

Introduction

Going from Strength to Strength

Life continues apace at the Perse, with plenty of progress to report.

Demand for places at the Upper continues to be very strong: we have just had more candidates at 11+ and 13+ than we have had for at least fifteen years. Next September we are on target to have our biggest Sixth Form ever. But life here is not just about getting bigger – we have grown while maintaining the highest standards. We have just had a vintage year for Oxbridge offers (see story inside) and about 40 per cent of our pupils are going on to read science courses at university. So we are clearly bucking the national trend towards a worrying shortage of students taking public exams in 'hard' sciences.



Girls to enter the Prep in September 2007

Indeed, so strong is the demand for places at the Perse – and for the sciences in particular – that we have brought forward our plans to expand our science laboratories at the Upper. As some of you will have noticed, the building work is already underway and we are on track to open the expanded labs in time for the new academic year in September 2007. By making sure that any noisy work is carried out outside teaching hours, we have managed to keep disruption to a minimum, with lessons being taught in the existing science labs as usual. This project is the most

challenging aspect of the proposed developments at the Upper, so the fact that it is progressing smoothly augurs well for the main building works when they start in 2009.

The major development projects at the Prep – the new classroom block, Art & Technology and Library – and at the Pelican – new Hall, new music rooms and expanded classrooms and Library – will start this summer, and are due for completion by September 2008.

Demand for places for girls at the Prep is proving to be even stronger than we had hoped. Last year some of our Pelican parents, who wanted their girls to be able to stay at the Perse, came to us and asked whether we would open our doors to girls at the Prep in September 2007 rather than 2008. After careful consideration we felt confident that we could offer these pioneers a first-class educational experience, and so I am delighted to say that we will be going ahead with a full form of 20 girls at the Prep this September. This is a great vote of confidence in the Prep and its new Head, Gareth Jones, and a very positive development.

This mood of buoyancy has been reflected in the feed-back we have had from the surveys of parental opinion carried out at the Pelican, Prep and Upper over the last three months. We have been very pleased by the high levels of satisfaction expressed about the quality of the teaching at all three schools, and also the recognition that the Perse offers much more than a first-rate academic education. A number of parents commented that the Perse is much



more of an all-round school than is generally recognised by the outside world – this is an area where we need to portray a more accurate picture of ourselves externally.

On communications generally, some parents felt that they would like to hear more from the school about what is going on. There is a balance to be struck here as we do not want to flood people with paper. On the other hand, to use the phrase from school reports down the ages, we can (and will) try harder!

My superb deputies have been responsible for much of the day-to-day running of the School at the moment, while I am Chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC). On all fronts it feels as though we are moving ahead strongly. There will doubtless be plenty more to report in the next edition of Perseptions. And when, in the summer of 2008, I reach the age of 60 and my successor arrives, I know I shall be handing on a lively and thriving trio of schools to whoever that fortunate person turns out to be.

Nigel Richardson

Perse U16 Win National Indoor Hockey Title

The Perse U16 indoor hockey team won the National Final at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham on Sunday 21st Jan 2007. Having won the U14 title in 2005, the team have the rare honour of being double national title winners.

The team beat Sevenoaks Hockey Club 4–3 in a dramatic final, which was covered by Sky Sports, having qualified from their group and beaten Millfield 3–1 in the semi-final.

Congratulations to all the team – Mr Dan Bradley (Coach), Dudley Spiers (capt), Micky Franklin, Paddy Carson, Mark Goulder, Ben Creese (who scored a hat-trick), Ben Salisbury (GK), Louie Freeman-Bassett, Duncan Graves, Adam Miller and Andrew Meredith.

With grateful thanks to www.hockeyweb.co.uk for allowing the reproduction of this photograph.



Pelican Tin (10th) Anniversary

To mark the 10th – or tin – Anniversary of the Pelican, the Parents' Association (APP) has commissioned Old Persean Matt Sanderson to create a sculpture of a pelican for the front of the School. Matt has involved all the children by asking them to send him ideas of how to design his work of art. It will be completed by this summer.

Following on from the birthday celebrations in September, the climax of festivities for the Pelican's Tin Anniversary will be the Summer Ball, on Saturday 23rd June at the Perse Prep. Pelican parents, both past and present, are very welcome. For further information please contact Juliet Evans on Ym40@dial.pipex.com.



Pound a Poem Competition

Congratulations to all the boys at the Prep who wrote a poem for the Pound a Poem competition. They helped to raise a total of £122.55 for Cancer Research UK. One winning poem was selected from each year group, to go to the next round of this national competition. The poets were:

Vicknan Sriharan – Year 3
 Alexander Scott – Year 4
 Joe Bradley – Year 5
 Oscar Newlove – Year 6

All the poems entered are in the Pound a Poem book, which can be found in the Prep Library.

