Shiplake College
Henley-on-Thames

riverbank

Spring/ Summer 2013

As you can see I enjoy my job. I take pride in pupils' achievements. We often see the broad smiles, and sometimes the screams of delight, when pupils receive examination results before parents receive the calm and controlled response.

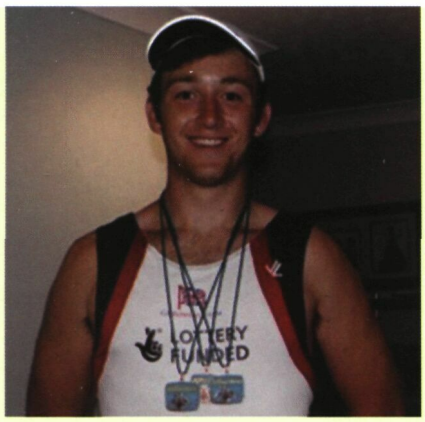
Shiplake is an exciting place to be. Education constantly evolves not to meet the needs of today but of tomorrow. I enjoy dropping into lessons to see pupils acquiring the skills which teachers believe they will need for the industry of tomorrow, for the communications of the next decade, and for the languages to thrive in the global community.

Encouraging aspiration, as well as developing practical and thinking skills, our teachers have taken A Level English students to a private Chaucer seminar at Lady Margaret Hall within the hallowed walls of Oxford University; Theology and Philosophy students have visited John Howell, Henley MP, at Westminster to ask some very searching questions.

On the river and the playing fields our coaches continue to aim high. The cricket 1st XI played their first ever fixture against the MCC and were not at all in awe, finishing just 14 runs short of a prestigious victory. Following on from the three boys who represented England, at various levels for rugby we now have five senior rowers who put in a very impressive performance at the GB Small Boats trials. They now wait to see if they have made it to the next stage. Meanwhile Marek Lapham picked up 3 golds for the Junior GB squad at the Munich International Regatta. Shiplake pupils aspire to the very highest standards.

Conducting at the Spring Concert

Gregg Davies, Headmaster



Commuting on the curriculum

Sometimes the journey is an education in itself. For Shiplake College's Year 7 a rush hour commute into London, a daily ritual that may be theirs in a decade's time was a real eye-opener.

Visiting the Science Museum they built on recent classroom studies of shapes in the Mathematics galleries before progressing to the Launch Pad exhibition with its array of hands-on practical experiments demonstrating mathematical and engineering principles.

The V&A Museum provided some superb opportunities for sketching with the boys inspired by ironworks, motifs and ceramics.

E-Library up and running

Reading on the bus, finishing a chapter in the queue, catching up on the plot over lunch, have all suddenly become easier.

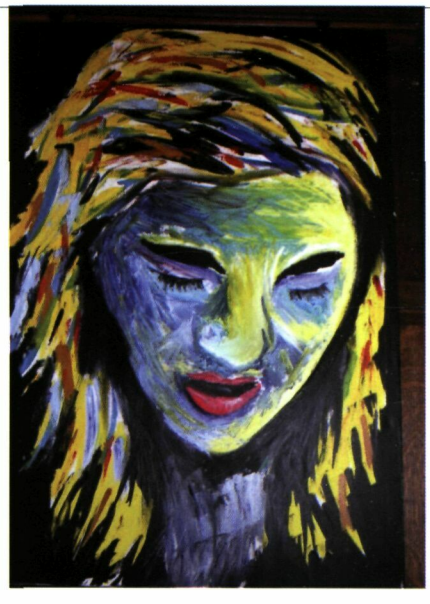
The College's investment in an 'e-library' gives pupils and teachers, the opportunity to become voracious readers.

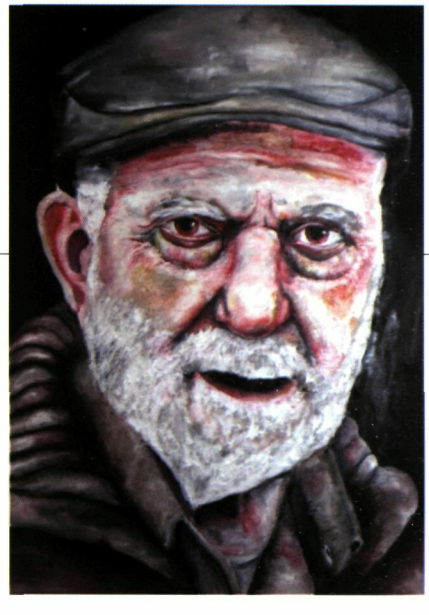
With the ability to download over 250 titles, free of charge, onto a wide variety of 3G and wi-fi devices, including Kindle Fire, pupils can develop their reading. Readily available apps provide the ultimate mobile library for PCs, Apple products and Android devices too.

House Art Competition

It was a case of move over Lady Gaga in the Year 13 Sculpture Competition.

Bunty Rowbotham went a stage further than a dress made from meat, as her card two-piece outfit, displayed the skeleton and internal organs.





Never an 18 certificate!

