



The Hardyens' Club Newsletter

Published in **Spring**, Autumn and Winter

To stay
in touch
with your
Friends

Autumn
Edition
2025

In this
Issue

You Write

Around
the
School

2025
Annual
Reunion
Dinner

2026 Date
Sat 21st March

Please make
a note in
your diaries

News
from the
Hardyens
Club
Charitable
Association

From the President - Damien Lewis

Dear Friends,

We had a wonderful gathering for the informal Old Hardyens dinner recently, for those of us who were able to make the alternative date and venue. It was held at the Brewer's Arms in Martinstown, just outside of Dorchester .



Next Year Announcing The Hardyens Club Annual Reunion Saturday 21st March 2026.

Make a firm date in your diaries, please. For various reasons the school is unable to accommodate us next year, so we have booked the lovely **Kings Arms Hotel** (newly refurbished) - and we will be in their first floor Casterbridge Room. The dinner will be informal and we hope to be able to hold the price at £32 pp. A booking form and more details will be issued in the New Year.

The Facebook post, with pictures, is live here :-

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/217787688417689>

It would be lovely to see as many of you as possible.

*My very best wishes to you all,
Damien Lewis,*

1958-ers Annual Get together at the Junction Hotel



In attendance:

Bob Turner, Richard Sonley
Stuart Hargreaves, Richard
Cummins, Jonathan Pullen
Simon Frampton, Colin Squibb
Alan Potter, Clive Dickinson
Alan Attyrde, Hugh Slavin ?
, Jeremy Hall, Paul Light
Barry Smith, Ken Stephens
Godfrey Lancashire

Pictures courtesy of Ken Stephens
and Richard Cummins



Forthcoming Club and other events

Monthly Luncheons on the last Thursday of the month at the Poet Laureate pub in Pummery Square, Poundbury. Meet from 12.30pm.

2026 Annual Reunion Event is being arranged for **Saturday 21st March 2026**. Please make a note in your diaries. (*See above President's letter*)

Cricket Match, Club v School:

We are sorry to say that the annual cricket match did not take place this year. The Club will be discussing future Hardyens sporting events at our next meeting, to see how we can continue our great relationship with the Thomas Hardy School P.E. department for years to come.

Christmas Carol Service St Peters Church, Monday 22nd December at 7.00 pm see You Write for more details from Peter Oakes, Conductor/organiser

Hardyeans Club Contacts - changes!

President: Damien LEWIS, Life Vice-Presidents: Anthony C W Day, Peter Foster, Hugh Griffiths, Godfrey Lancashire, John Pearson

Chairman: Nick GRASSBY

NEW Hon Treasurer : James DRIVER, James@kennedylegg.co.uk

Hon Membership Secretary : Vacancy. In the interim, please contact the Secretaries for any membership queries. Alan BROWN has resigned and we thank him for his service to the Club in this role since 2017.

Hon Joint Secretaries/ Newsletter Editors Peter and Heather FOSTER. Holmecroft, 12, South Court Ave, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 2BX E-Mail : heather.foster1@btinternet.com (tel 01305 262121)

Hon Press Officer: Damien Lewis E-mail: mediac21@aol.com

School Liaison Officer (tel 01305 266095 or 01305 231512 Wessex Multi-Academy Trust)

www.facebook.com/groups/Hardyeans is the official Club facebook page for news of Club members and friends. and check out the School site www.facebook.com/thomashardyeschool



Find us on
Facebook

which links into the main school website www.thomas-hardye.net on which can be found news of events at the school including the Community Lectures. See also

www.facebook.com/groups/452234394961667/ for news of Dorchester Secondary Modern; Thomas Hardye School, Dorchester, Dorset. There are other Thomas Hardye School-related facebook sites, and more generally, 'You're over 30 and from Dorchester when.....' is a good one.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/284997108221127>

From the Editors: Whilst Facebook is a valuable way of keeping in touch, please don't forget those who don't 'do' Facebook, and consider writing to the *News/letter* editors as well, to get a wider membership response

Among recent FaceBook posters:

Roy Ralston, Jonathan Pullen and John Rickett about the possibility of the author John Meade Falkner having attended Dorchester Grammar School in 1870 ??