Liz Brimmer, English Co-ordinator



Design and Technology at the Prep

The boys in Years 5 and 6 have been busy working on some interesting Design Technology projects this term. In Year 5 the boys have learnt about using cam mechanisms and have used them to make a variety of toys. In Year 6 the focus has been on pulley systems and in particular on the way in which fairground rides can use this method of movement.

Jane McPherson,
 Head of Art & Design at the Prep

Jane joined the Prep back in September and is closely involved in the design of the new Prep Art & Technology Centre – work on which will start this summer and is due for completion in September 2008.



A Time for Giving

From time to time at The Pelican we like to remember just what a lucky group of people we are. Sometimes it is not until we consider the plight of others that we realise our good fortune.

We continue to support our main school charity – SOS Children's Villages, in particular the village in Tlokweng, close to Botswana.

So far this school year we have sent about £1300 which has been used to buy school uniforms for the children. The older Pelican children keep in touch with the Tlokweng children by sending cards, photos and letters. The contact between the children makes our giving more meaningful.

In addition on 2nd February The Pelican supported Unicef's 'Day for Change'. Children came to school dressed in the colours of the Kenyan flag and brought some pocket money with them. Unicef's aim is to raise money for education in Kenya. Over 1 million children who could go to school, do not because of a lack of resources. Year 1 children performed an assembly for the whole school and their parents to raise awareness of the situation in Kenya, including a series of poems and songs entitled 'A Rumble on Safari'.

Sarah Sherrington-Scales, Nursery Teacher



Why 'A' Levels work for us

The world of education rarely stands still, and all teachers are aware that there is usually another change just around the corner. This is certainly true of the post-16 curriculum, last changed in the year 2000 when AS and A2 were introduced as distinct components of 'A' level.

In 2008 there will be even more options available to schools with students between the ages of 16 and 18.

- 'A' level will continue, but it looks as though the number of modules will be reduced and A* grades introduced to distinguish the very best candidates
- The Cambridge Pre-U, designed to stretch the most able and prepare candidates for life at University, will be taught for the first time. Pre-U will offer a free choice of subjects although students may also complete an extended essay to achieve a Diploma
- Specialised Diplomas will be introduced in five areas for students who are interested in more vocational subjects
- The International Baccalaureate will be available in a small number of schools and will enable students to continue studying subjects in six core areas

With all these options on offer, which is the right way forward?

While the AS and A2 model may not be perfect, for the Perse Sixth Formers who have taken 'A' levels over the last seven years, we believe that the courses have served them well and enabled them to move on to university destinations of their choice.

Perse students thrive on choice, and 'A' levels (and the Pre-U) give candidates a free choice of subjects, allowing them to specialise and pursue interests that they will

wish to continue at university. For example the combination Biology, Physics and Chemistry is popular here but would not be possible with the IB. 'A' levels also offer breadth and many Sixth Formers study a mix of arts, humanities and sciences. We try to build our timetable around Sixth Form choices to give maximum flexibility and students can study up to five AS levels.

At The Perse, we do not always think of our Sixth Form as a separate curriculum. In Greek for example, boys have completed AS before they join the Sixth Form and in Maths and French, where some take IGCSE or GCSE early, they may also have started working towards 'A' level in the Middle School. As the School increases in size there could be more opportunities for students to take exams early if it is right for them to do so. We want to ensure that our pupils learn at a pace that is appropriate to their abilities and arrangements such as setting and early entry for GCSE are designed to do this.

Our Sixth Form curriculum certainly does not only consist of 'A' levels. We have a programme of General Studies and Life Skills to supplement the main subjects, as well as our Enrichment Programme. Language opportunities have grown and a number of Sixth Formers study Portuguese, Russian and Japanese as well as their core 'A' levels. There are a number of extension opportunities including Advanced Extension Award and the STEP examination in Mathematics. We have also had some notable successes in the Olympiads in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

A final strength of 'A' levels arises from the large number of students who take them nationally. There are three Exam Boards each offering different syllabuses. This allows Heads of Department and teachers to choose

courses that are interesting, challenging and relevant to Perse students. We encourage Heads of Department to think boldly and to exercise their right to choose.

So will we be offering 'A' levels in ten years time? We will certainly continue to monitor the options (particularly the Pre-U) so that we can offer the most appropriate courses for all our students, and this could involve a mixture of, for example, 'A' levels and the Pre-U.

