

Introduction

from the Headmaster

Good schools never stand still, and since the last edition of Perseptions, we have been pressing ahead with our plans for the move to full co-education. By the time you read this, we shall have submitted our planning applications for the Upper and the Prep to the City Council, following a series of exhibitions in late January for parents, staff and our neighbours, so that they all had the chance to see what we are proposing before the formal submission went in.

We hope to get the go-ahead from the Council in late April or early May, but the precise timing is obviously in its hands. Assuming the news is good, work will start on the new classroom block at the Prep in early 2007. Leighton House will be refurbished over the summer holidays of 2008 so all the work needed to provide for the expansion and the arrival of the first girls at the Prep will have been completed by September 2008.

During the following Spring, building work will start at the Upper, which will in turn be completed in time for girls joining in Years 7 and 9 in September 2010. For more detail on our plans, go to www.persedevlopment.org.

On a cold evening at the end of January, we also had the opportunity to show our plans to various supporters and friends of the School at a reception on the Terrace at the House of Commons hosted by our MP, Andrew Lansley. Far from shivering stoically in the cold, we were in a very warm marquee, looking out over the very spot where the cameras had snapped the whale stranded in the Thames just a few days before. Guests included Martin Stephen, my immediate predecessor and now High Master of St Paul's School.

Other recent developments give us further grounds for confidence. Demand for places from those wishing to join next year's Lower Sixth at the Upper has been by far the strongest that we have known – to the extent that we have had to close our lists early. During the first week of February



we also received our first applications from girls to join the Upper School in Year 7 in 2010. So, as we submit our plans to the Council, I am glad to say that we feel the wind in our sails.

Meanwhile, amidst all the future excitement, 'normal' life here goes on. Our Sixth Formers have gained over twenty places at Oxford and Cambridge for the eighth year running. An Upper Sixth pupil has been rowing at U18 national standard; a member of the Lower Sixth has represented Great Britain at fencing, and a Fifth Former has been selected for the England U16 rugby development squad.

We have also appointed Gareth Jones, currently Deputy Head of West Hill Park School, Hampshire and a former Director of Music at the Dragon School, Oxford, to succeed



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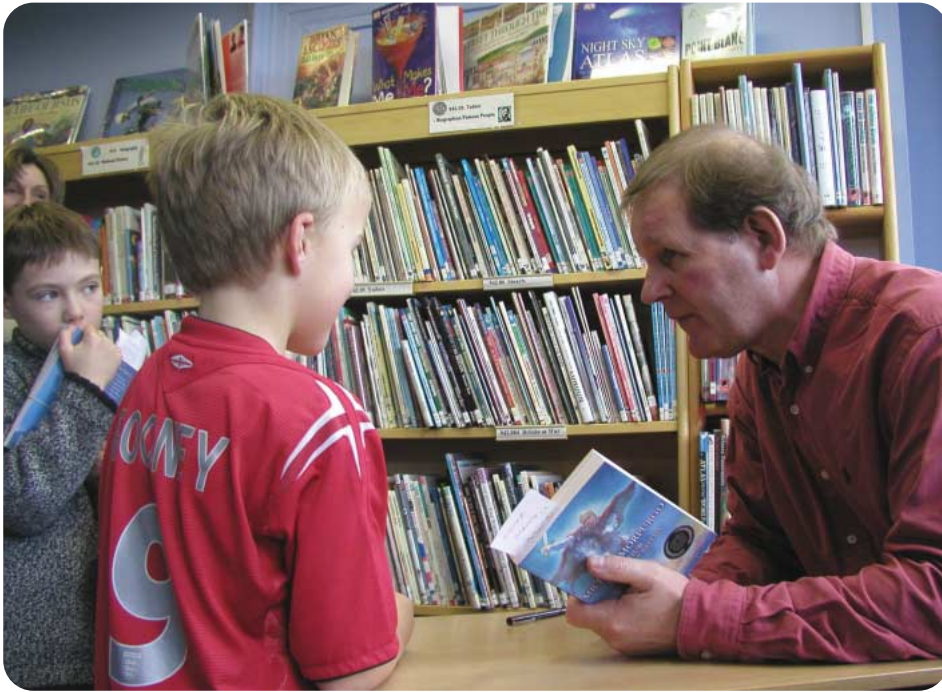
Paul Izzett, who steps down in July after 22 years of distinguished service as Head of the Perse Prep.