Damien Lewis, on Weymouth Museum's funding application '...Great to see the coverage in today's Dorset Echo of the Weymouth Museum, the future home of the Great Oak Screen. We're looking forward to a future opening, where the Screen will take pride of place. More updates to follow ...'

Do have a look at the Club's Facebook page - make contact with old friends!

Also be sure to have a look at **Graham Allen's** website (<https://old-hardyeans.com>) which contains a wealth of memories This site is regularly updated, with many many photographs and useful information

From the Headteacher



Dear Hardyans,

I hope all members of the club are well and enjoying a year of such consistently glorious weather. It was a great shame not to see everyone at the annual dinner, which could not go ahead due to practical issues with securing a date which worked for members, and I hope very much that this can be resumed in 2026.

The school continues to thrive, and was inspected this February by OFSTED, whose words of praise for the warm relationships between staff and students, the high academic standards and world-beating opportunities for students will, I hope, be familiar to all former students of the school in its various forms over the years.

This summer we send students off to university courses at some of the most selective institutions in the world, to highly sought-after apprenticeships with market-leading companies, and to lives enriched by their time at our remarkable school. Many of you have helped prepare them for those steps through our mock-interview programme, and this makes such a positive difference to their confidence and aspirations.

Our current students are making final preparations for the school's summer musical extravaganza – The Addams Family – which promises to be a wonderful showcase of our students' talent and professionalism.

Everyone at the school wishes all members of the club a lovely summer, and I hope to see many of you at school and club events over the next year.

*Best wishes,
Nick Rutherford*

*The above was originally sent some months ago See also some updated information
from the Headteacher in Around and about the Thomas Hardy School section at the end of
this Newsletter*

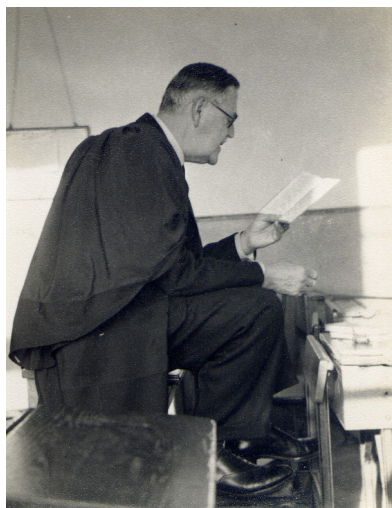
You Write

From

Bill Johnston

The Obituary item about Peter Sedgwick stirred a couple of memories. In the 1950s we rarely knew our fellow students' first names and almost always addressed them by Surname. So 'Sedgwick' is familiar; as is 'Caselton', who wrote the piece. And I didn't know that he and I shared our first forename!

I have a suspicion that the picture I have attached may be of Caselton; perhaps you're able to verify this*. My cohort of Hardyeans may recall that I adopted the pseudonym Studio Johnno when I used the notice board outside Classroom 4A to display photos I'd taken officially at Corps Inspections and CCF summer camps at Bourley and elsewhere. As a sixth-former I also took sly pictures of the Masters who taught me, displaying their teaching style (!) to the best advantage—as the attached portrait of 'Dunc' Lidbury in a sixth-form English lesson shows.



When skimming TV channels the other night in the hope of finding something worth watching (I remain a 'wireless' man from well before the time when, every Wednesday morning break, we would relive the jokes from the previous night's Goon Show) I came across my 'twin' Geoff Hutchings once again in the endless re-runs of Benidorm. There he was, lying on a poolside lounge only getting up to pick a fight with one of the other characters. Considering he and I were born on the same day in June 1939 in adjacent beds at Dorchester Hospital, I believe that he aged considerably sooner than I!

Best wishes to you. I still hope, one day, to come back and return the copy of Homer's Odyssey XI which is sitting beside me as I write and which Pat Vickery, Gerald Bartlett and I all used for our A Level exams in 1957!

