



OMNIBUS

The termly newsletter of Wilson's School

THRILLS AND SPILLS IN ITALY

Josh Wood grabs his skis for a half-term break

As someone who had never been skiing before, the build up to the 2007 Italy trip to Passo Tonales was quite a daunting one. The thought of breaking an arm, leg or any other body part seemed to haunt my mind for the duration of the flight and rest of the trip. Fortunately, no such injury arose (for me anyway).



For me the trip started in the worst possible way: an early wake up call of 3:30 in the morning. This led to a drowsy, adrenaline fuelled day, consisting of enduring airport security checks, hours of travelling and equipment collection. Our hotel, the Piandineve, was excellent with great facilities, food and MTV reception. According to some it was "the best

food we've ever had on a ski trip" and I would definitely agree. However, by the 14th meal of some form of meat and pasta, it had grown a bit tiresome.

The first day of skiing was an exciting one, if slightly apprehensive. Knowing that on the practice slopes in the UK my ability extended to my only being able to turn right, and then not being able to brake, meant my confidence levels were not high. My apprehension then proved to be for good reason, with my first attempt at skiing causing me to lose complete control of all direction, pick up speed and having to fall on the floor to stop myself from causing a serious incident. This then turned into a pattern which repeated itself for the next two hours. Luckily, in the afternoon session, I was able to ski with more control.

However, then we were all faced with a new and even more challenging task: trying to understand exactly what our instructor was trying to teach us. Gorgio, an 'aged' man whose

grasp of the English language extended solely to the phrase "Follow me!" and a couple of random "Hellos" and "KAMI-KAZEE" every few stacks, meant that the most difficult part of the whole skiing experience was to try and decipher his Anglo-Italian ramblings. Nonetheless, we all persevered throughout the coming days and eventually managed to ski with some competence.

This new found confidence of ours caused us to invent some exciting, if slightly dangerous games, involving jamming poles under each others skis and bending over whilst skiing to pick up ice filled snowballs, all in an attempt to cause a spectacular stack. As a result we were not disappointed, creating large crashes and scary near misses involving members of the public.

One of the more interesting parts of the whole trip though were the 'après ski' activities. Entailing two karaoke sessions, a fun packed quiz, ice skating and a disco, we certainly weren't left without something to do in the evenings. By far the greatest treat was being able to experience the dulcet tones of Mr Hemmings in his rendition of 'New York, New York' and Mrs Heath's and Mrs Mitchelmor's fantastic duet and dancing. Also, the quiz was thrillingly competitive, ice skating more like walking as the blades were so blunt and the disco was great fun.



Therefore, skiing was definitely a fantastic experience. Leaving with a few minor injuries and knocks was definitely worth the week of exhilaration that skiing brought to my half term.

A QUESTION OF STATUS

The Headmaster reflects on the many changes this year at Wilson's

Like many schools with a historic foundation, Wilson's is a Voluntary Aided School and as such it has a different status from the majority of state funded schools. As a VA school we have a good deal of independence from the Local Authority, we own our land and buildings, and have a distinctive character. Many VA schools are Church foundations of one denomination or another and have a distinctive and pervasive religious character: their purpose and *raison d'être* is the promotion and nurturing in their pupils of specific religious traditions and belief; others, like Wilson's are ancient foundations, with a distinctive character and links, which might be quite tangential, to one church or another. Wilson's falls more comfortably into the second category. We have always described ourselves as having links to the Church of England, but never as a Church School.

This became a live issue for us following our last Ofsted inspection. VA schools receive a second inspection called a Section 48 inspection that follows the main inspection and looks specifically at the religious education in the school and the school's ethos and character. It was not a terribly comfortable experience for us; for although the inspector considered the quality of religious education in the school to be good, it felt that the school did not have a clear sense of its character as a Voluntary Aided School – in other words it did not have a sufficiently strong character as a Church School. This is undoubtedly true. Our problem, however, was that we didn't think we were a Church School in the commonly understood sense of the term. Nor did we want to be. We thought – and think – that we are a boys' grammar school with historic links with the Church of England. That was the starting point of a very positive discussion with the Diocesan Board of Education that has recently resulted in an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between Wilson's School and the Diocesan Board.

