- 15. (Now everybody is writing to them. I asked one girl her age and she replied "Don't you know it's rude to ask ladies their age." The tables were set down the side of the Great Hall with boar's head and chicken legs eaten all with our hands. At the end all the guests joined in so I and my friends ended up dancing around with Mrs Eggar.*

*I took part in our House rugger and we've won both matches, one 46 - 0 and the other 4 - 0. I received about £1.50 for the Playboys. Yesterday I got off games to take a large instrument with Mr Woodcock in the minibus to Bracknell. The squash courts are finished but I didn't join because I thought it would effect my tennis.*

*Love Andrew*

*PS Thank you for the stamps.*

A dinner was held by Ossie Swaine for the joiners of 1975 to celebrate 30 years on after leaving Shiplake. It was a lovely evening and appreciated by all the old men that attended.

These included Peter Lean (Welsh) who is MD of Black Rock, Rupert Mackay (Burr) who is a vicar in Hadleigh Wood, Jon Daniel SKP who runs with his brothers the family store in Windsor, Crispin Harding Rolls Skp, our Police Officer (Special Protection) Steve Arnott (Welsh) who is a management consultant, Mike Grant (E) who runs- his own company caled Autoinparts , Jerry Roth (S) who is Sales Director for Crimsontide, and Nigel Baddelly who runs his mushroom farm in Kent. Finally our Society treasurer Henry Summers who missed the photo call!

Michael Charles also made a "guest appearance " by satellite link and I am extremely grateful to Michael for his wonderful DVD of himself and his good wishes.



"I smell like a sewer rat – no sorry that's not fair to sewer rats," **Ralph Dixon (82W)** wrote on just the third day of his epic six day, 250 km run across the Sahara Desert in Morocco. Although Day One had been a relatively short leg of 30 km a succession of energy sapping dunes had provided a tough start. On Day Four temperatures hit 52 degrees which led into the 82km overnight stage, "which felt like the longest day and night of my life."

Ralph's phenomenal effort in completing the succession of marathons in some of the most inhospitable conditions known to man raised 230,000 RM for the Malaysian Aids Foundation with Ralph's particular wish that the funds should be channelled to the Baram Delta in Sarawak.



*Ralph Dixon, having completed the 250 km Marathon de Sables across the Sahara*

Since retiring **Nick Bevan** (Headmaster 1988 - 2005) has been busier than ever and amongst many other things has been able to return to the towpath as a coach. In June he took his Under 15 crew from Teddies, Oxford to the Marlow Regatta.

Just before the final he began to feel unwell and called into the First Aid tent. They immediately recognised that something was wrong and Nick was whisked off to hospital. A relatively mild heart attack was diagnosed and Nick remained in hospital for a week wondering what had happened to his crew, their boat, his bike and all his responsibilities! Nor was his health improved when he discovered that his crew had, perhaps unsurprisingly in the circumstances, failed to win their event. Nick is now restored to full health and and a full range of activities but is very grateful to all those who have sent him their best wishes.

Enterprising Old Viking **Will Chetwode (92E)** was at the heart of the Dunkirk-style operation to repatriate stranded British holiday-makers swarming into Calais during the flights shut-down caused by the Icelandic volcano. Chetwode, usually based at Kites on Board, kite-surfing school based in Rye, East Sussex, offered exhausted travellers a lift at £65 a head. No profiteering from Chetwode; this was the same price as a ferry crossing for those who could squeeze onto a Channel crossing.

*The Guardian*, in Calais to report on historian Dan Snow's attempt to recreate the Dunkirk spirit, interviewed Chetwode too. Then the Port Authorities clamped down on the rigid inflatable boat operation. Chetwode, a former Shiplake Boat Club member, was puzzled by the decision, "We've got commercial licences so its not a problem for us," said Chetwode with his homeward-bound passengers grinning above their life jackets.

**James Chetwode (93W)** has just joined a company called Camps International who specialise in overseas volunteering for schools. They run projects in Africa and Asia all based around local communities in need of help.

**Dominic Barretto(93S)** "I launched my company Yellow Jersey PR ([www.yellowjerseypr.com](http://www.yellowjerseypr.com)) last June. After 14 years running the PR for the likes of Airbus, Fuller Smith & Turner, Eidos plc and JC Flowers I've finally stepped into the great unknown and set up camp here in London to focus on providing corporate and financial communications to listed companies and senior business executives. We are the UK's fastest growing financial PR firm and it has been a great 12 months of ups and downs.

I would wholly recommend to all Shiplake boys and girls to pay their dues working in a variety of companies throughout their career - mainly to pick up tricks of the business world and learn from other people's mistakes - but always keep a firm eye on "going solo" as they hit their thirties. It's truly fulfilling, and at times scary as hell, but control over one's destiny is the up-shot."



*Dominic Barretto*

# Old Vikings' News

**John Polansky (93W)** lives in Colorado, USA, by a lake but that doesn't mean that he has to swim the English Channel. When one of John's friends was looking for a challenge and a means of raising funds for the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Society, along with the Special Olympics, she approached John. The group of five swimmers undertook a gruelling training routine in Colorado's icy lakes.

Yet conditions were against them when they took to the Channel on June 25th. The water temperature had dropped to an unusually chilly 49 Fahrenheit. "When you first get in it just feels like hot pins and needles throughout your body, and then you get the ice-cream headache." With two of the team suffering from hypothermia John had to take on two legs.



Although the crossing is 24 miles, tide pull and push swimmers off course and most crossings are closer to 35 miles. The team made exceptional progress, completing the crossing, despite a near miss with shipping and jelly fish, in a very fast 10 hours and 48 minutes. So far they have raised nearly \$10,000 for their charities.

**Michael West** (Staff) Chaplain at Shiplake in the early 1990s, is now splitting his retirement, with wife Anne, between Washington for most of the year and visits to London. He regrets that he was not able to attend the 2009 Reunion but he was delighted to read that Christian life at the College was going from strength to strength. He sends his warmest greetings to staff and pupils who may remember him.

**Chris Raper (94 W)** "Moved out of London about five years ago and went travelling for a bit to have a career break. I am now living in north Buckinghamshire working for a property search and acquisition company (a bit like Phil and Kirstie on TV) which I thoroughly enjoy.