*[*Photos from Bill Johnston indeed show a studious Bill Caselton In the Library, and Mr Lidbury. The latter also appeared in Newsletter no 146 September 2022]*

Came Down Golf Club News of Hardyean Alex Johnston

Dear Godfrey,

I'd like to share some good news with you - Alex Johnston will be joining the pro shop team here at Came Down from Monday 8th September 2025.

Alex lives in Dorchester and had a short spell as a member of our club during his junior golf days. His home club is Broadstone, where he holds an impressive +2.8 WHS handicap index. After completing his education at Hardye's, Alex undertook a golf management degree at Keiser University in Florida where he was a key member of their golf team that competed annually in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) championships. He returned to the UK earlier this year having gained the US equivalent of a first-class Bachelor's degree.

Alex will be enrolling in the PGA system and beginning his career as a golf professional this autumn. I know he will progress quickly and be a great assistant pro for Came Down in the years to come. Alex is passionate about golf and will be conscientious in helping others improve and make the most of their ability. I'm sure you'll enjoy following his journey over the coming years.

Christmas Carol Service St Peters Church, Monday 22nd December

Peter Oakes is organising a Carol Service for former musicians of the Thomas Hardy School (staff and students), especially those who sang in Chapel Choir / Thomas Hardy Singers. It will be on Monday 22nd December at 7.00 pm in St Peter's Church, Dorchester.

All are, of course, very welcome to attend the service, but if any former choir members would like to come at 4.00 pm on the day, there will be a rehearsal of some straightforward choir items to sing in the service.

If former choir members would like to sing in the 'choir' on the day, *please contact the Editors* who will forward details to Peter Oakes so that he has an idea of numbers.

The collection at the end of the service will be shared equally between the music departments of the St Peter's Church and the school.

Memories of the rafts at Weymouth

from Jonathan Pullen *This article appeared in the Dorset Echo of 29th July in Joanna O'Donnell's Nostalgia section. This is slightly edited.*

'Our maritime playground' - is how Echo readers remember the scrapped Greenhill rafts.

The Echo asked people for their memories of time spent swimming to the floating platforms following the removal of them earlier this month.

Generations of local residents have enjoyed swimming out to the rafts off Greenhill Beach, Weymouth, since the 1920s.

Weymouth resident Jonathan Pullen has since been in touch recalling his childhood memories

"Bearing in mind, the vast number of bathers who have enjoyed the rafts over more than a century, it would appear (my long late mother remembered diving off the former Portland Harbour raft referred to) there appear to have been very few significant accidents, and a few bumps and bruises are not newsworthy." Mr Pullen sent us this wonderful photo of himself, taken by Nick Ferriman, diving off a Greenhill wooden raft in 1969 when he had just turned 22.



Living nearby in Dorchester and spending time swimming at Greenhill enriched his childhood, he told us. "Greenhill was our beach 'home'. I was a very short sighted child (I have poor sight now) and was barred from certain contact sports like rugby.

"I was not much use at cricket or tennis, either but swimming permitted freedom from a somewhat restricted life."

He said of the photo: "You might just notice a row of beach huts below the promenade in front of the first row of terrace houses.

"The last one standing - by decree of the old borough council - hut spaces were no longer allocated from 1988 - belonged to the late David and Sheila Richardson who had a large family, some of whom still maintain a Weymouth connection.

"Some Weymouthians of my generation would remember the Ross-Mackenzie family, not least as the mother, Charmaine, a renowned sportswoman, gave swimming lessons in the sea to both local junior schools and to individuals." Mr Pullen describes the rafts as 'a maritime playground for us youngsters'.

He added: "I often joined up with friends who either had beach huts in front of the big Greenhill terraced houses or in the somewhat higgledy-piggledy hut 'village' below Greenhill Gardens.

"We learned common sense and risk assessment from a young age, no namby pamby nonsense then, thank God!

"Sometimes we were engaged in friendly and not-so-friendly battles with other gangs, picked up bodily and chucked off the raft but that was all part of life's adventure.