For the Governors and Trustees of the School the essential points are clear. Our Foundation Charter and Trust documents, the basis of the school's character and ethos, make no reference to the Church of England. We were, of course, founded by a clergyman and our links with the Church became more formalised when we took over the assets of the Green Coat School in Camberwell, a small Church of England charitable foundation, after the Second

World War. Since that time, the Trust and Governing Board have had representatives from the Diocesan Board. Nevertheless we have had friendly, positive and cooperative relationships with the Diocesan Board for many years and have always valued the help and advice of its officers. The first paragraph of the Memorandum of Understanding recognises these facts:

'The Diocesan Board of Education recognises that the particular history of Wilson's school means that it does not fit into the normal mould of a Voluntary Aided Church of England school and is not a Church of England foundation. The Board recognises nonetheless that Wilson's School is to be regarded as an important member of its group of schools.'

Wilson's pupils come from a very wide range of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It is, we feel, very important that every boy in the school feels that it is his school, and that the values and traditions that it subscribes to are those with which he can also identify. The Memorandum accordingly continues:

'The following statement of values is endorsed by Wilson's School:- The spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each child will be based upon the following values and virtues : respect and tolerance for all; the pursuit of truth and justice; the challenge of service and duty; the experience of mutual trust and reconciliation and the pursuit of excellence.'

These values and virtues find expression in the curriculum, character and life of the school through:

- spiritual development which recognizes a religious dimension of education through the curriculum and the daily act of worship;*
- moral development which builds character, enabling each child to have the courage to do what is right;*
- cultural development which incorporates the Christian heritage of this country as well as the contribution made by other religions and cultures;*
- mental and physical development which releases each child's full potential.*

The full Memorandum of Understanding is now published in the Parents' Handbook on the school website at www.wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk.

NEW BALLBOYS PLEASE

Joe Rifaat explains the role of this year's team of Wimbledon Ball Boys

You'll probably be watching the players a bit more than the side of the net when Wimbledon hits your screen this summer, but spare a thought for how those bright yellow balls get shifted around the court just in time for when Federer needs them. The answer? Ball boys, of course!

Mrs Anne Rundle, who formerly taught in Merton, leads the 250-strong team of ball boys and girls each tournament and this year, eight lucky Wilsonians will be somewhere in the group, having survived the military-style initial assessment. Whether it's rolling, feeding, marching, sprinting or the inevitable covering of the courts when rain stops play, you've got

to be prepared, and training sessions in the months to follow should hopefully cover the lot – you certainly don't want to be fetching a ball when Venus Williams decides it's time for a down-the-line winner...

So what are the sessions really like? Strict, in a word. You've got to do exactly as you're told, and remembering to always march left foot first, having your shirt tucked in and maintaining the standby position when not doing anything are just three rules in the bucketful that we've got to adhere to. That said, our first training session did feature a few comic

moments, even if some of the laughter was a little nervous.

But in the end of ends the organisers aren't out to get us, and simply following instructions and not having a giggle with

the person next to you should be enough to get you to the All England Club. There are times, however, when it feels like being in the army, and changing your identity to "number 98" certainly doesn't help!

ATOM BOMBS IN ROOM 26

Daniel Smith challenges the Geography Society with his update on the History Society

With the echoes of the volcanic eruption from the founding of the Wilson's Geography Society unremittingly threatening on the top floor, the History Department decided it was time for retaliation. "Peaceful co-existence" and "peace for our time" were not viable options in this academic confrontation; nor could concessions be made to such aggressors as the geographers, who look across at the History Department with such trepidation. Therefore, armed with an interactive board pen, the new School Captain, Michael O'Halloran, and thousands of years of History; Head of History, Dr Meddleton, set about creating a force of historians prepared to refound the History Society, previously led under Joyman Lee and Mr Harries.

Fortnightly, the History Society meets to present topics of historical and political interest and debate arguments relevant to our discussions. Since the first meeting in October, a wide range of topics have been presented by members of the group including: The Crisis in the Middle East, Iraq, the Union with Scotland, Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan, Thatcher's

Legacy, Nuclear Weapons and most recently Slavery; giving the school historians a lot of ammunition in this prevalent contest. Not only is there a breadth of knowledge being shared between the historians in the group, who range from year seven to lower sixth (and also various members of staff), there is also an edge of competitive debate over complex issues such as "Are nuclear weapons beneficial or detrimental?"

While the Geography Society remains shell-shocked by this move, the History Society flourishes under this new banner; with the use of effective propaganda techniques to recruit even more members. It is amazing to see that one Head of History and one School Captain alone could recruit such an elite force of historians ready for discussion. As in the words of Winston Churchill, "Never in the field of academic conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

With nuclear weapons behind us, we ask: how long will it be before the geographers surrender???