Sadly, I am not allowed to play squash anymore due to a very dodgy back which is disappointing as I loved having a run around between four walls."

**Chris Campbell** who arrived at Shiplake in the mid 1990s, via the Pickering College Connection to teach, serve as Welsh House tutor and coach basketball, e-mailed in recently. Since leaving Shiplake he has worked in software sales in some form or another. He is currently Senior Account Manager at VeriFone, a US Payments provider. His passion for the NFL remains undiminished and he enjoyed being taken to the Patriots v Buccaneers game at Wembley, by a supplier in October 2009.

**Nick Williams (96S)** "After leaving Shiplake I went to college and got a GNVQ in Information Technology. After working around various trading floors in the City offering IT support I decided to go travelling. I spent many months diving around South East Asia with my sister who at the time was living in the Philippines working as a diving instructor.

Upon my return I met an old friend who was a currency trader. One thing led to another and soon I was buying and selling Foreign Exchange. In April 2005 I took a huge gamble and left full time employment to start my own company called IFX (UK) Ltd t/a International Foreign Exchange.

I have felt all sorts of emotions since the beginning of my endeavour and I'm sure, like most, have had my ups and downs especially over the last 2 years with the recession and everything that comes with it. The economy seems to have settled down for the time being down and with it so have I. I am expecting my first baby with my partner Paige in April next year and IFX is on course to achieve its first ever 250 million GBP sales turnover at our new office in Brook St, Mayfair. I would love to catch up with some old faces so please contact me at [nwilliams@internationalfx.com](mailto:nwilliams@internationalfx.com) should you wish to get in touch."



# Old Vikings' News



In 2008 **Max Andrews (96B)** swapped city desk life for city scene photography. (It must also be remembered that after leaving Shiplake Max also made it onto the World Tennis rankings too). In September 2009 he shot New York which has since been exhibited at "Renaissance International" in Covent Garden, and at the famous Chelsea cafe/bar "Marvel London". His work can be seen at [www.maxandrews.net](http://www.maxandrews.net) He is offering all Old Vikings a 25% discount on any of his pieces.



**Dan Vanrenen (97W)**: "I run a small investment/incubator company. I have a development team in Gibraltar working on new technology and ideas and a couple of other companies which I have set up and run using my business studies skills, learnt at Shiplake!"

Younger brother **Jamie Vanrenen (00W)** is very well too. He became a father in February 2010. He has recently set up a wine shop in Parsons Green. It is a "New Way to buy wine" you can taste before you buy.

**Sharain Jalil (97E)**, who spends a lot of time training for and playing rugby, is attached to NIKE now as their brand events manager. I organise football and running events for them and in fact I was in Manchester recently but I didn't have time to get down to Shiplake before I had to fly back to Malaysia".

**Tom Pontin (98O)**: "Having left Manchester University with a 2:1 in Economics I worked as a head-hunter for a couple of years with John Gillespie (Welsh) before joining fellow Old Viking Alex Ingham Clark at F&C Alternative Investments. I didn't realise Alec was an Old Viking until his last interview question: "What would your former headmaster have to say about you?"! I reeled off a suitably polished response, with a little trepidation, to which he replied "well when I saw Nick at Nat Schools...". Somehow, I got the job."

This was the summer of 2008 and with the financial collapse; a baptism of fire ensued. I am now at Fulcrum Asset Management, which was founded by Gavyn Davies, former Goldman Sachs Chief Global Economist, chief Executive of the BBC and advisor to Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair. I'm living in Bayswater with my girlfriend of seven years, Alexandria. Having turned 30 and after an unbeaten season playing for Henley 2nd XV last year I have decided to take rugby a little less seriously and enjoy Friday nights, London life and cycling a little more.

**Tim Page (98W)** is a Director of MediaCom, a large media agency based in London and has been there for four years.

In December 2010 he begins a six month sabbatical. On page 21 you will find a photo of Tim and Nic Lowry as part of a group at Everest Base Camp. Next time Tim will be climbing even higher with an even more arduous attempt on Mount Aconagua which is the highest mountain in the Americas at 6,962 m (22,841 ft), and the highest mountain outside Asia. It is located in the Andes mountain range, in the Argentine province of Mendoza.

**Mark Lauder (Staff)** has become Headmaster of Ashville College, Harrogate. After a spell as a Housemaster at St Edward's, Oxford, Mark then served as Deputy Headmaster at Felsted in Essex. Mark says he always feels a nostalgia for Shiplake during Henley Royal Regatta week.

# Old Vikings' News

**Mark Partridge (Staff):** "Early in the year I decided to step down from the position of Director of Rowing at Nudgee College (Australia) after nearly three years of work. The timing was impeccable, with Nudgee winning Head of the River in March. My brother Mike and I rowed together a few times this year including the World Masters' Games in Sydney in October.

The highlight of my year was finally being able to do my Army Reserve training at Kapooka (NSW) in September/October and "Marching Out" once I had completed the gruelling month-long training. This included showering and shaving every day in less than 2 minutes, as well as making the bed with hospital corners and marching everywhere from dawn till dusk and many other physical challenges."

"I'm the father of **Chris Smith (00W)** who was at Shiplake in the late '90s. He left after his 'A' levels and went to Durham and then to work in the city in risk analysis. Five years ago he decided to take the gap year he never took after university and went on a one year tourist visa to Australia with the intention of splitting it with six months of enjoyment and six months of related work.

One of his first interviews for a temporary post was with Dunn and Bradstreet, who offered him a permanent post with visa support. The opportunity was too good to miss and he put aside the idea of entertainment for a job (the first time in his life and a testament to the education he received at Shiplake!!!). He's been in Australia ever since and has now moved to IBM.

He still talks about Shiplake and keeps in touch with old friends through Facebook, and occasionally sees them when he visits us in the UK.

The Barbados cricket tour was one of the highlights of Chris' time at Shiplake. As we're both keen cricketers I was also very interested in the tour. I think he feels the weather is too hot in the Australian summers to play it in the English tradition of watching the rain fall from the pavilion and discussing the last match. He's developed the acting 'bug' which he acquired at Shiplake and has performed a number of times at the Genesian Theatre in Sydney. He's currently directing the next production, *The Glass Menagerie*, which starts at the end of this month."

