



ST ALBANS SCHOOL

HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD TOP TEN FOR RUNNERS

Cross country runners from St Albans School once again proved their mettle on the international stage, competing in the World Schools Championships in Budapest in April and securing a top ten finish.

The team, representing England, achieved 7th place against 21 other countries. Teams from Turkey, New Zealand and France took the first three positions.

The five-day event included competitions for both school and national teams and attracted the top young runners from around the world, making it a strong challenge for the St Albans School team. For the most senior boys, Oliver Edmond, Tom Halling and Ben Hems, this was a fitting conclusion to their school running career.

In the 5.4km main race on Margit Island, Lower Sixth student Ben Clarke led the team home in 31st place, closely followed by Fifth Former Tom Fulton in 32nd. The three Upper Sixth boys followed, with Josh Avenell, a Third Form boy running for the senior team, finishing in a very valuable 91st place.

Kenny Everitt, Head of Cross Country, commented: "Being placed seventh in such a strong field was a great achievement for the boys. We expected the older boys to do well, but Josh Avenell's performance in such a high profile senior race was outstanding and bodes very well for the future. The school has a proud tradition of cross country success and this looks set to continue."

"Being placed seventh in such a strong field was a great achievement for the boys."

Exhausted but exhilarated: the team at the end of the World Championship race



OA Inspects the Troops

Wing Commander Martin Lowe OA was Inspecting Officer for the CCF in March. He remembered his own days as a cadet and warmly congratulated the current group of students who put all their energies into participating in the inspection day's events. As well as being impressed by the commitment of the St Albans cadets, he also saw the success of the second year of integration of cadets from Marlborough Science Academy, a partnership which is really flourishing. Cadets from both schools worked together under the leadership of a senior cadet in a variety of command tasks which were both challenging and enjoyable. The infamous Gun Run was made even more difficult by muddy conditions and the Coldstream Guards' addition of a section pulling a weighted sledge, which tested everyone. Observation and orienteering skills were tested, while the rescue of downed pilots from enemy territory provided plenty of drama as well as testing first aid knowledge.

Academic Heights

Several students have been successful in Olympiad challenges in different subjects. Each Olympiad tests knowledge and skills outside the realms of the normal curriculum and attracts entrants from across the country. The Linguistics challenge requires pupils to work in obscure and even invented languages and is designed for Upper Sixth Formers. However, two Fourth Formers, a Fifth Former and a Sixth Former won bronze awards. In Chemistry, the School gained four silver awards, while in Biology, gold awards were made to Alex Cook and Maya Mendoza with a further 4 silver and 2 bronze awards. In Intermediate Mathematics, pupils gained 6 Merits, with Thomas Hillman gaining a Distinction with one of the top 50 marks in the country.



Science Cinema Success

Sixth Form scientists scooped awards at the NPL School Science Film Challenge, bringing the School's tally to seven consecutive wins. The students used Physics lessons in the final weeks of the summer term to conceive, shoot and master instructive films of just two a half minutes. Two pairs of students won awards, one being the top award for 2015.



Both films skilfully tease out the science behind a trick – one shooting a flaming ball into a bucket several metres away, and the other showing the opposite motion of helium balloons and air-filled balloons in a moving car.

Crisp editing, use of music and the clarity of their scientific explanations won Jack Dobson and Charlie Oliver the top prize of Best School-Made Film, while Oliver Conway and Oliver Cohen were awarded the prize for the Best Cinematography. Both films can be seen on YouTube and can also be seen on the School website: <http://www.st-albans.herts.sch.uk/Science-Films-Win-Awards>

Getting to grips with balloons for a science film



Partners Enjoy Opportunities

Primary school pupils' study of mini-beasts was given a real boost with the donation of six microscopes with new lenses from our Biology Department. Key Stage 1 children at Wheatfields School used the equipment on an immersion day during National Science and Engineering Week in March, fascinated by the revelation of tiny details. The School's Business Manager, Caroline Churchill, explained, 'It really enhanced the activities and enabled the children to carry out experiments. They are looking forward to carry on using them to observe nature and their environment.'

Wheatfields is just one of the Schools which benefits from St Albans School's Partnership Scheme, where each Friday afternoon 39 Lower Sixth Form students provide classroom assistance and help with sport at our various Partnership schools and Cathedral Education. With a further 22 students working with St Albans staff to deliver masterclasses in Art, D&T, Drama,

ICT, Music and Science, the Scheme enables our senior students to gain crucial life experience beyond their studies and add another dimension to their CV.

"It has been rewarding to know that the teachers really appreciate some extra help."

Recent masterclasses have included a lively Taiko drumming session held by our senior students for pupils at Redbourn Infant School, which proved



Challenges for Drama Students

A Level Drama students staged some of the most ambitious work of recent years as part of their practical AS and A2 examinations. The Lower Sixth group took on the work of controversial playwright Sarah Kane, *Phaedra's Love*, which was staged using the challenging physical theatrical techniques of Steven Berkoff. The stage was set up as a traverse, with the audience members facing each other across the action, while the actors were committed to the stylised performance in their multiple roles. They worked as a tight ensemble throughout, using their bodies in highly synchronised sequences and making effective use of song and choric speech at key moments. The Royal characters were depicted as puppets, and the only piece of set, an empty door frame, was used variously as a mirror reflecting

appearance and inner reality, and a doorway between public and private versions of self in a complex and challenging production.