There is a big task ahead, but as the momentum picks up, we move forwards with growing conviction, confidence and a sense of keen anticipation. Thank you for your continuing support and interest.

Nigel Richardson
February 2006



Fifth Former selected for English U16 Rugby Development Squad
– report on page 6



Michael Morpurgo's visit

Thanks to several months of negotiating and the persuasive enthusiasm of 'The Two Ollies', (McLellan and Linehan), we welcomed former Children's Laureate to our school on 2nd December 2005. It was a wonderful day. Most of the boys needed very little introduction to his books: he has written more than a hundred, and their appeal is wide-ranging, but we spent the time leading up to his visit getting really well acquainted with the man and his work. All Michael's stories depict strong characters drawn often from very painful aspects of everyday life, and it is this real understanding that makes the characters so real and important to us. We had readings in assemblies and looked closely at his charity 'Farms for City Children' which he set up thirty years ago with his wife Clare. The charity was set up to give inner-city children a taste of life on a working farm, an experience which gives them something to treasure for life as they learn how to live and work together, having fun but helping to produce the food that we all rely on. Michael is first and foremost a storyteller and he kept us all enthralled with the stories behind his work. He then went on to open our Charity Christmas Fair, held this year in aid of Michael's charity. A hugely enjoyable finale to a great day.



Pelican's 'Side Drive' project

The Pelican children have made a start on their 'Side Drive' project. The idea for this came about when it was felt that the vibrant and energetic atmosphere inside the Pelican really ought to be reflected in its outside spaces. Jane Bower, a local artist and teacher, came to school armed with clay, expertise and patience. She worked with all age groups and their teachers during a day which was both informative and productive. The children made beautifully detailed clay tile flowers and leaves. Jane will return to school in order to teach the children how to glaze their tiles. Once fired, the tiles will adorn the side drive wall, in a display like a climbing plant which can be added to in years to come. The project has been made possible using money from The Annual Fund.



The Play Way: **tradition and innovation** in the **English and Drama Department**

English at the Perse has always been a subject with a particularly strong identity. It was not long after the subject was established as an academic discipline (in both schools and universities) that Henry Caldwell Cook, the School's celebrated English master, published his visionary book *The Play Way* (1917), in which he expressed a simple idea that was nevertheless revolutionary in terms of educational theory:

We act the plays we study, not only because it is entertaining to do so but because plays are made to be acted.

Caldwell Cook's ideas later fell out of fashion to some extent until Douglas Brown drew on them to establish the 'Mummery' method of teaching English at the Perse in the late 1940s.

In 1998, an Inspection of the School (the first since 1951) submitted the Mummery method of English teaching to close scrutiny and some changes were recommended. A great deal had happened to English in secondary schools in almost half a century including, in more recent decades: the introduction of GCSE; the establishment of a National Curriculum (which dictated the formal division first of English and Drama – and then of 'Literacy' and 'Literature'); the introduction of a National Literacy Strategy; the embracing of media studies and electronic technologies by the subject. The nature of English studies in Higher Education has also been redefined completely in recent decades – and clearly the Perse has a duty to offer appropriate preparation to the increasing numbers of our pupils who study English Literature in the Sixth Form (now in three sets as opposed to the single class in 1998) and then go on to read the subject at university.

English at the Perse responded to all these demands both by holding on to the

best aspects of the 'Play Way' tradition and – at the same time – adapting to meet these new challenges. The Department – now formally re-named 'English and Drama' – continues to deliver both aspects of its subject area in an integrated way (and we find ourselves in the unusual and fortunate position where all members of staff in the Department possess expertise in both these areas). The growth in our provision of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils at all levels reflects a vision whereby linguistic, literary, dramatic and oracy skills are nurtured in complementary activities both within and outside the classroom. We aim to provide a full range of activities to meet the needs of every pupil – and that might be by engaging in close textual study of a play by Shakespeare or David Mamet, joining a Drama club, selecting from our programme of theatre visits, participating in an English-Speaking Union competition, publishing an article in a form web-magazine, being awarded Drama colours, or gaining a place in the National Youth Theatre.