**James Burridge (99O):** "For the past six years I've been with the BBC, commentating on rugby for Radio Northampton and Five Live and presenting on Midlands Today and BBC Look East. Got married last year to Antonia on the Isle of Wight, very special place for us Burridges. She's a Downe House girl who was my waitress at Henley Royal Regatta seven years ago. Busy living between Northamptonshire countryside and Battersea."

**Chris Holbird (99S)** "Just returned back from Afghanistan where I was attached to 40 Commando, Royal Marines.

I was based in a place called Kajaki in Helmand Province where we were pushing the Taliban out of our sector and trying to stabilize the area. Currently posted in Catterick, North Yorkshire where I am employed as a Military Policeman conducting Garrison Policing and awaiting promotion to Sergeant."

**Tom Constable (00E):** "I'm now a Naval Officer in the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy. Currently I'm an Aircraft Engineering Officer on a Sea King Search and Rescue helicopter Squadron based down at RNAS Culdrose (HMS Seahawk), I only have a few months left before I join HMS Illustrious (aircraft carrier) as the Air Weapons Supply Officer (aka Bombs). Sports wise, I'm about to start my second season in the Royal Navy Alpine Ski Team, doing Down Hill and Slalom Racing (Inter Service champs in Meribel in early Feb). Rugby has now really taken a back seat unfortunately. I still often see Ollie Gradden, Richard Jacob, Tim Scoffham and Nick Lay."

**Jessica Jonzen (00W)** "I thought I should let you know that my husband and I had a baby girl on 22 September! She's called Otilie and was 15 days late so has obviously inherited her mother's poor time-keeping skills! Robert Prance is going to christen her at Shiplake church on December 19th and both Hugo Lowry and Ilana Rakhorst are Godparents."

**Hugo Lowry (00O):** "I am continuing to live and work in London as a Chartered Surveyor. Outside of work, I'm back playing rugby, when possible, for Hammersmith and Fulham RFC, following a nasty injury last season, although most weekends now seem to be spent going to friends' weddings!"

# Old Vikings' News

**Alexis Rivet de Sabatier (01S):** "I am now living in Paris. I've finished my long studies (seven years at university). After a Masters in Business Law at University Resné Descarte, I then went to Rouen Business School where I passed a Masters in Management, specialising in Entrepreneurship.

With a few friends we started our own business in intelligent fabrics. The aim was to make childrens' clothes that could protect them against parasites. It did not really succeed but I learned a lot. Also I worked as an auditor for Mazars. Now I am working for a new technology firm as a Business Developer."

**Nic Lowry (020)** "I am still working at the fund management company Invista REIM in the City of London and have been for over 4 years. I am currently living in Putney, and I am in regular contact with a number of Shiplake Vikings who are dotted around the capital. On that note, I recently spent over two weeks in the Himalayas with Tim Page, where we trekked to Everest Base Camp and also climbed to the peak of Gokyo Ri, both of which are in excess of 5,350m or 17,500 ft. It was a very enjoyable, albeit diverse, holiday!

Since hanging up my rowing oar last year, I have attempted to stay fit and healthy in order to keep on the preferred side of the BMI chart! I dabbled in a number of triathlons last year and I also took part in the Henley Swim, where I was comprehensively beaten by current member of the SCR Hugh Mackworth-Praed. Good to see I am still being taught a lesson by a member of staff, eight years after leaving the college!

I am running in the French Riviera Marathon, from Nice to Cannes, in November, which will certainly be a challenge; coming from someone who never achieved a "standard" on the arduous Shiplake College Cross Country run, it will no doubt be a painful experience."



"Don't forget that it was at Shiplake that I learnt to play the guitar," said **Alan Pownall (01B)**. Alan is a highly original singer/song writer who has been described as a British Jack Johnson. His debut album "True Love Stories" has received many excellent reviews, described as "perfectly made for lazy summer days."

The Independent's reviewer wrote, "Pownall brings a strong melodic sense to his benighted tales of blighted love and ships passed during nights too dark to notice what's been lost, with the bouncy piano of "Clara" recalling Elton John."

*Tim Page (2nd from left) and Nic Lowry (2nd from right) at Everest Base Camp*





# Old Vikings' News

**Adam Palk (020):** "After leaving Shiplake I went on to study Philosophy at Reading Uni. Then I was importing, roasting and selling coffee in London for a while. Now I'm running a community centre in Brighton. My aim is for it to be the best social enterprise cafe so I can take the model to other community centres. Miss the Shiplake years quite a lot, I've managed to keep in contact with most people."

**Matt Gould (030)** is really enjoying his first teaching post at King's College School, Wimbledon in the prep school. He is teaching English, assisting with the school play and coaching a football team. He is off to Rome and Pompeii at half-term on the Latin trip – such commitment!

Younger brother **Olly Gould (0100)** is saving up to travel to Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand in the spring, before going to Leeds University to study Sports Science and Physiology next September.

**Will Jackson (04S)** is busy working as a Team Leader for Research Machines on the Milton Estate Didcot. Will enjoys the challenges of developing new products but is concerned that government cut backs may impact on opportunities for his team. He has moved out of the nearby parental home and is sharing a flat with a friend.

**Kate Mannix (050)** graduated with a 2:1 honours degree from Nottingham University, spent a year travelling and joined GMTV, now bought out and rebranded as Daybreak. Kate is a Production Assistant living in London and sharing a flat with **Holly Baird (050)**. Holly works for a company identifying locations for filming.

After gaining a 1st class joint honours degree in Geology and Archaeology from Birmingham University, **Nicholas Mannix (06O)** has stayed at the university to study for an MSc in Hydrogeology.

**Tom Levin (06O)** is working in television, currently working on the second series of *One Born Every Minute as a Runner*, and then after that I am onto another documentary called *24 hours in A & E* which should be fun." His sister **Natalie Levin (02O)** works for The Guide Dogs charity.

**Ed Vaughan-Fowler (06W)** graduated from Exeter University in the summer of 2010 and is currently working as a shipbroker at ICAP in London.