Michael Punt, Deputy Head – Acting Head of Science



Michael has been at the Perse for 6 years. He is currently Deputy Head (Curriculum) and was previously Head of the Perse Sixth Form. Michael has been appointed as Headmaster of Chigwell School from September 2007. We wish Michael, Gill and family all the very best for their new life in Chigwell.

Congratulations to Dr Chris Pyle (currently Head of Geography) who is taking over from Michael in September.

Institute of Physics Prize



Congratulations to Sixth Form student Alex Gaunt who was awarded the Institute of Physics prize for the best coursework portfolio in the Advancing Physics AS. His work included designing a sensor for monitoring the colour of a chemical solution and a presentation on the use of quartz wave plates in fibre optic communication. Alex also achieved full marks on both written papers at AS level, alongside three other students in his year. Two Upper Sixth formers were also commended. John Hale and Yan Li reached the top twenty in the country.

Over 91% of Perse Physics students achieved an A grade at Physics A-level.

University entrance update

Once again Perse Upper Sixth applicants have excelled themselves across the range of Oxbridge subjects. A total of 25 offers were made (13 at Cambridge, 12 at Oxford), amounting to nearly a quarter of the year group gaining a place. Following on from the 2006 success, Engineering applicants did even better this year, with seven being offered places.

A summary of the places gained:

Engineering – 7	Medicine – 3	Natural Sciences – 2
Biochemistry – 2	History – 2	English – 2
Geography – 1	Economics – 1	PPE – 1
French and Spanish – 1	Music – 1	Physics – 1
Computer Science – 1		

A full update on entry to other universities will appear in the next edition of Perceptions. For Perse students starting this academic year, the top destinations (outside Oxbridge) were Bristol, Nottingham, Birmingham and Durham; the most popular degree subjects were Economics, Engineering, Medicine, Geography, English and Modern Languages.

Dan Cross, Deputy Head – Head of Sixth Form

The Upper Library

At a Library Committee Meeting recently, I read an excerpt from a library committee meeting that appeared in 'The Pelican' in December 1948. It read: "...it would seem that its popularity remains as great as ever. We have acquired several new books, including some by Arthur Ransome, which are widely read. Much as the continued popularity of the Library is welcomed, it would be greatly appreciated if patrons would return books and magazines to their correct places..."

I am delighted to say that the popularity of the library still stands, as does the appreciation of students returning their borrowed materials in a timely and organised manner! Students and staff have access to a wide variety of materials from our well resourced library and our book issues are ever increasing due to the frequent replenishments of stock driven by suggestions from library users at the Perse.



The focus of the library during the past year has been to continue promoting fiction books throughout the school. The Lower School in particular have a genuine thirst for reading, snapping up the books displayed in our 'New Arrivals' area, and the boys keenly request books they have seen elsewhere. During the past year we hosted two successful author visits including thriller writer Robert Muchamore, famed author of the 'Cherub' series of books (see above photo).

The future plans for the Perse School bring an exciting phase in the development of the Library and its role within the school. The library is to be moved to new premises which will almost double the current floor space and allow for more study spaces. There will be room to house many of the documents that are currently stored away for safe keeping and additional space for the many hundreds of new books, journals and audio-visual material that are purchased annually.

Caroline McGrain, Librarian

The Alex Cook Centre

It has been decided that the Sports and Sixth Form Building will be known as the **Alex Cook Centre**.

The first phase of the building ended in 2000-1. The second phase, comprising the second gym and the remaining changing rooms, is due to be finished by 2010.

Alex Cook is an Old Persean who was a governor for 25 years (1977-2002) and chairman (1982-2002). The project took twelve years to reach fruition, during which he devoted much of his time and his professional skills as a chartered surveyor.



The Perse Environmental Education and Action Project (PEEAP)

The Perse has established an environmental action group consisting of pupils, teachers and support staff to look at ways in which the Perse can reduce its environmental footprint, improve environments both locally and overseas, help pupils gain a better understanding of environmental problems, and act as a role model for other schools and the wider community.

PEEAP has been launched through a number of eco-assemblies, and we plan to show the Al Gore film "An Inconvenient Truth" to the school in order to raise awareness. The school already has an environmental improvement group and a paper recycling scheme. PEEAP hopes to build on this start and the group have already identified a number of action projects including the extension of the recycling scheme to include bottles and cans, the storage of winter rainwater for summer irrigation of the cricket square, more e-homeworks to reduce paper consumption, and an investigation into whether school food could be organic and/or sourced from local farmers. The group are also eyeing up the new teaching block building plans to see what scope there would be for the inclusion of solar panels to heat water and generate green electricity.