"Usually, older siblings or friendly adults would intervene if things got a bit out of hand but I'm thankful for the resilience it taught me.

"And despite certain serious health setbacks unrelated to aquatic pursuits, I still enjoy rather geriatric sea swimming today!

"I really deplore any decision not to provide the rafts and thus deprive swimmers, especially children, the chance to enjoy the simple pleasures which meant so much to past generations. It's ironic is it not? How on earth did we survive childhood!"

Godfrey Lancashire commented: I totally agree.

We have such fond memories of the raft and I remember 1966 and third year sixth when a great deal of A level revision was carried out ,or not , on the pebbles .

Such happy carefree times as you say.

Obituaries

We have been advised of the following who have sadly passed away. Our thanks to the informants and condolences to relatives and friends.

Robin Attryde 1954-61

Alan Attryde has written to say - Sadly I have to advise you of the passing in Ukraine on 27th August of my brother, Robin Attryde, after a long illness.

Alan Attryde

Daryl Bristow

Daryl Bristow passed away on 1 Aug 25. Daryl was at school from 1958 to 1963.

R.A. (Taffy) Evans, aka Tony 1953-59

Alan Brown was advised by Zoe Dancey (Tony's daughter) as follows:- sadly Dad passed away on Saturday 20th September this year.

Roy Foot

The Club was advised by Came Down Golf Club of the passing of Roy Foot, father of Tony, on 15th July 2025. Roy had been the Club Secretary at Came Down for several years in the 1980s

Simon Meyers

Came Down Golf Club also advised the sad passing of Simon Meyers, brother of Hugh, at the beginning of October 2025. Simon was at Hardye's from 1963 -69

The funeral, a celebration of Simon's life, is due to take place at Kingston Maurward House on 4th November at 1pm

News from HCCA Bursary Students and farewell to Stephen Gould from Julia Moore, Chair of HCCA.

At the AGM of The Hardyans Club Charitable Association in April 2025 we were able to thank Stephen Gould for his many years of dedicated service as HCCA's Treasurer. Stephen stepped up as Treasurer on the retirement of Colin Lucas. Over many years he has organised the payment of the bursaries to students and kept a very watchful eye on the Association's finances for which we are eternally grateful! At the AGM the trustees were delighted to welcome James Driver from a fairly recent cohort of ex Hardyans to join HCCA as the new Treasurer helped, in the first instance, by Stephen.

I am very pleased to share news from the bursary students all of whom give such a vibrant picture of life, including its ups and downs, at a range of universities across the country. Their hard work and determination supported by their bursaries demonstrates the vital role that HCCA plays in their lives. I hope that you enjoy reading their reports as much as the trustees did. We are grateful to Hilary Over for ensuring that we receive reports from all the students each year.

B

I have had such an amazing second year at Portsmouth - I don't even know where to begin.

At the start of my second year, I was awarded a prize for getting the highest overall mark out of the psychology cohort for the first year. This was a welcome surprise and really solidified the work I put into the first year. I also had the opportunity to do a work placement, which I did at a children's nursery near Portsmouth. This was so much fun, and I gained so much valuable experience from there, working with children, and expanding my work related skills.

Throughout the year, I completed all my assessments and exams with good grades and finished the year with a first overall. I was given an opportunity to become a research assistant for my tutor. I have been calling and organising with local schools to run psychological studies with the children. This will carry on into the third year, where I will be actually running the studies myself—again, an amazing experience for the future.

I had one unfortunate experience this year, where one lecturer thought I was using AI for one of my assignments. I didn't, obviously, however, it was scary to be accused of something like that after all the hard work I put into my assessments. It was sorted and was fine in the end, but it was worrying for a bit.

Ultimately, it has been an amazing year, gaining experience and meeting new people with whom I have been able to work. I have been able to get lots of valuable experience for my CV, which will be great for when I look at jobs after third year. I'm very excited for my third and final year. Thank you.

F

I have enjoyed my second year studying computer science at Nottingham University, below is my report. Academically the workload in year 2 was as expected more demanding but I was able to select 3 optional modules: Software Specifications; Distributed Systems and Advance Functional Programming [AFP], of which the later built on my first year's love of Haskell and as a result I have made some Haskell videos on my YouTube channel.