**Ed Adler (06B):** "I have just graduated from the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester with a 2:2 in Property Agency and Marketing, and I am now working for a Chartered Surveyors Firm on Albermarle Street London. I am currently living in a flat on Fulham Broadway with another Burr Old Boy, **Will Sparkes (06B)** who is working for a recruitment company. My brother **Will Adler (07B)** is in his final year at Newcastle University completing his Business Management degree and is looking to get into insurance."

**Tim Hill (06E):** "I have recently graduated from reading Music at Canterbury Christ Church University and I am currently working as an intern for Rayfield Artists. One of my projects is representing The Prince Consort, a young and exciting group of singers who have recently graduated from the Masters course at the Royal College of Music. My job is to connect them to a young and affluent market!"

**Will Satch (060)** raced in the GB men's VIII at the 2010 World Rowing U23 Championships in Brest, Belarus, winning a bronze medal. Will now rows at Leander Club. On a rowing website Will states that in his spare time he has a wide range of interests including swimming, watching rugby, drawing and drinking a wide selection of green teas.



*Will Satch (middle of back row)*

# Old Vikings' News

When he was a pupil at Shiplake, **Tom Bennett (0/E)** was part of a company who took a school production to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This year Tom took two plays to the Fringe. "*The Changeling*, not the Jacobean play, but a devised piece, wasn't bad," says Tom but it was *Bound* which ran for a month and received five 5 star reviews.

Bear Trap Theatre, graduates of East 15's acclaimed Contemporary Theatre Course, won a host of awards and was flown to Adelaide, Australia to headline their Fringe Festival.

The play is about six men, five chairs, one table and an ocean, as compelled by the threat of bankruptcy. The Violet fishing trawler and its mismatched crew are forced out into treacherous weather.

Lyn Gardner of The Guardian reviewed the play with the compliment, "A young company of real promise ... performed with real dynamism."

*Tom Bennett (left) in **Bound***



**Freddie Greaves (09B)** has just started rehearsal on the National Theatre's *Prince of Denmark*. Since spending a gap year travelling Freddie has resumed his thespian career, jetting back from Cambodia to take a guest role in the College's *Hunting of the Snark* performed in Oxford's Botanical Gardens and taking one of the ten lead roles in the National Youth Theatre's *S'Warm*.

Set in Elsinore, a decade before *Hamlet*, Michael Lesslie's new play focuses on teenage rage and rebellion from adolescent Hamlet, Ophelia and Laertes.



*Freddie Greaves in **Snark***

**Send your news and photos to:**

**[medwards@shiplake.org.uk](mailto:medwards@shiplake.org.uk)**

**for the 2012 OVS Newsletter**

## Nick Bevan recalls the tunnels discovery

A knock on our front door one weekend found our neighbour Jane in her wellington boots and Barbour asking me to join her in a walk into the woods to 'see something which might interest me'. Naturally intrigued, I followed her into the heart of a dense coppice that led away from the school for about half a mile. I have to confess that although I was well aware it was private property, I had ventured in a few times in order to flush out smoking and drinking dens. It provided superb cover and boys could very easily evade being identified. Whilst evidence was fairly easy to locate, boys were not!

On this occasion Jane led me to a small clearing with a leaf strewn floor. First she pointed out many wooden carvings in the trees around us which I had not noticed on walking in. Then she swept back some leaves to reveal a large trap door hidden beneath. The mystery was deepening. She had wisely brought a torch and once we had descended we found ourselves in a chamber which had been carved out of the earth and chalk. There were sconces in the wall for candles, a rough bench around the wall for seating and evidence of very recent occupation. The chamber must have been about two metres by one and I had to stoop to stand in it. What was more mysterious however was the presence in one corner of a tunnel, about 5 feet high, rough hewn and chalky leading down and into the hillside. Unsurprisingly neither Jane or her gamekeeper, who had been the first to find this cave system had dared to go down the tunnel. Nor on this occasion did I.

But I was already intrigued, amazed, and to be frank impressed and having carefully covered our tracks we departed. I promised to investigate further and report back. Naturally Jane was concerned about the possibility of an accident on her property but I confess to mixed feelings of similar worries at the same time as huge admiration for what was being done; the evidence in the chamber of current activity was everywhere.

These boys, if they were our boys and I had no reason to suspect anything else, had energy, imagination and flair; good characteristics for young men which should be encouraged! Back in school I shared the discovery with very few people.

The boys involved had clearly been extremely discreet and for the time being I certainly wanted to respect that.

However I took the clerk of the works and one house-master into my confidence and when things seemed quiet we set out with torches to make a deeper exploration. While noticing the carvings we also found what could only be described as a home-made assault course in the woods below the excavations, further evidence of long term use of the area by adventurous boys. The clerk was fascinated by all the timber and rope work which he immediately recognized as having disappeared recently.

So, having shown them the entrance chamber, for that is what it turned out to be, they bravely dived into the tunnel followed somewhat gingerly by me. The exclamations of amazement on emerging after some ten feet of tunnel told me that something even more astonishing lay ahead. We had emerged into a large chamber, the size of a room. Drapes hung on the walls, there was a bar with glasses in one corner, cushions lay about and there was a battery powered music system as well. Candles would provide light set into grooves in the walls. It was quite tidy and clearly well used.

***Were there any excavations before the late 1980s? Total immunity from further investigation for any Old Vikings telling the story of earlier underground developments for next year's newsletter!***

Interestingly in one corner there was a ladder leading straight up to a trap door in the ceiling. Nothing daunted, up they went to find, amazingly, that the ceiling of the lower chamber was wooden and there was another similar sized, decorated and furnished room above with a shaft above leading to another trap door emerging straight out into the woods; both an escape route and a ventilation shaft. The ventilation shaft was remarkable for two reasons. Firstly it's considerable height; stretching from the bottom chamber past the one above, its total height must have totaled close to 20 feet, if not more. Secondly and just as remarkable, was the astonishing manner in which the shaft had a wood panel finish, complete with handholds in the case of an emergency evacuation. Since the rooms had been cut into the hillside this ventilation shaft was of considerable height. The Clerk of the works had, by the way, already identified many more bits of material including of course one of his ladders!