A scene of Bart Simpson skateboarding naked in *The Simpsons Movie* prompted plenty of discussion for the British Board of Film Classification.

Heidi Renton, from the BBFC, explained to Y13 Media Students who are preparing for their Critical Perspective A2 examination, the role of the independent, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation.

Actually it wasn't love at first sight

Delving into her family history, Trudi Lister, along with Tom Jones, Shiplake College Sixth Formers, devised an original two-hander, *Goal and a perfect six*, for an enthralled Tithe Barn Theatre audience.

Taking Trudi's grandmother Sheena, Scottish Ice Dancing Champion, and her grandfather Harold 'Cep' Young, a Canadian ice-hockey player for the Fife Flyers, as a case study, the play investigates how humans create and use memory.

Beginning in science documentary mode, Trudi and Tom, present the physiology of memory. "If you are over 28 then your memory is already declining," warns Tom. Sideways glances from professional presenter Trudi, attempt to keep overly dramatic Tom on script and on message. This deft sub-plot brings humour to the warm love story that illustrates the science, particularly when the despairing Trudi leaves the stage to grab a drink from the bar.

With diagrams on the screen behind them, and Tom squirming as a seahorse as he replicates the shape of the hippocampus, the presenters explain how every time we remember our synapses have to recreate the memory. Memories change and develop as well as fading and disappearing.

Switching from presenters to the forties sweethearts, who were Fife local celebrities, Tom and Trudi as Harold and Sheena, act out their first meeting. That is the problem. Years and decades have embellished Sheena's romantic memories. Harold gently amends Sheena's memories of love at first sight.

During their courtship Harold asks, "What if we become one of those couples with nothing left to say?"

Sheena reassures him, "There's always something to say." Sixty-one years on Harold and Sheena have plenty to say about the sweet business they started, the house they built and the children and grandchildren they visit. The Youngs can be very proud of their grand-daughter's creativity too.

Colder than here

Acting as a fifty-something woman, sentenced to death by bone-cancer, with 'six-to-nine months' left is a challenge for a teenager.

Ellaoisa Gorvin portrayed a mother tying to hide the pain from her daughter; who struggles to swallow the outsize tablets, but she left the audience in no doubt as to Myra's resolve and inner strength.

For Myra death was one last project to tidy and organise; her plans for a flat-pack cardboard coffin perfectly in character. Her words say she is ready to let her life slip away. Unable to work she reads the 'shelves of cancer' at her local library to occupy her time, but she cannot relinquish her maternal instincts.

Meaghan Barron-Cutts played recovering bulimic daughter Jen in the opening scene of Laura Wade's 2005 debut play Colder than here in the AS practical performance. With a track-record of choosing bad men, much to her mother's chagrin, and an on-going feud of silence with her father, the picnic rug on which Jen and mother sit may as well be a minefield. Meaghan portrays Jen as a troubled soul ready to implode.

In a tribute to Stanislavskian technique the two actors smooth imaginary creases in their clothes, rub their limbs distractedly and endure awkward silences. Mother has brought Jen to audition a site for her grave. It would be a difficult situation at the best of times but this is a family at war. There is certainly more than one elephant in the room!

"Vegetarian sausage roll?" asks Myra. The audience barely twitter such is the tension in a comedy that is more bitter than sweet.

Joseph £2,500 for Helen House and Douglas House

Ruaridh Sheppard, who played the title role in the Shiplake Community production of Joseph presented a cheque for £2,500 to Sister Frances Dominica OBE at a Shiplake College service.

Sister Frances, who had visited to address the College Congregation as well as representatives from Shiplake Primary School and the Parish Church, was surprised when the presentation was made, "I am totally overwhelmed, I didn't know this was going to happen, this cheque will make a difference for a lot of people."

In 1982 Sister Frances founded Helen House the world's first children's hospice. Later she founded Douglas House, 'just across the vegetable patch', for teenagers with life-shortening illnesses.

One phone call from the mother of 2 year old Helen, diagnosed with a brain tumour, to Sister Frances, looking for someone to talk to, had changed Sister Frances' life. "It is the butterfly effect, a little flutter of the wings that has had enormous consequences."

Joseph a community production

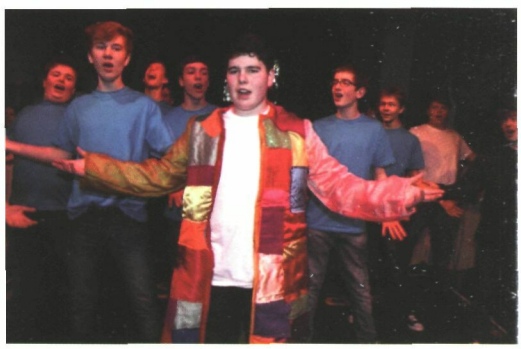
College, church, primary school and Sunday school combined for the ultimate feel-good production.