I joined Hacksoc and competed in the Hackathon coming second in the Haskell part of the competition and have been asked to upload some of my Haskell youtube videos to the University's ComputerPhile you tube site. Also this year as General Secretary for Compsoc I was involved in running the Compsoc stall during Freshers' Week and in order to meet students on other courses I joined both the gym and the climbing club which I have enjoyed as a way of clearing my head after a long day of lectures so I can refocus on my studying in the evenings.

Additionally, I have formed a new society called Toki Pona Soc. It is going well with good participation from other students, and I will be continuing this club in year 3.

What I have particularly enjoyed is the Haskell [AFP] module and I will be exploring Haskell research for my dissertation topic. I have secured a place with the senior Haskell professor as my supervisor which I am very pleased about.

A double credit module, a group project, was particularly challenging as I agreed to be the lead pulling together the other 7 members' code as well as my own code for the project which meant I had a lot of work to do near to the deadline to ensure all the code fitted together and worked so I was very happy that I got 84% for this module. Also, in year 3 I will be a senior mentor so will continue to mentor 1st year students and I have been elected President for Compsoc.

J

This past year has been very successful overall. Academically I achieved even higher than my first year. I'm at a First Class grade, but my average has increased significantly with certain modules reaching 95%. I took part in several smaller work experience opportunities, as well as a 6 month Mentorship scheme in which I shadowed and learnt from the Vice President of Electronic trading at JP Morgan. I've been teaching myself to code independently, focusing primarily on Python and R.

At the moment I am deciding whether or not to go straight into work after my Bachelors or take on a Masters. If I do decide to it will be Finance based but with some Exposure to Tech/Computer Science.

Outside of my studies, I am currently working as a Camera Specialist for Sony part time. But I was recently approached by the head of a Private Security company who are looking for someone to run Business to Business sales, given that some of their clients are billionaires it should be a fantastic opportunity to network. Additionally, I recently had the amazing opportunity to model for Alexander McQueen, which was exciting!

Once again, I want to express my appreciation for your assistance at the association. Studying in London is no easy feat coming from a low income background, and your support has enabled me to reach these fantastic opportunities. Thank you

E

This year I studied a variety of modules, my favourite being Sexual Offences and Offending. I wrote an essay on the subject of the incarceration rates for rape, and issues surrounding and I received a mark of a high first, which I was extremely pleased with. I learnt a lot about victimology, the issues within our criminal justice system surrounding women's and victims of sexual assaults' rights, and the reform needed to improve the system.

I also studied criminal psychology, a module particularly interesting to me. I wrote a 3000 word profile on a serial killer of my choice, Fred West, a serial killer from Gloucester. I received a first for this profile.

I found second year housing particularly challenging. This was surprising to me as I previously lived in supported living but I found it harder living with friends I'd made at university who had lived with their families all their life! I found myself making bin rotas, constantly checking on whether or not things of mine had been used or taken, and have generally found it hard navigating a shared living space with friends from a privileged background. Furthermore at the start of year 2, our friend dropped out, leaving us a person short of a bedroom. We found a stranger who seemed nice enough, but within a week of the tenancy, he revealed himself to be a sinister character. His views, misogynistic and backward thinking, his identity "an incel" (involuntarily celibate). This was a particularly toxic environment; however I found myself being stronger about my opinions and morals, and better off in the long run.

Thank you again for this incredibly helpful opportunity and support. It really is a huge help towards rent, and means that I can live a little bit less stressed out.

N

My second year of university has been one of the most enjoyable years of my life. After deciding to switch course during my first year, it was the best decision I've ever made. Not only am I so interested in the content of the course (Sociology BSc) but everyone that I have met because of it has been so lovely and I felt it was very easy to settle in. This year at uni I moved out of student halls and into a house with four other friends. This has meant that the year itself has been much more financially challenging as renting in Bristol is extortionate and unfortunately swallowed up my entire loan. The Hardyean's bursary meant that not only could I afford my food shops but also join societies at uni such as the Sociology Society, and the Art History Society which are great for meeting new people and socialising, but do require a membership fee. I still use my iPad which I bought during my first year with the bursary, every day, and have completed every essay, every exam, and every piece of reading I've done so far on it. I'm very excited for my third year and what it will bring! Thank you so much.