# Tunnels

We were stunned at the sophistication of the whole enterprise; its spaciousness, relative tidiness and charm. We could picture boys relaxing and enjoying themselves and, to be frank, admiration and wonder were our principal feelings. At that stage it never really occurred to me that it might not be safe, that boys might be in considerable danger. All three of us returned to school to reflect on our findings.

My first priority, without really thinking through the consequences of what might happen if I was successful, was to find out which boys were involved and so on successive Sunday afternoons I found an excuse to discreetly observe the comings and goings in the forecourt from my study on the first floor of Skipwith House. I guessed, wrongly as it turned out, that boarders would be mainly responsible and that Sundays, when there was a fair amount of free time, would be their best opportunity for enjoying and developing their project. I had a vague idea of who might be involved and sure enough, quite early in my observations but late in the afternoon, John turned the corner by Everett House. Scruffily dressed and with a fair amount of chalk on his clothes, he looked exactly as you would expect a boy to look if he had just emerged from a tunnel!

I decided to confront him and after a considerable amount of bluster he admitted that in their first year in the school he and a handful of friends formed a secret society that, having been driven from the woods nearer the river, ended up in the thick of the woods creating this extraordinary underground 'clubroom'. Only three or four others were involved, mostly dayboys and when I eventually got them all together they claimed they had dug the tunnels and rooms from scratch. This I questioned but they stuck to their guns and I have never discovered fully how it all began. My suspicion is that they stumbled across something that had been there for some time and enhanced and extended it. They did have detailed plans drawn up for further improvements.

They were initially very resentful, and understandably so when I made it clear that now we knew about it we were going to have to do something about it and that, after consulting senior staff and governors, the decision was made that we could not be responsible. There were huge safety issues and tragically, but inevitably, the whole place would have to be destroyed.

This was something that some of the boys involved struggled to come to terms with. But imagine the worst case scenario. In a boarding school pupils safety is paramount; we are entrusted by parents to provide a duty of care. The personal anguish, let alone the legal ramifications for the school in wake of a fatal collapse would have been unthinkable. The school authorities would have been in the position to prevent a disaster and would have failed abjectly to do so. In the end there was no room for discussion and, very sadly, the 'tunnels' had to go.

Although the boys did not appreciate my attitude at the time, in my heart I hugely admired what had been achieved and would have loved to have been able to preserve it as a monument to the initiative and enterprise of today's young men. They were; on the whole; sensible and committed boys enjoying success in many areas of school life and I hated to fall out with them so badly.

A parent who was a professional demolition engineer agreed to do the deed with the boys involved acting as his safety team on the day. It was a poignant moment creating an uncomfortable rift which was never bridged.

I hope that with the benefit of hindsight they will now understand why we had to do as we did. If any of them on reading this cares to arrange a reunion, I would be absolutely delighted to meet them again and fill in the gaps about the creation of this remarkable feature which are missing from this report.

*Nick Bevan*



*Nick's son, Oliver, investigating at the entrance to the tunnel*

# OVS London Reunion



***Images from the 2010 OVS London Reunion in the Blanca Bar, Jewel at Covent Garden. The 2011 Reunion will take place at the same location at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 8th November 2011. Tickets available on the door.***



## Kenya Expedition 2010



Mount Kenya will always top 17,000 feet and the white water rapids will douse the raft's passengers with chilling water. Herds of elephants will trample past the camp site and fish will team over the coral reefs in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. But it is the people who make or break an expedition.

The Shiplake College expedition of July 2010 on their 25 days of travels bonded like no other. Even though they pitched camp on volcanic rocks, were besieged by ticks, suffered twisted ankles and even a scorpion sting, they looked out for each other and looked after each other.

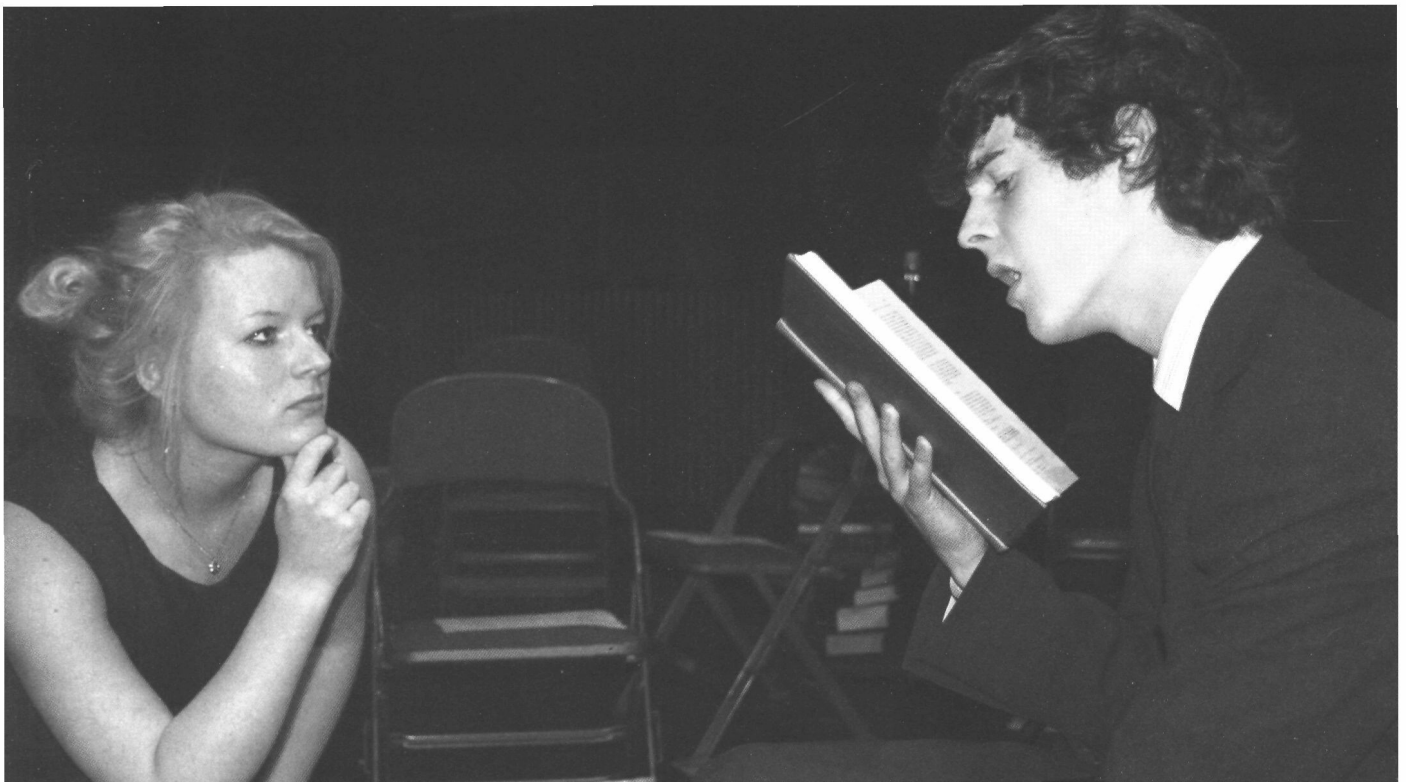
## Beckett and Pinter in the Tithe Barn Theatre

Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter provided the inspiration for Shiplake College's three play homage to two of the twentieth century's most influential playwrights.

Beckett's *Play*, a talking heads production is a minimalist presentation of an eternal triangle. Beckett targeted speech like artillery fire. Pierre Blanc as Man 1, Aless Williams as Woman 1 and Grace Miller as Woman 2, sat in metre high black boxes, and provided it.

The next two short plays were inspired by Pinter's "one criminal act", the theft of the original manuscript of Beckett's *Murphy* from Bermondsey library in 1938. It was an inspirational text which "he read to death". Pinter's friends prodded his conscience humorously, "Think of all the charladies who won't be able to read Samuel Beckett now."

Christian Young, below, as Pinter, vehemently expresses his struggle as a playwright through his career as he experimented with his craft. After every play he set himself the target that next time he must "Fail better." Hannah Fitzgerald, playing his wife, Lady Antonia Fraser, looks on with deep concentration.





## Best examination results ever

Heads of Department are now looking back at the 2010 examination season and assessing how they can improve on an exceptional set of results. Not only did Shiplake achieve a record A\* - C pass rate of 90% but the College's academic added value results were exceptional. For the second successive year highly effective teaching and learning added an average of 1.6 grades to every subject for every pupil. All but one academic department added at least one GCSE grade to the achievement of every single pupil. At A Level preliminary analysis suggests that the College's academic added value will place it in the top 1% of schools nationally.

"There is no magic formula for our academic added value," says Gregg Davies, Headmaster. "We work hard providing interesting and patient teaching. Teachers offered numerous extra clinics before school, during lunchtimes and into the evenings. Our pupils received exceptional support. Small classes and a determination not to allow any pupil to disrupt any other pupil's progress for a single second have paid dividends. Frequent monitoring and outstanding pastoral care help to ensure that the vast majority of pupils exceed their original academic expectations."



## Come in boat number 57

Arriving at the world's largest two day rowing event, The Head of the Charles Regatta, in Cambridge Massachusetts, proved to be an awe-inspiring experience for Shiplake's squad of 12 senior oarsman and three teachers. Within just days of arriving in the USA, after a quick tour of Harvard University, from former Shiplake pupil James Briggs, the Shiplake oarsmen found themselves on a demanding three mile course of bends, buoys, boats and bridges.

The Shiplake party received a huge morale boost when 1st VIII coach Hugh Mackworth-Praed, in boat number 57, finished 12 seconds ahead of an international field of single sculls. Then the 1st VIII enjoyed victory over local rivals Radley College when they finished 20th out of a field of 74 schools.

A four hour double-decker train journey took the squad to the Big Apple for two days of memorable sightseeing. Next stop on the busy 13 day itinerary was Philadelphia. Hosted by Malvern Preparatory School, and billeted with parents, the boys took advantage of an indoor rowing tank to check-out their technique in the surrounding mirrors.

The Head of the Schuylkill Regatta provided a triumphant conclusion to a very successful training camp on the Schuylkill River. The 1st VIII finished fifth in their category ahead of some very strong American rowing schools. Nick Gordon and Toby Bownass gained a comfortable victory in the High Schools Doubles, with a 6 second gap to second place.



*The OVS contributed towards the costs of a very successful training trip*

# Staff Leavers

## Phil Davey

Just short of a gold watch – twenty four years and two terms. Phil Davey arrived at Shiplake in January 1986 from Cornwall to take on the role of Welsh House tutor based in The Lodge. Six years at Kingswood House School and a year travelling in Australia provided Shiplake with an experienced and versatile teacher. There was even a summer when the multi-talented Phil worked with the Maintenance Department. From coaching the U14A rugby team to fixing shelves. Phil quickly established himself as an essential part of the Shiplake jigsaw. In the Senior Common Room he was witty and very knowledgeable on many subjects.



Within a year he had been appointed Master-in-Charge of 1st XI cricket and many of us who have seen the slow left-arm Tufnell-like loop to the bowling, the effective but unobtrusive wicket-keeping and elegant left-handed batting know why the appointment was so immediate. Shiplake sporting history was made with the first overseas cricket tour to the Netherlands.

In the classroom Phil proved to be a very effective English teacher who, when appointed as Head of Department helped one fortunate Year 11 to be the first year to achieve a 100% pass rate for English GCSE. Not surprisingly, A Level numbers swelled and Phil ran a very successful department. Yet Nick Bevan, the then Headmaster had another challenge for Phil. Media Studies was in its infancy at Shiplake but growing rapidly. With huge numbers of sometimes wayward creative types lining up, the department needed the discipline, rigour and focus that Phil had brought to the English Department. Phil also had to train and develop a succession of assistant teachers to maintain the standards and push the students.

Phil made Shiplake history in another area too. As extra-curricular provision expanded Phil became the first member of staff to take a minibus of boys to play snooker. He was as happy with a cue in hand as he was with a pen solving the essential daily cryptic crossword. When the Headmaster sought a new word for the electronic school management system to chronicle offences it was Phil who gave the word "Infraction" a place in Shiplake's vocabulary.