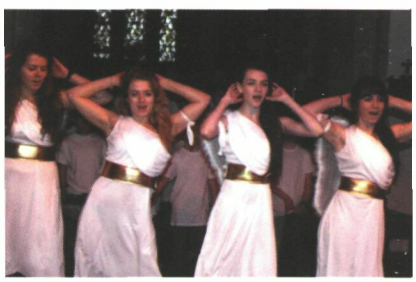
From the moment boys and girls from Shiplake Primary School's Years 5 and 6 poured onto the stage with their smiles and infectious enthusiasm it was evident that A Shiplake Joseph, a Community Youth Production between Shiplake College, the Primary School and the Sunday Club would be a high-energy entertainment bonanza.

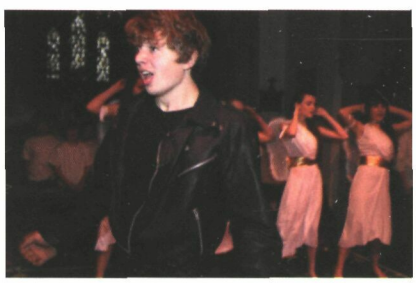
Lloyd-Webber and Rice had originally written Joseph and his *Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat* for a performance in an English School. Catherine Saker and Jenny Unwin's slick edit romped through the action. Such was the pace that matinee performances, with seventy actors and singers on stage in the Church of St Peter and St Paul, for St Mary's School and the remainder of Shiplake Primary School kept even the youngest of children entertained.

Louise Rapple's eight-piece band picked out the honky-tonk sounds of the Seventies but Joseph's multi-coloured onesie, proudly worn by Ruaridh Sheppard, epitomised the nod to contemporary tastes. His eleven brothers are wonderfully disgruntled as they hiss, boo and gesture amongst the audience whilst Jacob showers affection on his favourite son. Tom Jones, as Reuben, soon won the audience's affection.

The element of pantomime, memories of Christmas linger, was heightened by a camel that makes asides to the audience. A sedan MDF wood limo and a golden 'pimped' BMX bike were typical of the production's irreverent sense of fun. Once in Egypt, there is comic slapstick as Potiphar's wife chases Joseph around the stage.





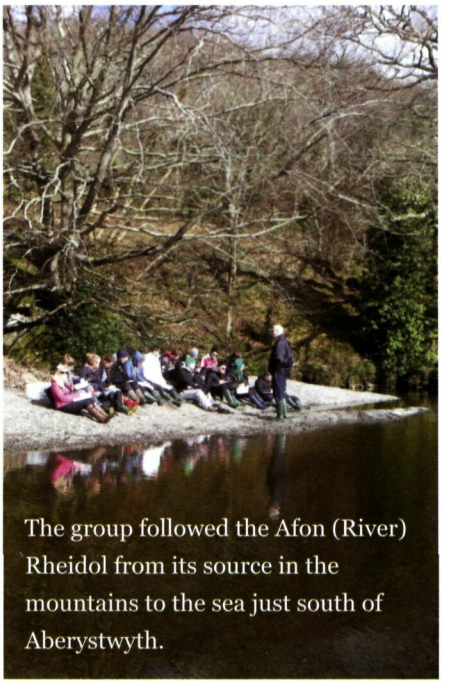


Above all Joseph is an exuberant musical ranging from operatic high notes, through country and western to disco. The clear diction and melodic tones of the Primary School boys and girls, with their glittering cowboy hats, combined magnificently with Shiplake College's junior choir. Together they provided a sound track that carried the biblical story through to the foot-stomping triumphant conclusion of the mega-mix finale.

Nor should it be forgotten that Billy Sayers' lip-curling Elvis presentation of the Pharoah, complete with leather jacket, was conclusive proof that the King lives.

AS Geography field trip

AS Geographers travelled to Wales for some preparation for their summer examinations, focusing on 'coasts' and 'rivers' as their key themes.



The group followed the Afon (River) Rheidol from its source in the mountains to the sea just south of Aberystwyth.

Anti-Bullying Competition Winners

A Welsh House production team of Ben Allen, Amish Lunar, Nicholas Hayes and Alex Ward won the overall competition for the most effective media produced following the Anti-Bullying Campaign.

The competition produced a range of entries including film, poetry and posters. The Senior winners were Yeem Chanthanawan and Jamie Lewis from Burr House a collaborative effort from Everett's Year 9 took the Junior Prize. Harvey Hendry's powerful messages and images won the Lower School prize.

This initiative was part of the school's observance of National Anti-Bullying Week. In addition to the competition, chapel services, assemblies and tutor meetings discussed issues surrounding bullying.

The Peer Support team promote the anti-bullying message.

Coping with bereavement

Bruce Jones, the owner of Tomalin's Funeral Directors visited Shiplake College to speak to Year 10 Theology and Philosophy students, about the role of a Funeral Director.

"Bereavement comes to us all sooner or later, knowing what happens helps, it is part of the process of bereavement," said Rev Stephen Cousins, the College's Chaplain.

The pupils were taught how to be pallbearers, carrying a wicker casket, one of four types that Mr Jones brought along. They were trained how to negotiate stairs and corners.

"The following week we took the boys to Reading Crematorium. Once again they were full of sensible questions. We have been doing this trip for four years now and every year there are different questions. Too often we shy away from talking about death. It is important to talk to family about what they want from a funeral, a funeral plan brings a lot of reassurance that they are doing what their loved one would have wanted," said the Reverend Cousins.