GEOGRAPHY'S REVENGE

Geography retaliates with a photo-story illustrating their recent trip to Talybont



Getting stuck into the chores



The group enjoy the unseasonal weather at the end of March in South Wales!



Some members of the group enjoy the unseasonal weather in a different way...



It's not just colouring in, you know - working hard on A-Level Coursework



Mr Vidler and Mr Knight model "Talybont Chic"



The competition for "Hard Hat Wearer 2007, South Wales Heat" was fierce

INSIDE THE SIXTH FORM CENTRE...

A team of hard hitting journalists expose what really goes on in the Sixth Form

AIMING HIGHER...

Lee Holmes learns from the Higher Education Evening

Chelsea and Liverpool were on television and yet Wilson's School Hall was packed with sixth formers; you could tell there was something important taking place. Higher Education Evening was the event that had brought all these A-level students to school and it was the night when we were looking forward to having all our questions about university answered. With everyone arriving at 7pm we were led into the hall where Mrs Mitchelmore gave students and parents an introduction to the evening and the speakers, who had come from varying universities. "Get it right first time" was the motto projected up onto the screen and unsurprisingly, with the fear of fees of £3,000 or more, students and parents would have realised the importance of making the right university choices. Mrs Mitchelmore also showed the competitiveness that exists between university applicants, with certain universities admitting just 75 students for certain courses when up to 1500 had applied. However, we were assured that with the help of advisers from Connexions, Prospects and our very own teachers we could make the move to higher education as easy and rewarding as possible.

Having already made our decisions on which universities

KNOCKING ON THE STAFF ROOM DOOR

Keli Dusu investigates the qualities required of Wilson's School Prefects

I trudge reluctantly up Mollison Drive. My entire body hauls itself clumsily with the potent knowledge that Monday morning, period one, English awaits smugly for my arrival. I can honestly say I have never paid attention to the array of Prefects that roam our school corridors. Nonetheless, as the prefects scurry around purposefully doing their duties and tasks for the day, in the back of my mind a myriad of questions loom. How are the Prefects chosen? What is it really like to be a Wilson's prefect? What are the variety of roles and responsibilities they undertake and, like house-elves in the Hogwarts we call Wilson's School, do we take their efforts for granted?

During a gruelling interrogation session with Mrs Mitchelmore, I was able to unravel some trade secrets as to how prefects are chosen. Fundamentally, the school looks for specific qualities and attitudes which the students in the upper school should possess. The first requirement is reliability; the staff and the school must be confident that prefects can encompass time management and organisation skills to attend and complete their list of duties and errands both individually and as a team. This was closely followed by a high level of commitment. Prefects must have the willingness to give up their time, as it takes a brave man to tackle the debris that

we were going to hear from, everyone moved out to their respective rooms to listen to the first 30 minute talk about the UCAS procedure. This first talk was simply concerning our UCAS forms and the presentation made it clear how integral these forms are to our further education and outlined what universities wanted to see. Separating yourself from other similar applicants is not only very difficult but also very important. In order to gain their attention each student needs to show that they are a well-rounded individual and that they have not simply completed their courses but that they have involved themselves in a variety of pursuits.

The third part of the evening was completely different, as we were listening to individual universities and the courses they provide. I attended the KCL talk and found it both informative and enlightening, as did most other pupils, with Southampton especially recommended by my fellow students.

Higher Education Evening was very helpful in informing parents and students alike of what is in store for us when it comes to the time for us to apply to our preferred universities and prepare for a few years of doing our own washing!

materialises in the aftermath of lunch.

Mrs Mitchelmore conveyed the importance of students showing a high level of initiative and independence. This enables them to deal with certain situations around the school like ordering eager and ravenous boys about at break and lunch. They should be enthusiastic while exercising patience in potentially volatile situations. However, be warned: they do have a degree of authority to hand out detentions and replace teachers in different circumstances. Furthermore, they are given a Handbook and, coupled with their own adept knowledge, no matter how much you may persevere they are always a few steps ahead.

The process of choosing students that are deemed to fit the "job description" is quite simple. The staff nominate a boy for each role – Head Boy, his deputies and captains, the Senior Prefects and the main body of prefects. After the nominations are totalled, the Heads of Year are consulted and scrutinise the selections until they are confirmed. The prefects do not undergo an interview or test of any kind and, far more intriguing, grades and results are not taken into consideration. So the next time a teacher tells you to stay behind, you could be their choice for prefect. No? Well, you can always hope.