Edward Elliot, Deputy Head



The Environmental Group

Les Misérables

In December, the Perse School, in collaboration with Perse Girls, performed the schools' edition of the musical Les Misérables.

The performances took place in the Mumford Theatre of Anglia Ruskin University and we had our very own lighting and sound designers. Working in a professional theatre was fantastic, especially as we were adorned in fabulous costumes thanks to the County Drama Wardrobe. All the hard work paid off and it was such an amazing experience for all involved. The shows were a triumph every time and the packed audiences were left in awe of the superb performances.

Nick Chilvers 5T



Annual Fund Projects 2006–7

The revamped Perse Annual Fund has had a very positive start. It was launched back in September during the telephone campaign, where over £70,000 was pledged to the Fund (and an additional £25,000 donated to the Access to Excellence Campaign).

At the first meeting of the Perse Annual Fund Committee, eight projects were funded, at a total cost of £36,000. These included the purchase of a 1st IV rowing boat at the Upper, ICT equipment for the Art department at the Prep and a better play surface to use during poor weather conditions at the Pelican.

You should have recently received information about this year's Annual Fund. If you haven't already done so, please consider supporting the Fund, so that we can match the above grants at our next meeting in April. Many thanks.

Roly Owers,
Development Director

Upper Science Labs

Construction of the Science Lab extension at the Upper started at the beginning of the year and is due for completion by this September. This work forms part of the overall Perse Development Programme, agreed last year, to enable the Upper to go fully coeducational and increase its numbers to around 900 pupils. The work has been brought forward from 2009 in response to the growing demand for places in the Perse Sixth Form. To support this project, grant applications have been made to the Wolfson Foundation, the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation and the Simon Gibson Charitable Trust.



Dr Perse Society Lunch

This is being held on Saturday 29th September 2007 immediately after the School Open Morning. The venue is St John's College, Cambridge.

The Dr Perse Society is open to all whose gifts to the School amount to £10,000 and above and to those who have made a legacy in their Will in favour of the Perse.

All members should have had initial contact about this event. If you qualify for membership and have not been contacted please contact us.

Legacies

After you have made provision for family and friends in your Will, please consider leaving a gift in your Will to the Perse. Information on how to make a gift is available from Roly Owers in the Development Office or on the website.

Charities Act Update

The Charities Bill has now completed its legislative passage through the Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent on 8th November 2006. Hence the Charities Bill is now the Charities Act 2006. The Act is being implemented in stages, a process that is expected to take at least 18 months.

One of the key changes within the Act that is relevant to the Perse is that, unlike before where public benefit was presumed, the School will have to demonstrate that its operations benefit the public in some way. This 'public benefit test' is to be carried out by the Charity Commission. The Commission is due to consult on the operation of the public benefit requirement during the course of this year, with a view to implementation early in 2008. The Government will then review the issue of public benefit in three years time.

Perse Access to Excellence Campaign

In the last edition of Perceptions I outlined what the Perse Access to Excellence Campaign is seeking to achieve. Its central aim – to enable the Perse to double the number of bursary pupils at the Upper over the next decade – has inspired significant enthusiasm from those parents, alumni and friends whom we have talked to so far. Our current plan is go public with the campaign later this year and run it through 2008.

As well as a clearly identified goal, a successful campaign requires a lot of planning and coordination. This is being orchestrated by a Campaign Board, which is still being recruited.

One member of the Board is Old Persean Simon Clemmow, co-founder of the Advertising Agency, Clemmow Hornby & Inge (CHI), who has sponsored the design of the campaign's logo and other printed material. CHI's clients include the Daily Telegraph, Carphone Warehouse and the Prince's Trust. David Tang OP is another member, who kindly hosted a reception for the campaign at China Tang in the Dorchester back in November.

Support for the campaign has therefore already started in earnest, and gives the School great confidence that it will be a success. If you would like further details about the campaign, or would like to know more about joining the Campaign Board, please email me: ron.haylock@perse.co.uk.

Dr Ron Haylock, Chairman,
Perse Access to Excellence Campaign

International support of the Perse

Do you live in the United States, France, Germany or Ireland? If so you can make a donation to the Perse and will receive all applicable tax benefits in the country where you pay tax. This can make a considerable difference to the net cost of your donation.

For further information, please visit www.persedevlopment.org/help/overseas.asp or telephone +44 (0)1223 403808



News in **brief**

AMNESTY CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

This year members of the school wrote greetings cards in support of Amnesty International. 57 cards were sent to prisoners of conscience, people under sentence of death, human rights defenders and others at risk. Pupils learned about the difficulties of exercising freedom of speech, or gaining a free trial, in various parts of the world.