C

I have been in Hong Kong as courtesy of my uni's 'Global Summer Exchange' programme (in contrast to Mexico last year).

I have re-read the email I sent you last year, and saw that I wrote I had the BEST year. Believe it or not, this year has been even better!!

In terms of sports, this year I tried out for the Women's Basketball team, where I made it onto the 3rd team and have competed in matches against other units (including our varsity against UCL where we won!!). Basketball is something I hope to continue into my third year, if I have enough time alongside my studies. I also joined the dance society, where I would go to salsa classes once a week. I made some really good friends there too. One of my friends who I met in Mexico and studies at the University of Birmingham even invited me to her uni to attend a Salsa Ball!! (it was amazing!!) Last but not least, I also attended indoor bouldering (climbing) sessions. Again, I made some amazing friends that I would climb with weekly (sometimes fortnightly).

In regards to my studies, I was a little nervous to start this year due to having selected my modules. I was nervous as I was worried I would've picked modules that may not end up being what I expect, or maybe I would just not enjoy them. But this was not the case. I thoroughly enjoyed all my modules, taking a particular interest in 'Teaching Language as Communicative Skills'. In this module, we looked at how to teach English as a foreign language to non-native speakers. The reason I had such an interest in this is because after I graduate, I have been looking into joining TEFL courses abroad. So I thought that this module would be a good taster to see if I would enjoy it, and I did! Overall, I got 75% for this module!! My grade for the year was 67.5% though, which was slightly annoying as I am only 2.5% off a first!! (I'm sure I can make this up in my third year though!)

My first term wasn't so bad as the earliest my lectures would start was 11am. However, in second term I had a LOT of early classes, meaning that I had to cut down on my social life in the evenings. I forgot that I needed to be stricter with money this year (due to renting a flat rather than being in student accommodation). However this spending did not go on for very long, and after two weeks I had made a spending/budgeting plan to help keep me on track.

I also started a new London job this year which was very exciting!! Every Saturday and Sunday morning, I coached football to children aged 1.5-7 with the company 'Little Kickers'. I absolutely loved this job. I sadly had to leave the job at the start of June as I would be leaving London to return back to Weymouth and go on my trip to Hong Kong.

Last but not least, my trip to Hong Kong. Again, I applied to be on the 'Global Summer Exchange'. I wasn't really expecting to get a place but I was overjoyed to be awarded my second choice of The Chinese University of Hong Kong!! I was enrolled on two programs this time around: 1. 'Creative Cities and Urban Cultural Life' and 2. 'Take on Hong Kong: The Revitalisation and Interpretation of Hong Kong's Cultural Heritage'. Both courses were very interesting, and I have learned a lot about Hong Kong. I knew Hong Kong used to be a British Colony, but I didn't realise that it was handed to Britain due to an agreement with China after the opium war. Actually, I didn't even realise Britain ever went to war with China!! My time in Hong Kong was amazing. I met the most amazing people and I don't think saying goodbye has ever been harder. Fortunately, some of the friends I made live in London. I haven't yet received my grades, but I am hopeful that I will do well. Last year for Mexico I received 100% and was awarded full credits!

D

My first year at the University of Birmingham seems hard to condense into an email. I found the Pharmacy course challenging at times, but it was also incredibly interesting. Initially, I was worried the course would not be right for me, but now I feel relief, and I am confident I made the right choice. There were many small group sessions, and got to discuss topics in detail. I really enjoyed expanding my knowledge of chemistry, and the human body, and then using this information on the placements I attended. I have met so many great people and I really enjoy spending time with my friends on the course.