The Upper Sixth students embraced the challenges of multi-media theatre with their devised adaptation of Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Their production, *The Fireman*, explored the changing perspectives of Montag, whose job is to burn books but comes to learn their value. James Smillie managed the technical aspects of the play, with creation of the effects of fire by lighting and smoke and skilful use of video projection. The set too mirrored the content of the play, with images of books on the stage floor, books in part of the setting and even books at one point falling from the ceiling.

just as exhilarating for the Sixth Form volunteers as it did for their young percussive protégés.

Eleanor Friend, one of the students assisting Bernard's Heath School, says of her experience 'It has been rewarding to know that the teachers really appreciate having some extra help. I've seen the children progress through the year as they move onto harder reading books every time I am there. It has always been an enjoyable end to my week and I'll definitely miss it next year.'



*Sean Bracebridge,
enjoying his role
as Head of School*

*Redbourn Infants
School pupils
master the Taiko
Drums*

Profile: Head of School Sean Bracebridge

Sean Bracebridge is not only Head of School, but is a stalwart of the Music Department's activities and has high academic aspirations. How does he fit it all in? He talks candidly about achieving the right balance between studies, music and School commitments.

• You're set to read *Music at Oxford* in October. Why did you decide on that particular course?

Although I considered PPE and Engineering for a split second, it was a pretty straightforward choice to make, as I enjoy music so much. The music degree is really well-rounded, combining the discipline of essay writing with creative live performance and there are some incredible modules to choose from. I'm hopeful that it will open plenty of doors when it comes to choosing a career path after university, which is good as I am still unsure which industry I'd like to work in.

• What have been your most formative and enjoyable experiences at School?

Being involved in the production of *Into the Woods* and the summer cabarets are particularly memorable and were great fun to be a part of. I had a fantastic time on the ski trip to Vermont and enjoyed representing the School in athletics tournaments too.

• Why did you choose to learn the trumpet and who are your main musical influences?

I picked the trumpet when I was ten after seeing a live orchestral performance and deciding that 'the loud one' looked the most fun - and it is! I'm a big fan of Muse, Oasis, Jamie Cullum and Alt-J but I listen to everything from Wagner to Ella Fitzgerald for inspiration.

• What's the key to balancing music and studies?

Little and often is the key to fitting in practice for me but I think everyone has their own preferences. It takes discipline to avoid distractions such as social media during study time, which is tough sometimes but worth it to get the results you want.

• What advice would you give to pupils in lower years who aspire to be a future Head of School?

To be honest, I'd say don't worry about it. Enjoy your time at school and make the most of all the opportunities you get given. The role of Head of School is one of those things for which it is inappropriate to campaign. If you're asked to be a Prefect or Head of School then you should be honoured and consider it an important job rather than a personal accolade.

National Hockey Role for PE Teacher



The skills of PE teacher Martin Langston have been recognised by England Hockey. The organisation has asked him to step in as Manager of the Men's U21 Hockey team on a temporary basis to cover a particularly busy time. Martin, who is Head of Academic PE, will be in post until the end of July and oversees a squad of about 28 elite U21 players.

'I cover all the logistical side of things,' said Martin, 'in support of the coach and assistant coach.' He is in charge of the welfare and safeguarding of players as well as taking care of all practical arrangements on a number of training camps.

The squad visited Germany in early April before a return visit by the Germans later the same month and each occasion involved intensive training and three matches. There will be further activity in July, with training camps at the Bisham Abbey centre, shared first with Belgium and then with Ireland. The training camps are part of preparations for the annual tournament which takes place in Malaysia in October, followed by the European U21 Championships.

'It is a great opportunity and honour,' said Martin, who has previously enjoyed a stint as England U18 manager. 'It will take up a lot of my School holiday time, but it will be great experience.'

Broom Heads Stateside

Top tennis star Charlie Broom helped the School achieve victory in the U18 category at the County Doubles Tournament recently. He and his partner George Davis reached the final through three increasingly tough matches. In the final, the pair showed their resolve after slipping to 0-3. They refocused and played strongly to take the next 6 games, winning 6-3 and taking the trophy.

Charlie, who has a career-best world ranking of 167, will be moving to America later this year, having been awarded a tennis scholarship by Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Dartmouth is an Ivy League university with a highly respected tennis programme. The tennis team is now ranked in the top 40 for all teams in the USA. Charlie will be taking every opportunity at Dartmouth, as he has also been granted an unconditional academic place by the university.

The next aim is Junior Wimbledon and tournaments in Europe and America over the summer months – once A Levels are out of the way, of course.



Sporting Selections

Three Fourth Form sportsmen have gained international recognition. Following their performances in this year's U15 NatWest Schools' Cup competition, Cameron Furley and Ayo Olukoton were selected for the NatWest Schools Cup Academy Day Squad. This met on 22nd May at Pennyhill Park, England's training base, to train with

three current England players and review video footage of the session with them and a top sports scientist. In golf, Greg Hurley won the Daily Express European Junior Championship Qualifier at the Hertfordshire Golf Club during the Easter holiday. He has been selected to play in the Final in Spain in November.