Former Head Boy Joe Ruiz outlined the role of prefect as a figurehead for the school. Many of us may be oblivious to the fact but prefects actually make a significant contribution to the organisation of many of the school proceedings, from Parents' Evenings to Open Days. They can also claim a high level of proficiency with a range of electrical and IT equipment in the hall that occasionally torments the minds of even the most technologically advanced members of staff!

They nevertheless remain steadfast in knuckling down to what may seem unenlightening and mundane tasks. A rota divides the duties in the Canteen, the Foyer and the main staircase. The prefects also make time to pay special attention to the needs of the lower school, particularly Year Seven. They provide a mentoring service and maintain the Year Seven Common Room; it is clear the responsibility and role of the prefect is to create a tangible link between students and teachers.

As if this was not enough, there is a new Prefect and House structure that integrates both the standard selection and the new addition of the House, Year and Day prefects this year. Think of it as a more productive Labour Party without the quarrelling and wars. At the top is the School Captain, closely followed by three Deputies who are each in charge of a different section. There are additionally the newly appointed five House prefects in the senior team who control the Day and Year prefects. Their job is to organise the troops and work tirelessly throughout the day to coordinate the day-to-day work.

Now, what better way to explore what it is really like to be a Prefect than by asking former School Captain Joe Ruiz? After a short period of puzzled, yet resolute consideration, he

confirmed that a prefect is essentially a responsible, committed and polite individual. Probing the memories possessed by us all in the middle and upper school, I asked him whether, in Year Seven, he had aspired to such an important and pivotal role and he swiftly confirmed this. He can recall, probably from a diminutive height, the authoritative prefects around the school. I do wonder though whether the trendy mauve gown may have swayed his preference. On the other hand, an important issue was raised that tests the commitment of a prefect: TIME. Unsurprisingly, Joe did concede that it was difficult at times with the frequent eruptions of coursework and the non-stop message to "REVISE NOW". Nonetheless, and many of us would find this hard to admit, he confessed that, if he had the time, he probably would not be doing anything else awfully useful with it.

So what are the perks? Now we're talking! Well, no, not really, even if he revealed that as a senior prefect he has exclusive use of the prefect room. Great! However, it doesn't end there. While prefects shouldn't be "unlucky" enough to "lose" the notes for last week's homework, Joe can do something most of us can only dream of: knocking on the staff room door. However, Joe and his team would all agree that it is an honour to be chosen to represent the school. As a final point, he highly recommended the idea of being a prefect as it not only reflects well on you and your future prospects but it is also a fulfilling role that is challenging yet rewarding. However, he highlighted, you should not underestimate the work involved. So next time you or I trudge unwillingly into the Monday mayhem that is the foyer, catch a prefect and give them the thumbs up acknowledgement to say "Hey, you are appreciated." Whether or not they take you seriously is another story altogether.

WORDS FROM THE WISE

Ali Campbell explains the role of the Mentoring Team

Every year it's the same story. A hundred and fifty new boys join the school, with a hundred and fifty different questions for those patient enough to listen. Ranging from the simple ("Where's S6?") to the more complicated ("Where can I get a spare locker key?") to the downright humorous ("I can't do my tie, my mum usually does it for me..."), the little rascals always need a bit of help adjusting to life at secondary school. Enter the mentors. Like Buddha, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, the Fonz and your mother all rolled into one, we dispense equal parts wisdom, compassion and a wealth of experience to those Year Sevens who need our help.

Dodgy jokes aside, some boys find it harder than others to get used to life at Wilson's, and it's the role of the mentors to try to make this transition a little easier. As Mr Cady, Year Manager for Year Seven, put it, "It's good to see these stu-

dents being supported and guided by a sixth former who can relate to what they're going through. While we can't claim to know anything, there's a good chance one of the team has experienced whatever difficulties a pupil is going through and can empathise.



But what exactly does a mentor do? There's no simple answer for that. At the most basic level, we visit the Year Seven forms every few weeks to make sure they haven't run into any problems. However, they're often reluctant to admit any problems in front of their peers, despite the fact that everything discussed remains confidential, and so we are also available in private. While we may offer advice on how to deal with a situation, often the most helpful thing we can do is just hear the pupil out. So if you're in Year Seven and you feel you need to get something off your chest, just look out for a Sixth Former wearing the "M" badge. He'll be happy to talk to you.

ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE...