Outside of the course, I joined the medical society and the pharmacy society, which organised games night and fun nights out, as well as helpful revision sessions. I also joined the casual Badminton society, which has been my favourite so far. My friends and I have also enjoyed getting to know Birmingham; we have tried different restaurants, and found fairly local areas to hike around.

I feel as if I have also gained many helpful skills, such as budgeting by planning for my weekly food shop, rent and bills, and having money to have some fun too. Additionally, looking for my second-year house with my friends was a new experience. I am also considering joining the hiking society next year.

Happily, I passed first year with a first class in some modules and a 2.1 in the others. The exams were a challenge, and it felt like we covered so much content in just one year.

I am looking forward to my second year, especially after working all summer! I can't believe first year flew by so very fast.

M

My first year at university has been an intensely challenging yet incredible experience. I am so immensely grateful to be a recipient of a bursary as, amongst support from my university, it has allowed such a big life change to be possible.

What I have enjoyed most about coming to Oxford University is the unique tutorial style of learning. Each week we get the opportunity to meet with our subject tutors in small groups of around three and discuss, in detail, the work which we have completed for them. At first, I found this quite challenging. Completing work and, in most cases, the initial learning of content is fully self-directed. Besides having worked on my EPQ I was not at all familiar with the process of researching and writing independently so I started out by producing some truly awful essays!

Additionally, having tutorial sessions with a few other students makes it very apparent exactly how well you are doing compared to the rest of your cohort, which can be a little discouraging at first.

However, receiving so much personalised constructive criticism in these tutorial sessions has allowed me to make a lot of progress in my researching and writing style over the year which I do not believe I would have been able to do under typical class-based learning. In a set of mock exams at the start of my second term I was lucky to receive the highest scores in my cohort and a first (distinction) overall, allowing me to gain some confidence that I did belong at Oxford.

Unfortunately, I did not do quite so well in my end of year exams, scoring an average of 66/80 across my papers where a score of 70/80 was required for a first. However, this does at least represent a strong 2:1 and puts me on track to receive a first in my final exams (at the end of my third year) should I work hard from here on out.

I am very excited to start my second year as from this point in my degree I can now choose all the papers I wish to take. I had decided to drop philosophy (most PPE students drop one subject to allow themselves to specialise) as although I enjoyed the first-year content, this was the element of my degree which I was least passionate about. So, from now on I will be studying Politics and Economics (though I still receive the full PPE degree) with plans to land an internship with a think tank for the end of my second year.

Besides my academics I have also picked up some new hobbies over the past year. Oxford has an incredible bouldering gym within the city centre which my friends and I attend frequently. Although I have not yet joined any theatre groups in Oxford, I have kept engaging with music through learning to play my friend's bass guitar. Now I have settled into life at Oxford I have plans to audition for a pop acapella group the Oxford Belles this year who have had opportunities such as performing at COP26 and at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Overall, I am very much looking forward to my next year here, both for the new papers I get to study and the new opportunities I may have with internship applications and my Belles' audition. Finally, I cannot thank this organisation enough for supporting my time here.

On behalf of the Club we wish all bursary recipients well in their studies and that they will achieve the results necessary for what they want to do in life beyond Uni.

Around and about the Thomas Hardy School items from the School's Summer and Autumn Newsletters

Mr Rutherford wrote: Among the stand-out moments of the half-term have been the range of visits and extra-curricular opportunities on offer to our students, including the science trip to Switzerland to visit CERN and the Large Hadron Collider, history trips to London and, this week, Berlin and the geography trip to Iceland. Following the incredibly successful international trips during the summer to Sri Lanka and Borneo, these opportunities remain a remarkable and important feature of THS life. As always, I must thank the staff whose dedication, organisation and generosity with their own time mean these trips happen year after year.