Dramatic activities (whether 'creating', 'performing' or 'responding') still have a firm place at the centre of the English curriculum throughout the School. We continue to use the Department's flexible Drama studio/classroom for everyday teaching (and plans are in place to create a similar new facility when the Department relocates to its own section of a purpose-built teaching block as a result of the forthcoming School expansion). We also make full use of the 160-seat Lecture Theatre for our annual season of eight in-house plays (one of last year's productions was also staged at Cambridge Arts Theatre; one of this year's – the first amateur production of Seamus Heaney's new translation of *Antigone* –

will transfer to Edinburgh in August). Opportunities exist for members of all Year Groups to participate in a production annually. We also encourage pupils to devise, direct and produce plays – often with scripts written by their peers and presented as Charity events. All Year Groups also participate in Debating and Public Speaking events as part of the English curriculum – and three extra-curricular societies provide further opportunities for pupils.

It was very satisfying to see these changes receiving positive recognition in the School's Inspection report of 2004. More importantly, we hope that even Henry Caldwell Cook himself would have been happy with the balance that we have achieved and that he would recognise that the 'Play Way' spirit continues to thrive at the Perse today.

Christopher Green, Head of English and Drama



Helen Duckhouse

Congratulations to Upper Sixth former Helen Duckhouse, who has won a place at the renowned London Studio Centre to study for a BA (Hons) degree in Theatre Dance. She will receive a thorough training in dance, singing and acting – all the skills required for a career in the professional theatre. Helen has been dancing since the age of seven, and has been studying at the BodyWork Dance Studio in Cambridge for the past ten years. She has starred in many productions since she joined the Perse in 2004, including *The Country Wife*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Man of the Moment*, and will be appearing in the forthcoming Perse Players' production of *Antigone* (see *Dates for the Diary*), which will also be playing at the Edinburgh Festival in August.



First Form drama evening

Community art

As part of the enrichment art programme for Sixth Formers, we have formed links with the Rees Thomas Special School. Several of our Sixth Form had the opportunity of working together with nine of their pupils in a joint pottery project. Both the Perse and the Rees Thomas students learned a great deal from the experience, and found it extremely enjoyable and rewarding. The ceramics produced on the day were excellent, and students from both schools should be proud of what they achieved.

Rees Thomas has now invited the Perse students involved in the programme to a tea party, at which they will be able to deliver the fired ceramics produced by the Rees Thomas students on the day, and experience a day in the life of a school for children with special needs.

If there are other community or school based groups that would like to do a similar project in the future, please contact Su Johnson, Head of Art at the Perse on 01223 403867.



Think further

For three years now the school has run its own Gifted & Talented programme, in the form of a voluntary lunchtime club called "think". In the six forty-minute sessions per term we cover diverse, usually cross-curricular topics, which would not normally be covered in any lesson. The sessions are based on the passions of the staff members taking them, and involve open-ended and creative activities for the students to complete. The idea is that each session should open the door to an area of knowledge which students can follow up and research in their own time. The club has attracted a cult following at the school, and as of September 2005 its

scope has expanded, so that we now run sessions in four maintained sector primary schools as an outreach activity. The sessions at Foxton, Milton Road, Newnham Croft and Morley Memorial primary schools are targeted at year 6 students, and take place once per term in each institution. The sessions are very similar to those run by "think" at the Perse, and have included topics such as aerodynamics and paper aeroplanes, and an introduction to architectural drawing. Coming up, we have debates about ethics, fashion in car design, and the ancient art of Go: a 4000 year-old strategy game.

University success

We are delighted to be able to congratulate the 22 Sixth Formers who have received offers from either Oxford or Cambridge. The offers covered an impressive range of subjects, from Archaeology & Anthropology to Veterinary Science. Five candidates received offers to read Engineering; Mathematics, Geography and Modern Languages each had three offers; and Economics and Natural Sciences each had two candidates securing offers. This outstanding success in a variety of subjects demonstrates the spread of excellence we enjoy in our Sixth Form. Final confirmation from UCAS for all university offers is due in April or May, with Sixth Formers competing for places in a wide spectrum of subjects at some of the country's top universities, including Durham, Bristol, Nottingham, Newcastle and York, to name the most popular.