Brendan Pavey and Derek Mackey

Two Headmasters

Two teachers from Shiplake College will be leaving to become Headmasters at the end of the academic year. Derek Mackey, who is currently Director of Studies, is heading for the warmth of Kuala Lumpur to become Headmaster of the rapidly growing British School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"Although it was founded just four years ago the school already has 600 pupils. It operates on a British education model with small classes. I think my experience at Shiplake in developing pupils' work ethic and independent learning skills definitely helped my application," said Mr Mackey.

Brendan Pavey, who has been a Head of Geography, Boarding Housemaster and Head of Sixth Form, during his decade at Shiplake, is not travelling quite as far, just to Upton in Berkshire. He becomes Headmaster of Long Close School, an independent day school for pupils aged 2 – 16, from September 2013.

"It is a great tribute to the calibre of our Senior Management at Shiplake that two of our teachers have gone on to become Headmasters. They have both made significant contributions to the growth of the College and the general upward trends in our academic added value results and examination results," said Gregg Davies, Headmaster.

Jon Brownley's Wedding

The newly married Jon and Jen Brownley now live in the Everett resident tutor's flat where they have some very quiet Y9 pupils as their neighbours.

502 km cycled in Vietnam

Anne White, a teacher at Shiplake College, devoted her half-term holiday to raising over £2,000 for the Macmillan Cancer Charity, in memory of her cousin who died at the age of 42 from liver cancer.

She joined a group of 28 cyclists on an epic journey from Ho Chi Minh City, in Vietnam, past paddy fields and temples through to Angkor Wat, the largest Hindu Temple in the world, in Cambodia.

"I had suffered a DIY back injury in December, lifting tiles and had been in pain during the 440 kilometres training that I completed in the gym in January but once I got into the heat I was fine, except for the heat rash. Temperatures peaked at 44 Centigrade."

An intake of 5,000 calories a day was essential and the group stopped for refuelling with food and water every 20 kilometres. Distances travelled in a day varied between 50km and 102km. "One member of the group used his GPS navigation device and proudly told us that we had travelled 502.8 km over the entire journey."

David Dalzell (1955 – 2013)

Old Viking and Governor

Spending his pocket-money on junior Chemistry Sets and investigating their combustible qualities, including an incident where David blew-up a compost heap, demonstrated his tendency to experiment and take calculated risks from an early age.

David arrived at Shiplake College in 1968, after his prep school headmaster had declared him a "write-off". Shiplake College provided the environment that David needed to flourish. Encouraged and with leeway from an era of less stringent Health and Safety legislation David became the innovator and leader that he wanted to be whilst the College stretched his innate design and mathematical talents.

A succession of ever-smaller 'magic boxes' in his Welsh House study, manufactured from components bought on visits to London's electrical stores, meant that David could wake up in the morning, clap his hands and the day would begin. His door would automatically un-lock, the kettle would come-on and Led Zeppelin blast out from his ultimate hi-fi system.

David Welsh, his Housemaster, spotted an entrepreneur in the making as David ran his own mail-order electronics business from his school and rose inexorably to become Head of House.

Down at the river hours were spent training to become stroke of the first Shiplake VIII to race at Henley Royal Regatta. The crew progressed to the Quarter-Finals with a time of 6 minutes 58 seconds, an astonishing achievement in era of wooden boats.

Leaving Shiplake, David gained a first class honours degree in electronics from Bath University and went on to become Dr Dalzell when he completed his PhD at Imperial University.

Returning to Reading, David settled in the area and married Tina. David's business career was taking off too, when his company was taken over he found himself director of a Public Limited Company, Sintrom, at the age of 30. The arrival of daughter Emma and son James added to busy but happy times.

Yet David was at his happiest when innovating and testing new products. Whilst working for others, his original company, Onelan, had been put on the back-boiler. Then in 1989 David re-launched Onelan. In the true spirit of technology start-ups it was based in his garage next to his house in Lower Shiplake.

Onelan now employs 45 people, has spacious premises in Henley, and received the Queen's Award for Innovation in 2010 and the Queen's Award for International Trade in 2012.

David renewed his links with Shiplake. He became a member of the Old Vikings Society Committee, providing a pragmatic voice when it was needed but abundant enthusiasm when he thought that the Committee had a winning idea. He was one of the driving forces behind the OVS Rowing Dinner, providing the vision and the technology to transform the Sports Hall for a wonderful evening in October 2012.

David juggled the difficult task of being a Shiplake parent, when son James followed in Dad's footsteps, and being a College governor too. He joined the Board of Governors in an era when the College needed to invest time and man-hours in keeping up with the technological revolution that was engulfing education. David supplied the prudent guidance that took Shiplake to the forefront of educational technology but kept the costs within reasonable bounds. Chairing the Education and Welfare Committee, increasingly dealing with the delicate issues of Child Protection and the College's desire to boost academic performance, provided another chance for David to use his well-honed people and management skills.