For many years he proved a calming influence on first his Welsh House tutees and then in later years his charges in College House. As Phil retires his wit and support will be missed by his colleagues. He served on the Senior Common Room Committee and whenever a Colleague had triple booked himself with lessons, activities and duties Phil was always on hand to help out.

## Derek Dovaston

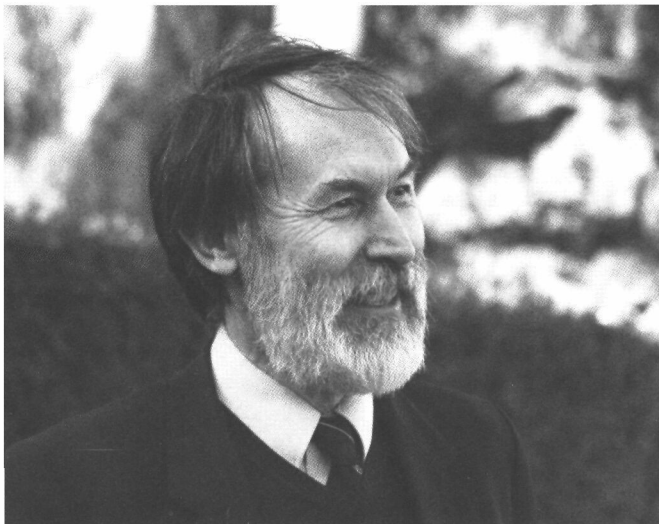
Probably one of the very best teachers who I have ever worked with," announced one of Derek's colleagues when Derek's retirement was announced. Derek belongs to an exclusive but growing number of teachers who have served two spells at Shiplake.

Derek originally arrived at Shiplake in September 1983 as a Physics teacher and "resident" Skipwith tutor, though his accommodation was a high attic room, rented by the College, in a large house along the Reading Road.

Staying for just a year Derek then moved to Cheltenham Ladies College and then on to teach in Germany for three years. In 1989 Derek returned, this time with his wife Barbara. They bought a house in Henley and Derek steadily migrated from Physics to the Mathematics Department. Returning with a beard and spells in Cheltenham and Germany, many pupils harboured a suspicion that Derek was a spy, even though the Cold War was drawing to an end.

Having read Applied Physics at Aston University, Derek had then worked in research and development at British Aerospace which provided him with the perfect background for teaching both Mathematics and Physics.

# Staff Leavers



## Brian Foakes

For five years Brian Foakes has been one of the quiet back room boys who make such a huge and largely unsung contribution to life at Shiplake. It has been Brian who has taken pupils week after week, to gain their life-saving qualifications. It has been Brian who has dealt with passports, route maps, cabin booking and permissions for pupils to take part in DofE and who has organised tachograph licenses for the expedition drivers. It has been Brian who has organised outdoor expedition after outdoor expedition and then returned to teach, tired but uncomplaining.

He was a very flexible member of staff who could switch from one subject to the other, as needs occurred: then he obtained exemplary results (in either subject). He also was effective right across the ability range. He played a significant role in the teaching of Further Maths to the brightest pupils.

Derek was always the Scottie in the Engine room, reliably producing "Warp Factor One" when the Captain Kirks demanded performance. Always happier as a back-room worker for two decades Derek has been the tutor at the backbone of Orchard House ensuring that the House runs in an orderly and quite manner. Successive Orchard Housemasters have seemed a little more relaxed when it has been Derek's duty day. For many years in the 1990s Derek quietly and tactfully completed the timetable

Derek has never been spotted in games kit or a track-suit, though he has shown steely determination to complete the lengthy charity walks along the River Thames, but he has been an admirable servant of the squash club, ever present to organise players and help them arrange games versus a suitable opponent. Derek also served as President of the Senior Common Room and also as the SCR's Treasurer.

As Victoria, Derek's daughter, leaves Shiplake's Sixth Form, the Dovastons feel that they have the opportunity to move on. They would like to spend some time in Germany, once again, but their plans are flexible.

Brian arrived to fill gaps in the Music Department, taking on the technologically challenging task of A Level Music Technology with pupils who were wannabe rock rebels rather than meek and mild scholars, and also in the ICT department. When Carl Lyon was lured to Dubai with UAE Dirham, Brian stepped into the breach and became Head of ICT. Maintaining the department's exemplary examination results and recruiting good numbers for A Level study, he completed the endless hours of administration with admirable efficiency.

Shiplake has been fortunate for many years to have Brian's flexibility and adaptability. If a job needed doing, quietly and well, then Brian was the man to fill the gap. Purchasing a narrow boat he navigated it through the Midlands' canals and moored up on Eyot Island. Every morning Brian enjoyed one of the most blissful and shortest journeys to work in the world. He canoed across to the Boathouse and then walked up the hill from the Thames. From his boat he ran one of the most memorable experiences of any new Year 9's life, the overnight Adventure on the Island.

Duty was part of Brian's life and he was always busy on a Tuesday afternoon helping his charges to gain the most from their commitment to CCF. As an Orchard tutor Brian spent countless hours ensuring that breaks, lunchtimes and prep ran smoothly in their House. Meticulous attention to detail and forward planning are an integral part of Brian's character and we will certainly miss his ability to check documents and foresee the problems: these were invaluable qualities too as a super efficient SCR Treasurer. There is no doubt that Brian's new school in Southsea will gain immense benefits from having Brian as one of their Housemasters.



# Staff Leavers

## Tom Caston

Since returning to Shiplake for his third stint, once as a pupil and then as a teacher, Tom Caston has rapidly ascended the College's career ladder. Arriving as a Geography Teacher he soon became an energetic Head of Department. Shiplake, Bath, London and back to Shiplake had provided Tom with a plethora of teacher role models, teaching techniques and a belief that he could inspire pupils to achieve their potential to its very utmost. He took Geography out of the classroom, demonstrating long-shore drift with human modelling, and into the hearts of his pupils. Geographers scampered over Iceland's glaciers and recorded their field-work data in Dorset.

Next stop, for just a year, was the position of Orchard Assistant Housemaster. A cocktail of care, concern, comedy and a disquieting ability to read what was going on in pupils' minds was much appreciated by Chis Alcock, his Housemaster.