The five Oxbridge Engineers: L-R: Alan Douglass (Jesus, Cambridge), James Green (Pembroke, Oxford), John Hale (Pembroke, Cambridge), William Chen (Queens', Cambridge), and Malcolm Begg (St John's, Oxford)



National Blood Service – Wednesday 30th November

In September the National Blood Service asked if they could come into school to give an assembly to raise awareness of the need for new donors. The assembly really inspired the Sixth Form and as a result the school organised a Blood Donation Session to take place in the Old Gym. They arrived early in the morning on the 30th November with lorries full of equipment to set up for a full day of donation.

Staff and pupils donated blood throughout the day and over 60 units of blood were dispatched to Addenbrooke's. The Blood Donation team will be back at school to collect again in 6 months' time when more of the Sixth Form are aged 17 or over, one of the criteria for becoming a blood donor. We hope to make this a regular event in the school year which will provide the Blood Service with a regular supply of new donors for the future.

Legacies

After you have made provision for your family and friends in your Will, please consider leaving a gift to the Perse. If you would like further information, please contact Roly Owers in the Development Office or look on the website (www.persedevelopment.org).

Development Projects Update

Extending the climbing wall at the Upper. In order to cope with the growing popularity of climbing at the Upper the current facilities are being expanded. One of the walls is being developed with a combination of permanent fixings and free-standing equipment, including an arch, 'chimney' and buttress. The arch will provide more climbing space and another overhang. The chimney/buttress will provide for a totally different set of climbing skills. These improvements should be complete by the end of the summer term.

Modifications to the Old Gym at the Upper. Following on from the improvements to the Hall at the Upper over the summer of 2005, work on the Old Gym will be carried out over the summer of 2006. This will centre around bringing the floor level down to the level of the Hall, making the entire space much more adaptable for school and social functions.

Upgrading the Upper kitchens. A rolling programme of improvements was started in 2004. To date this has included installing a new dishwasher (2004), erecting new window shutters (2005) and building the shell of a kitchen extension (2005). The extension will be fitted out over the summer of 2006.

Other Projects at the Upper.

- On-going improvements to the provision of lavatories
- Upgrading the electricity supply onto the site.
- Additional portacabin to provide for additional classrooms and office space

Enhancing the side entrance and courtyard at the Pelican. See article on page 2.



Charities Bill Update

In this current session of Parliament the Charities Bill has passed through the House of Lords – with its Third Reading on 8th November 2005.

The Bill has now reached the House of Commons – with its First Reading on 9th November 2005. It will follow the same debate stages as the House of Lords: Second Reading – Committee Stage – Report Stage – Third Reading. If amendments are agreed by both Houses the Bill will be given Royal Assent and become an Act, however the timing of its passage still remains unclear.

Payroll giving

This term, the Perse introduced a new way for its staff to support charities of their choice, by signing up to a Payroll Giving scheme called Give As You Earn (run by the Charities Aid Foundation). This is a flexible and easy way to support any charity or organisation with charitable status. Donating through Give As You Earn is tax free, which means that a monthly donation of £10 will cost a UK basic-rate taxpayer £7.80, and a higher rate taxpayer £6.00. Additionally, the Government is matching gifts up to a value of £10 for the first six months.

Staff from all three schools in the Perse Foundation are participating in the scheme, donating to a wide variety of charities, including the School itself. Any employee or pensioner paid through PAYE can donate to charity in this way. To find out more about the scheme, visit www.giveasyouearn.org, or contact the Development Office.



Keep in touch

So that we can keep you up to date with the latest Perse developments, please do let us know of any change in your contact details, especially email addresses.

News in **brief**

YOUNG ENTERPRISE TRADE FAIR SUNDAY 29TH JANUARY

Members of two Perse School Young Enterprise teams, Shade Enterprises and Saki Trading, went to the main Milton Keynes shopping centre to sell their items such as pottery, scarves and picture frames. More than 40 teams were represented at the fair. The event gave the Lower Sixth pupils a real insight into customer service. Sales were fairly slow but the teams are looking forward to the forthcoming local trade fair at the Grafton Centre in Cambridge. The teams were supervised by the school link teacher Mr. R. Wareing.