Meanwhile David was at the heart of Shiplake village life providing the technical expertise for events such as the pantomime and village events, rowing for the Vikings and hosting dinners and BBQs, where seafood paella was often his much enjoyed signature dish. The site of David running was a common feature of village life, he kept fit for squash as well as rowing.

In March 2011 David was diagnosed with cancer. Rather than slowing down David was determined to live life to the full. He met up with as many friends as possible, he took holidays and spent time with his family and continued to pick away at his guitar.

Over 300 people attended a Memorial to David in the Shiplake College Great Hall. They came to pay tribute to "a nice chap" as son James said, a man who had time and respect for everyone, a leader who had that rare ability of taking people with him whatever the task, whatever the challenge.

Preparing for the Ball at Queen Anne's School – the grand culmination of a term of ballroom dancing lessons

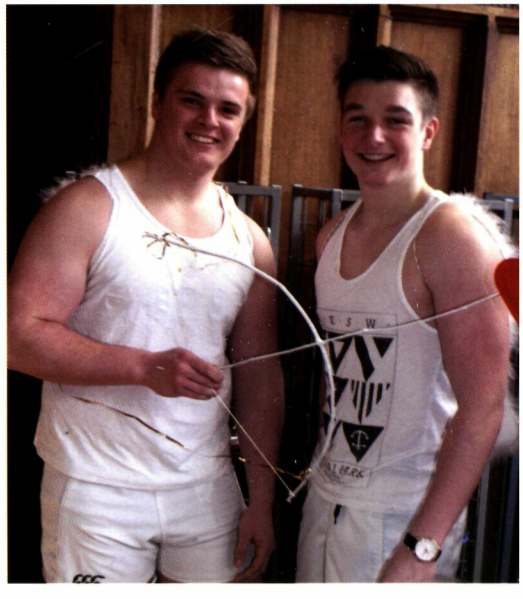
Private Chaucer seminar at Oxford for A Level English students

English A2 students from Year 13 enjoyed a taste of Oxford University study when they visited Lady Margaret Hall for a private seminar with Dr Helen Barr.

Earlier in the term sixth formers had visited Oxford University library to develop research skills using tradiaitonal and technological resources.

Dr Barr, who taught John Davies, now Head of English at Shiplake College, ran an intensive seminar on Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath* from *The Canterbury Tales*. With a wealth of research and publications on Chaucer, Langland and the Pearl-Poet Dr Barr has access to a wide variety of medieval sources that helped put the text in context for the fortunate Shiplake students.

"Better informed by the religious mores and social conventions of the time the students gained a fuller understanding of how shocked the pilgrims would have been by the Wife of Bath's outrageous and sensuous tales. The seminar provided a taste of Oxford undergraduate life. This is the second time our sixth form students have visited the university this academic year and Dr Barr has generously invited us back for further visits," said Mr Davies.



Two charming Valentines delivered cookies for charity.

Y9 enjoyed baking and tasting bread

Tough conditions for DofE Brecon Expeditions

"I am just going outside and may be sometime," DofE staff said, echoing the gallant Captain Oates, as they supervised Gold and Silver expeditions to the Brecon Beacons which took on an arctic appearance under late March snow.

Routes had to be adapted to lower altitudes as wind drifted to depths of waist-height making the higher routes impassable. With day-time temperatures rarely rising above freezing point expedition members, walking and cycling through the frozen landscape, had to implement the survival skills learnt over recent months.

Due to the biting winds and bitter cold, additional clothing was carried and groups were monitored carefully by staff. At meal-times the pupils huddled round the Trangia stoves in search of the rare sensation of warmth, but thanks to modern technological advances with clothing and of course the many, many layers all was well.

The weather focussed minds. Pupils took additional care with their map-reading and navigation skills to ensure that they successfully completed their expeditions as quickly as possible. Stopping off at the motorways services on the return journey pupils relished the return to civilisation, where warmth and hot food were readily available.

34 passed their silver assessed expedition, 20 passed their Gold practice expedition and 10 staff survived the ordeal. All of the expeditions were walking based but one Gold group did choose bicycles as their mode of transport.

The Gold groups are now planning and looking forward to travelling to Snowdonia for their assessed expedition.

Successful counter-insurgency operation for CCF army cadets

With intelligence suggesting a large airbourne invasion and a reconnaissance party arriving in advance of a large landing of men, equipment and vehicles, Shiplake cadets had a mission on their hands.

Acting as 1 platoon of the First Shiplake Rifles the platoon was tasked with destroying enemy clearance patrols. Each of the two sections conducted two ambushes after they had been issued with weapons and blank ammunition. They found a map of enemy patrol routes on the body of one of the foes which facilitated further successful ambushes.

In a very successful afternoon of operations senior members of the CCF army section, moving cohesively, quietly and swiftly showed the benefits of their training. Disciplined and effective action demonstrated the value of their effective communications strategies.

Faure's Requiem

St Peter's and St Paul's Church in Shiplake thrilled to the sound of Fauré's ever-popular Requiem. The Shiplake College Chamber Choir performed, joined by singers from other local choirs including the Shiplake College Community Choir and Shiplake Church Choir.