Then Tom spent a year preparing for the launch of the Lower School. The target was one set of eleven year old boys. Parents were convinced by Tom's enthusiasm and energy. They knew that Tom's creativity and commitment to exciting and often innovative education would give their boys the best possible start to their secondary education. Such was Tom's pioneering zeal that two classes of Year 7 pupils began at Shiplake in September 2009. Somehow Tom also managed to oversee the College's development plan.

Claiming to be a motivator rather than a technical coach Tom produced some fiercely competitive U16B rugby teams. One squad lost just a solitary match over a long autumn season. A legacy from Tom's Shiplake school days was a desire to win the traditional local derbies and his teams always seemed to tackle that much harder when the opposition were Pangbourne College or The Oratory School.

Initially Tom coached the 1st Cricket XI but then moved on to the U14As to enthuse new cricketers and ensure that the correct technical skills were honed right from their beginning. It was worrying to see some of the boys taking on the Caston body-language and chirpiness as they fielded.



*Tom  
and  
Noah  
Caston*

Tom has always relished a challenge and as he moves onto Ardingly School to become a Housemaster he and his wife Consuela are expecting their first child in September. Tom has had something of a yo-yo relationship with Shiplake and there would be few who would bet against him returning for a fourth stint at the College.

# OVS AGM 2010

**The Old Viking Society  
The Annual General Meeting 2010  
2030 Tuesday 9th November, Jewel, Covent Garden**

## **AGENDA**

- 1) The 2009 – 2010 Profit and Loss Account was approved.
- 2) Richard Alldrick and David Collis were re-elected to the Committee.
- 3) A warm welcome was given to guests of Honour Phil Davey and Derek Dovaston who have now retired from the College.

## **HEADMASTER'S REPORT**

With 51% of A Levels passed at A\* - B, placing Shiplake in the top 0.5% of schools for academic added value, and 90% of GCSE's passed at grades A\* to C, Shiplake recorded its best examination results ever. 92% of Upper Sixth Formers gained places at their first or second choice universities which was a triumph for the Careers Department.

The new Lower School is thriving with 34 boys in Years 7 & 8. They have already produced some excellent music, football, rugby and academic work this year. It was also a historic moment for the Sixth Form girls when they put an VIII onto the river for the first time.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is thriving. Over the past two years there have been canoeing, sailing and walking gold expeditions. Nearly 40 Year 10s are registered for the Bronze Award and there will be a busy season of assessment for the staff involved with DofE.

The 1st XV began well, including a victory over Teddies, but injuries have taken their toll. In the summer the 1st XV rugby squad will tour South Africa. The Boat Club is just back from an exciting October training camp on the East Coast of the USA and their hard-work suggests that they will be a force to be reckoned with next summer.

Last summer the 1st XI lost just two matches and the OVS XI discovered that the team had one of the most brutal batting line-ups seen at Shiplake for a number of years.

Next time you visit Shiplake take time to look at the quality of work on display. The art work is always stunning, but stop to appreciate some of the ability displayed in the Humanities, Language and Science and other departments too.

These may be difficult financial times but the College is packed. We began the term with 349 pupils and have enjoyed some very busy Open Mornings this term.

## **OLD VIKINGS WEBSITE**

The College and the OVS have taken the decision to include the Old Viking Society website within the new College website at

[www.shiplake.org.uk](http://www.shiplake.org.uk)

The OVS website will be found under the Community tab.

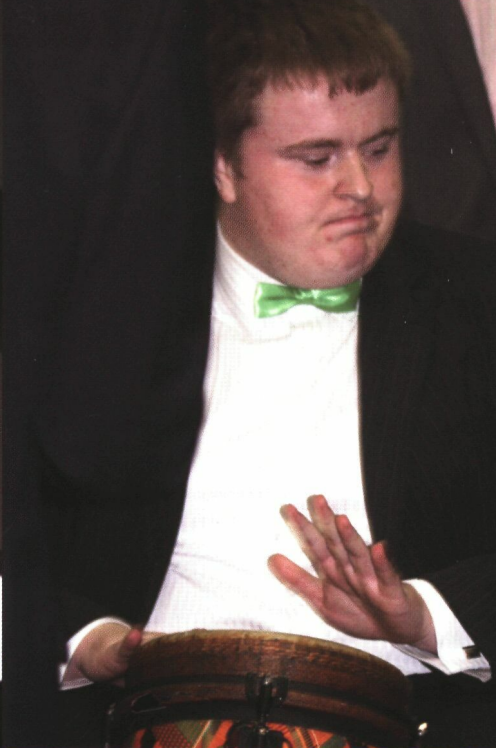
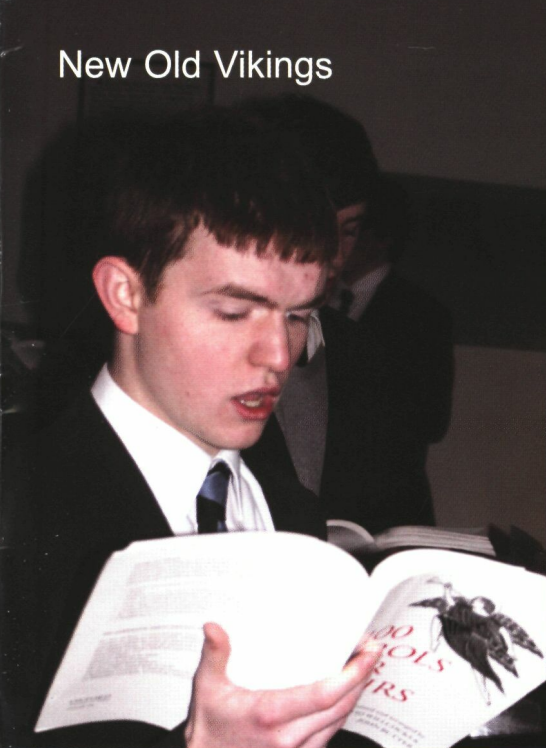
You will also find a copy of the current Court Magazine in that section too.

Please use the site to forward changes of address and communication details or send them to Michael Edwards at:

[medwards@shiplake.org.uk](mailto:medwards@shiplake.org.uk)



New Old Vikings







Thirty-one years on the 1979 1st VIII gathered at Henley Royal Regatta to cheer on their Shiplake successors.