SHARES4SCHOOLS – STUDENT INVESTOR COMPETITION

Five members of Mr Wareing's Lower Sixth Business Studies class are involved in this prestigious competition. The pupils invest £1500 on the stock market with real money. The team have chosen to invest in Japan and Eastern Europe through investment trusts. Currently the team is in 1st position in the Midlands East region and 5th nationally, with a gain of 12.8% since October 2005.



L-R: Donald Hyndman, Sarah Nolasco (Captain), Jonathan Barrett, John Gardner-Andrews, Jack Day

PERSE HEAD TO BE CHAIRMAN OF HEADMASTERS' CONFERENCE

Nigel Richardson has been elected as Chairman of HMC, the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, from January 2007. He will continue as Headmaster during his chairmanship. The HMC, established in 1869, represents the head teachers of some 250 leading independent day and boarding schools in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It has a further 60 or so international members, as well as up to 30 additional members who are Heads of maintained sector schools in this country. Nigel Richardson's predecessor, Dr Martin Stephen (now High Master of St Paul's School, London), was HMC Chairman in 2004.

EVENTS

2006 Dates for the diary.....

March 7th	Hockey Varsity Match	Southgate Hockey Club
March 13th	School Orchestral Concert	University Concert Hall, West Road – 7.30pm
March 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st	The Perse Players Production: Seamus Heaney's Burial at Thebes – a new translation of Sophocles' Antigone	Upper School Theatre – 7.30pm
March 21st	Dr Perse's Evensong	Gonville & Caius College Chapel – 6.45pm
May 5th	Charity Cabaret	Upper School Hall – 7.30pm
May 11th	Choral and Orchestral Concert	OLEM Catholic Church – 7.30pm
May 12th	OP Open Day	Contact Jennie Wallis for further details: jwallis@perse.co.uk
July 1st	Speech Day	Upper School

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

Sports in **brief**

RUGBY

Sport at the Perse continues to build on the considerable success of last academic year. Owen Giles in the Fifth Form has been selected for the English School Rugby Squad, a truly outstanding achievement. 2005 witnessed the most successful season in 14 years for the Perse 1st XV rugby team, captained by Oliver Jones and coached by Phil Gostling. They climaxed a fantastic season by defeating The Leys, 17–10. Rugby lower down the School has followed the lead of the senior teams. Between them, the U16As and Bs have recorded 14 impressive wins in 18 games last season. The U15A team scored a staggering 504 points and conceded only 65 last season, closely followed by the U15B's record. Eight of the Under 15s represented the County last season. Lawrence Middleton in the Third Form played rugby for the County and has been part of the Northampton Saints Elite Player Development set-up.

HOCKEY

The U16 Indoor Hockey Team has had an excellent season, reaching the National Finals, whilst the 1st XI Hockey Team has enjoyed a great start to the term, beating Oundle and Uppingham. Michael Franklin in the Third Form represented the UK Lions (Indoor Hockey) on a tour to Canada, and he and Adam Miller have been selected for the East of England U14 Hockey Squad. The U14s go through as County Champions in the Schools National Championships in their attempt to defend last year's National Title. The Girls' Hockey Squad has had their best ever season, taking on much bigger schools: they played 9, won 4, drew 2, and lost 3.

OTHER SPORTS NEWS

In other sports, Donald Hyndman in the Lower Sixth continues his success in Fencing and is now in the GB squad. Edward Louth in the Fifth Form has competed for Great Britain in Orienteering. Ben Creese in the Third Form has been selected for the South Region Cricket Academy. In the recent Staff vs. Students vs. Old Perseans Cross-Country race, Edward Aston in the Upper Sixth broke the School cross-country record, covering four miles in 29 minutes 9 seconds.

In rowing, the First VIII had the opportunity to show off their brand new blades, painted in the School colours, just before baptising them in the Head of the Nene race. Peterborough Cathedral can be glimpsed in the background. Now all the crew needs is a boat of its own to go with them!



Crew L-R: James Green, John Hale, Sam Beresford, Arun Kumar, Oliver Bonner (cox), Richard Stafford, Oscar Swift, Charles Parker and Rory Attfield