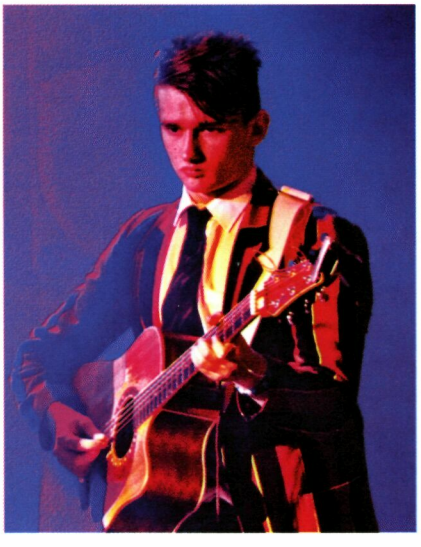
Unlike most amateur choirs, a chamber choir in a predominantly boys' school will always be short of sopranos and altos. This problem was easily solved by inviting local guest singers to join them. The organist was Simon Dinsdale, Deputy Head of Crosfields' School in Reading.

The performance was organised and directed by Louise Rapple, who is well-known locally as conductor of Reading-based Tamesis Chamber Choir, and who works at the College.

She said "Over the last few years the Chamber Choir has been lucky enough to be invited by Queen Anne's School in Caversham to take part in several well-known large-scale choral works, including Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. However, the choir has been improving steadily each year since it started six years ago, and this year we felt we would be able to put on a performance by ourselves, with the help of some local singing friends".

The evening was a great success and the large audience were appreciative of the wonderful performance and of the drinks on Shiplake College's picturesque terrace overlooking the river afterwards! The solo parts were all taken by students who had worked very hard and who can be very proud of themselves for the result. Paul Jones, Director of Music at Shiplake College said, "I am delighted that we were able to introduce our students to the joy of singing large choral works; an evening such as this one will remain with them and hopefully inspire a life-long passion for music".

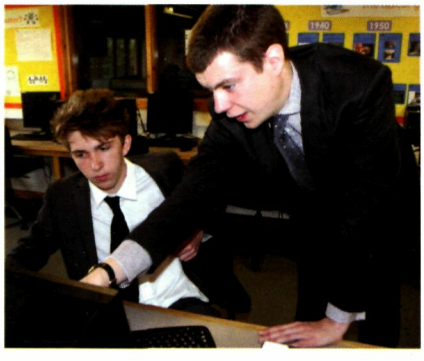
And there were plenty more fine performances at the Spring Concert.



Photos: Martin Baker

Teaching and Learning Group

"All the research shows that once you put a grade on a piece of a pupils' work the learning stops. The pupils look at the grade and take little notice of the comments. It is the comments that should help them to make learn and make progress," John Davies, Head of English, told the Teaching and Learning Group (TGL) when they met for a lunchtime think-in.



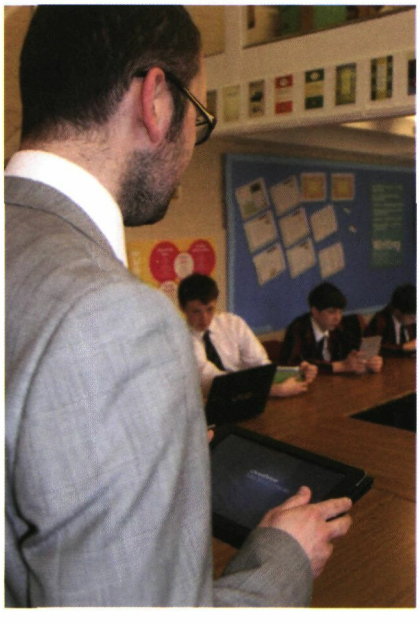
Teaching and learning are the very essence of a school's being but too often the day-to-day rush of lessons, marking, planning and revision clinics get in the way of thinking and analysing. Newly qualified teachers deserve more support.

Meanwhile no-one seeks advice from the teacher who has achieved excellent results since the days of O Levels and quietly gets on with the tasks of guiding cohort after cohort through the hurdles. Teachers close to their sell-by date need refreshing and rejuvenating too and they also have a wealth of experience to share.

Meeting fortnightly the TLG looks to raise the standards of teaching and learning. "It has brought departments together to collaborate and share ideas. Art's idea of a learning journal where they store feedback and sketch out new ideas can be applied to other subjects. Some teachers were surprised that role-play in business helped pupils to analyse the consequences of interest rate changes," said Derek Mackey, Director of Studies.

Teachers were challenged by numerous suggestions to change their behaviour such as randomly drawing numbers to see which pupil should answer a question, a step forward to preventing students from 'hiding' during discussions.

One key comment demonstrated the difference a teacher can make. "I like to think that an outstanding teacher would be outstanding in a field or on a desert island with no kit, no resources and nothing to write on. It is just you and them and a really good question." Sometimes we forget what resources of creativity, imagination and desire for learning that our pupils have within them.