Another area of excellence which is at the forefront of my thoughts is our incredible **performing arts department**. Anyone who saw the end of term production of The Addams Family will know how professional and entertaining the end result of their projects can be, and this is borne out in academic outcomes, where the progress made by sixth form students in music, music technology

and performing arts place them as amongst the most effective departments in the country. Last week the choir sang evensong in Sherborne Abbey, and the department have just received the exciting news of their nomination as Outstanding School Music Department at the national **Music and Drama Education Awards 2026**, which will be judged in February. This nomination is an incredible achievement for our music and drama departments and recognition that what is achieved at The Thomas Hardy School and across the Wessex MAT is amongst the best in the country. Well done to them, but particularly well done to the students who come early and stay late to rehearse and participate in the choirs, bands, ensembles, orchestras and shows.

We look forward next half-term to our Remembrance Service on 11th November and to the mock examinations for our Year 11 and Year 13 students.

RAFFLE DRIVES UP MINIBUS FUNDS

On Friday 9th May, the school held a raffle draw to raise funds for the new minibus. We had a huge range of prizes donated from parents, local companies and businesses and former students, including a signed Bath Rugby shirt, DIY equipment from Bradfords, permanent make-up vouchers from Rachael Loco, a beautiful food hamper from the Duchy of Cornwall, £100 cash from SDS Electrical and a veritable cocktail bar of alcoholic prizes! My personal favourite was the 3kgs of cheddar from Open Air Dairy (which I did not win...).

Students from Year 9 and Year 10 drew the winning tickets, and winners have been informed. In total, the raffle raised £5,000 towards the minibus fund. From donations, the non-school uniform day and the raffle, we now have £11,000 towards our £20,000 target for a new short wheelbase minibus, which can be driven by staff other than those of us who are more advanced in years! We are very grateful to all those who donated prizes and to everyone who bought a ticket and supported the raffle.

Any further donations towards the minibus would be very welcome, or if anyone would like to sponsor the minibus, please do get in touch: rglennie@thomas-hardye.net

Mrs Glennie

The school's CCF took part in the VE Day 80 celebrations at The Prince of Wales School

. The CCF supported with the set-up and after event admin, but was honoured to lead the act of remembrance at the start of the formal proceedings. SSgt Jessica Rose (Y12) gave the exhortation address, Sgt Theo Narraway (Y12) gave the Kohima Epitaph address and SSgt Max Thrift-Brothers laid the wreath. In attendance were the Rt Hon Edward Morello, the MP for West Dorset, the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset and the Mayor of Dorchester.

"It's always an honour to be asked to attend such events, but this one was very special being at another local school. All the cadets were a credit to the school and the CCF," said Maj Kevin Matthews, CCF Contingent Commander.





The CCF's annual tactical fieldcraft assessment took place in mid May. All cadets attending were assessed at their respective training levels, as well as working at troop level. It was an extremely warm weekend at Blandford Garrison, with cadets pushing themselves to find resilience they didn't realise they had. It was also the final tactical assessment for SSgt Max Thrift-Brothers and FS Will Christian, both of whom have served the CCF with distinction throughout their service.



COINS FOR EXCELLENCE SSgt Jessica Rose & SSgt Max Thrift-Brothers were presented coins for excellence by Maj Matthews, on behalf of Commander Cadets at Regional Command, for their fantastic fundraising in the Combat Stress 10 mile March. They raised over £1,500 between them. Copy & images courtesy of Maj K Matthews.

Students Land EU AI Competition Prize!

On 6th June, a talented team from Thomas Hardy School travelled to Berlin to take part in an international AI competition, joining nine other teams from eight different countries. Representing the school were Sophie Cradock and Harry Hannam, who had spent several months researching and developing a predictive AI model designed to detect when and where illegal fishing activity is likely to occur in our oceans.

We are incredibly proud to share that Sophie and Harry were awarded second place overall—a fantastic achievement on the international stage. Congratulations to both students on this outstanding success! Their innovative project impressed an international jury, earning them a place in the finals of this prestigious European-wide event. Sophie and Harry were invited to Berlin to present their project on the main stage and face a panel of expert judges at their stand.

After further development and fine-tuning, the students delivered a confident and passionate presentation, which was met with high praise. The judges commended the sustainable focus of the project, the creativity behind the solution, and the dedication and enthusiasm both students demonstrated throughout.

Mr Davis & Mr Price