Judith Gardom,
Philosophy and Religious Studies Teacher

BLUE PETER SHOEBIZ APPEAL

At the Prep, Tristan Marris, Thomas Reynolds, Tristan Latchford and Richard Green organised a shoe collection in aid of the Blue Peter Shoebiz Appeal. 205 pairs were collected in less than a week. The money raised will go to help orphans in Malawi who have lost their parents to AIDS.



WIND BANDS' CHRISTMAS CONCERTS RAISE OVER £1,000

The Michaelmas term for the Wind Bands is frenetic! We perform at open day, the junior recital and the Senior Concert. Wind Band 1 then begin preparing for what seems to be the highlight of their year – the Christmas Music! Our repertoire expands every year but we try to fit everyone's favourite into at least one concert.

We first played at the school's Christmas Bazaar and then at Scotsdale's Garden Centre where we raised just over £250 for EACH. Next we played at Addenbrookes for the David Mein Concert in support of the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), raising a record £750. My personal thanks go to everyone that supported us.

Viv Halton,
Music Teacher

Postcode change

Please note that the School postcode has changed to CB2 8QF. If you live in the Cambridge area, your postcode will have probably changed as well. Please let us know your new details. Many thanks.

EVENTS

2007 Dates for the diary.....

March 12th	Annual School Concert	West Road Concert Hall – 7.30pm
March 20th	Dr Perse's Evensong	Gonville & Caius Chapel – 6.30pm
April 21st	Perse USA Reunion 1	Encinal Yacht Club Alameda, San Francisco – 6pm
May 9th	Old Persean Open Day	Upper, from 11am
June 23rd	Pelican Summer Ball	Prep, from 7pm
July 3rd	Annual Fund Donors' Garden Party	Upper, from 6pm
July 5th	Old Perseans v Perse 1st XI Cricket Match	Upper, from 11am
September 28th	Old Persean Annual Dinner	Gonville & Caius Hall, 7pm
September 29th	Dr Perse Society Lunch	St John's College – 12.30pm
October 18th	Perse USA Reunion 2	New York

If you would like further details about any of the above events then please contact the Development Office.

Perse Sports Update

HOCKEY

The highlight of the term to date has obviously been the U16s winning the National Indoor Title. The 1st XI have had a great start to the season, with a 5–4 away win against Oundle and a 4–1 derby win against the Leys. They also qualified for the regional round of the National Schools Championship, but unfortunately missed out on a place in the finals. The U14a team (who play their hockey in the Christmas term) had an excellent season, winning 10 out of their 13 matches.

Girls Hockey achieved their best ever season, with the 1st XI winning 7 out of 12, beating schools such as Kings Ely and Wymondham and qualifying for the regional finals of the National Schools Championship. Indoor, they only missed out on being County Champions on goal difference. For the first time ever the School is fielding a 2nd XI.

NETBALL

The 1st VII Netball went forward to the East Championships this month to represent Cambridgeshire but did not manage to progress further. However this is another first for girls sport at the Perse. They got through the County round in December beating The Leys, Perse Girls, Long Rd & Hills Rd 2nd VII.



RUGBY

The 1st XV won 9 out of 13 matches. Highlights included beating Wymondham for the first time in 10 years, a win over Bedford 18–17 and reaching the fourth round of the Daily Mail knock-out competition. The 2nd XV won 9 out of 13, which included an impressive 40–0 win over the Leys, whilst the U16a XV had an outstanding season losing only 2 out of 11, with a 29–3 win over the Leys.

OTHER SPORTS NEWS

- Gymnastics – Dominic Hawkins won silver in his category of the National Team Tumbling Competition in West Bromwich. His team went on to become national champions.
- Fencing – the Perse team beat Bedford school and will be competing in the Independent Schools National Championships in March.
- Cross country – Matthew Leach came 2nd in the Regional U14s (Anglian Race) and will now represent Cambridgeshire in the English Schools Championship – in the U18s, the team of John Gardner Andrews, Edward Louth, Chris Boreham, and Robert Wilson won the Anglian Race.
- Rowing – the U18 boys rowing team won the Cambridge Sport Lakes Junior Indoor Rowing Challenge.
- Cricket – Michael Franklin, Duncan Graves, Martin Leary, Peter Richer, and Ben Creese have been picked for the County U15 cricket squad – Ismael Baksh has been picked for the Northampton Cricket Academy.

ROY BURRELL AWARD

The Roy Burrell Awards are given by the Cambridge Secondary Schools Association in recognition of sporting excellence within Cambridge. First place was awarded to Alexander Stafford, for excellence in cricket and rugby, with Dudley Spiers receiving a runner's up award for excellence in hockey.