Revision, revision, revision

If it is Monday in May or June then for Year 11 GCSE pupils then it is extra Drama revision at lunchtime, a top-up on ICT knowledge and skills at 4.30pm, followed by a quick sprint along to the Mathematics depart for 5pm and then an invaluable hour of GCSE Theology and Philosophy revision after supper.

Pupils, preparing for public examinations have a vast number of additional revision clinics and sessions to choose from during the final tense weeks before examinations begin.

"I have counted that there are 27 revision events for GCSE pupils, 31 for taking AS examinations and 28 for A2 pupils. The teachers have devoted many, many hours to preparing pupils for their examinations and I believe that our pupils will be better prepared than ever before.

However, pupils must still take responsibility for identifying their areas of weaknesses. Working conscientiously through past papers during individual study is essential so that pupils know what help to ask for. Revision needs to be active, reading through notes, with a highlighter in hand, is usually just an easy option," said Gregg Davies, Headmaster.

A short service on Ascension Day, at 7 am. at Maidensgrove Common, followed by a game of rounders and breakfast, has become a rite of passage for leaving Upper Sixth Formers.

Preparing for confirmation

Preparing for Confirmation the candidates see beyond morning prayers and the Sunday sermon, they see the church at work in the wider world.

A visit to a nunnery, as part of the education on prayer, with nuns guiding the pupils around their home and place of worship, gives the role of prayer a more substantial context. A visit to RAF Benson brings far greater meaning to the theme of War and Conflict than a classroom lecture.

"Pupils are fascinated by the Church's calendar. The year starts on the first Sunday of advent which is a date that moves from year to year. Yet the readings are fixed for the whole Christian world giving a rhythm to our worship. Wherever you visit a Christian church in the world you will hear the same readings on that day," said Reverend Stephen Cousins.

"We often forget that in medieval times very few people could read and the liturgical colours were a visual sign to the congregation of the season. Personally I see white as the party colour for the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Purple is for the sad penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. Red, representing blood, is for the saints and martyr's days. I like to describe green as the everyday colour, it is a bit like wearing jeans for day-to-day events," the College Chaplain continued.

Café-style prayers

Café-style prayers have become so popular that the event has had to move to a large venue. Every Thursday evening boys and girls convene for prayers, biscuits, conversation and care.

Around candles, representing each House, representatives read the prayers. There are prayers for ailing pets, departed relatives, and poorly grandfathers and grandmothers. There maybe a prayer for a departed musician or actor who has touched a life or for a friend who has moved away and is sorely missed. Finally the Chaplain prays for the community to be inclusive to welcome all who feel sad or isolated.

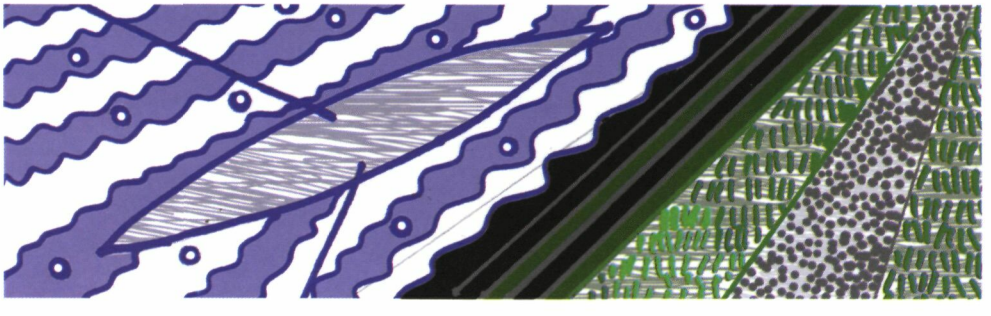
Although the clothes are causal it is a calm, quiet and touching occasion. Chapel Wardens dispense biscuits, chocolates and Coca-Cola to the junior boys, trying to make it go further in a manner reminiscent of a story of loaves and fishes. Then the chatter begins: Chapel Wardens and Chaplain listen, sharing excitement and discussing concerns.

Lower School artists work on new designs for Henley Women's Regatta

Shiplake College's young artists were invited to contribute ideas for new images to promote the regatta.

Pupils in Year 7 and 8, encouraged by Sarah Krause from the Shiplake Art department, produced a range of creative and exciting designs, some of which may be selected for use this summer. Designs from Ben Fletcher, Brett Fullard, Rafe Koser and Sam Hargeaves are amongst the front-runners.

Henley Women's Regatta is the premier rowing regatta for women in the UK. With over 1,000 women annually competing in the prestigious event Miriam Luke and her Committee are looking to develop the regatta's image.



Miami University Scholarship

Joanna Unsworth, from Shiplake College, has been awarded a 100% scholarship at Miami University.

The university is clearly delighted by the fact that Jo has now signed on and their website has proudly announced, "She has achieved many outstanding results during her junior career, including three gold medals in the 2011 British Championships in both sweep and sculling events."

They also record that Jo was a member of the Henley Rowing Club Quad that won the junior women's event at Henley Royal Regatta in 2012 before representing Grfeat Britain at the Junior World Championship in the Women's Quad Event.

As well as training in Florida's balmy temperatures Jo will be studying Physical Therapy, Sports Therapy and Fine Art over her four year course. As the website says of the first five students selected for their programme, 'In addition to excellence athletically, all five have proved themselves in the classroom. Each brings extraordinary talents to our programme and we're looking forward to the impact each of them will have.'

Jo, who is studying for Art, Biology and English A Levels at Shiplake has a busy time before the flight to Miami.

Jo started rowing at the age of six, after watching her mother coaching rowing, she asked if she could have a go. She has made good progress since then!

Marathon girls

Daisy Gresswell and Jo Unsworth found that that their training and preparation had been thorough when they comfortably completed the testing 26 miles and 385 yards of the London Marathon.

Jo began well and went through the half-way marker in 1.54.14 but slowed in the second half of the race. Her final time of 4 hours 13 minutes and 27 seconds placed her 3,119th in the women's race. Daisy set a more consistent pace, running the first half marathon in 2.14.27 and finishing in 4 hours 36 minutes and 8 seconds.

The girls set themselves the target of raising a total of £4,000 for Sports Aid, with £3,400 coming from Marathon sponsorship. They are optimistic that they are on track to beat their target with offers of sponsorship still coming in.

Director of England Lambs Independent Schools U14 Squad

It has been a frustrating season for Sam Beckett, Director of the Independent Schools Lambs U14 team, with frozen pitches and freak weather leading to the cancellation of a number of fixtures.

Last year Sam was a selector for the U18 Lambs as well as running the U14's, but this year he has developed the U14 side to give the boys a taste of a professional rugby set-up with video analysis and focus on core skills key aspects.

Sam manages a team of four coaches as they look after a highly talented squad of 24 players selected from Independent Schools all over England.

Girls win battle of the sexes

It was not just a battle of the sexes when Shiplake's male basketball team, the Shiplake Tropics accepted the challenge of the girls' netball team to a game of netball, it was a transatlantic clash of cultures.

With baggy shorts approaching their ankles and bandanas the boys were emulating their NBA basketball heroes from the USA's big-time and big money leg. Proudly wearing their Shiplake kit the girls were a well-drilled school team.

Bewildered by the pace of the game and unable to resist the natural instinct to run with the ball the boys were blitzed 5 – 1 in the first quarter.

Although the boys still fell foul of the contact and footwork rules the boys tightened their defence in the second quarter but were still only able to find the net once whilst Anna Proctor and Sophie Arnold demonstrated how to make the most of their chances, extending the lead to 7 – 2.

With Molly Thorp and Alice White defending well the netball specialists ensured that the girls ultimately finished with a 10 – 5 lead.

Photo: Anna Proctor enjoys making a point to Nick Arbuckle after yet another girls' goal

Photo: The Shiplake girls with England internationals Leah Cuthbertson (front left), Shiplake Head of Games, Emma Hampton and Sammie Philips (front right)

Can't touch this...

Sammie Philips and Leah Cuthbertson, Women's Touch Rugby Squad Internationals, visited Shiplake College to inspire a group of Sixth Form girls with an introduction to the game.

An extensive cardiovascular warm-up and some dynamic stretching pleased Emma Hampton, Head of Girls' Sport, "It all fitted in beautifully with our aim of a fit for life programme."

Touch is a rapidly growing sport in the Southern hemisphere with a Touch World Cup being hosted in Australia in 2015. The Shiplake girls soon picked up the tactics and rules and had a lot of fun as they learnt to play a mini-game during an exhilarating two hour session.

It was a day of dark clouds, showers and sunny intervals when the 1st Xl they played their inaugural match against the MCC. With Shiplake needing just 14 more runs and the MCC just three wickets for victory – a tense draw had been played out when the umpires finally removed the bails at the end of the day's play.

Gold-laden Lapham

Marek Lapham, from Shiplake College, aged 17, returned from the Junior Munich Regatta, on the former Olympic course, with three gold medals.

Although it was a highly successful regatta for GB there were only one other oarsmen who returned with such a collection of honours.

On the 2,000 metre course it was a busy Saturday for Marek who helped his Four through two heats to their Sunday final. In the afternoon Marek won his first gold of the Regatta in the GB U18 Eight. The GB crew began well and steadily increased their lead to finish 34 seconds ahead of their Swiss Challengers.

The final of the Fours competition was another GB victory though this time the margin of 2 lengths was slightly closer. Marek's final event was another comfortable victory in the Pairs where victory by 8 lengths brought his third gold medal of the weekend.

It has been a remarkable come-back for Marek who was seriously ill with malaria, spending time in hospital, in late December and early January. It took him a long-time to recover and it was not until March that he was back to full-strength.

For the next couple of months Marek's focus will be with his Shiplake College colleagues as they prepare for the National Schools' Regatta and Henley Royal Regatta. Then, if selected, Marek has the possibility of the Junior World Championships or the Coupe de Jeunesse.

Marek Lapham wearing the 1st Vlll Henley Regatta blazer. After international glory Marek's focus is now on Henley with his fellow Shiplake oarsmen.

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