Bas Gilbert surveys Comic Relief Week

MR BURTON NAILS THE WEAKEST LINK

Wilson's school was bursting with fundraising events this year to aid Comic Relief's 'Big One'. The first event, held on Monday the 12th March, was the much anticipated Weakest Link featuring the stunningly red-haired 'Anne Robinson', our very own Mrs. Jones, with staff members ranging from the newest of teachers such as Mr. Parkinson to well... some of Wilson's more 'experienced' teaching staff. The fun started as many of the Lower 6th, myself included, stood at the doors convincing Wilson's boys to part with their change. It was all in the name of charity, or perhaps the hilarity of role-reversal as the teachers are grilled under the watchful eye of 'Anne Robinson'.



Teachers slowly were whittled away, and dubbed the "Weakest Link". The majority took the fall graciously but some not so well following dubious comments from 'Anne' concerning a certain teacher's Australian origins! The staff perfected their banking skills after a few rounds, with a little help from the crowd I might add, and the teachers were thinning in numbers. Some rather strategic voting occurred and Mr. Burton, the strongest link in the round, shot down the hopes and dreams of his young apprentice Mr. Phillips. Other intriguing moments included when Mrs. Prestney, our 'leading' geographer, admittedly blanked out when the question began: "What is the capital...".

The Final was a close match between the two mighty rocks that call themselves teachers, the great tome of knowledge and Geographer Mr. Vidler and the hammer-wielding Mr. Burton, or perhaps under his military pseudonym 'Captain Burton'. The two had to work together in the Final round to gain



as much money as possible before switching their attentions to each other for the head to head. The questions flew at the two pub-quiz hardened veterans and they answered all five of them correctly which lead to the gruelling 'Sudden Death' round. They fought

hard but finally after 4 questions Mr. Vidler was stumped on a tough question leaving Mr. Burton to win... some chocolate! The egg in question (see left) was donated to 7H's Stall in the Comic Relief Fair.

Thank you very much to Mrs. Gill and Miss Wing who organised the event, to all those who helped out and also to the audience for their great 'support' and spare change. The event raised over £100 to add to the school's donation.

SPEND A PENNY IN THE HALL

The Second Fundraiser was the Stands held in the hall on Wednesday 14th March. Mrs. Gill and Miss. Wing allowed each form from Years Seven to Nine to design, designate and manage their own stands all in the name of charity. The event ran in the hall with dart games, throwing ping-pong balls in jars, Wii, Playstation, food and more. 9H won the prize for the most original stall with the "House of Laughter" (left) where contestants attempted to make the seemingly unbreakable Priyen and Keval laugh.

Some of the more adventurous stands included 9G's Sponge Throw (see below) where students enjoyed throwing wet sponges at a nicely arranged group of year 9's. The stand had visits from teachers willing to spend the full pound to use a bucket to soak a Year 9, perhaps to settle an old vendetta. Mr. Charnock joined in and aimed a well thrown bucket straight into the assemblage of students.

The event was, and I quote "Organised Chaos", according to Miss. Wing (see right, soaking Guy Morgan) and ran throughout lunch with boys surrounding their favourite



stands, dodging darts and eating home made muffins. Thank you again for all those who helped out and to those boys in years 7-9 who ran stalls and again to the organisers, Miss. Wing and Mrs. Gill.

WHO'S GOT THE X-FACTOR?

The final fundraising day was on Thursday the 15th where mufti day was combined with the lunch-time X-Factor competition. The morning was an interesting parade of boys with red hair, red shirts, red socks, gorilla suits... Well not quite in keeping with the red theme, Levi, but charitable anyway.

X-Factor ran very smoothly minus the occasional screaming reverb and feedback. The comperes were Miss. McGuinness and James Morgan with witty prelude comments who kept the flow of the event both in between the acts and backstage. The event started and the judges defined themselves as the archetypal characters on a judges' board. Mr. Winstone played the guileless and blunt 'Simon Cowell' figure and Miss Haire followed a more sycophantic [!! - Ed] disposition, applauding nearly all the acts. And Mademoiselle Morin followed a compromise between the two that fell slightly on the harsher side.

The Teachers' band, Get Staffed, headed by the strapping Mr. Molenyeux, sang a Queen number, ably supported by Mr. Simmons, Mr. Cady Mr. Walters and Miss Potter. Imran fended off some harsh comments from Mlle. Morin with retorts about her French roots. Some more memorable bands included the 'Bryan Adams Tribute Band' with the confident, if nothing else, Ricky Lawless backed by Sam Jones on Bass, Robert Law on Guitar and James Lewis on Drums. Mr Phillips also joined in the list of Teachers trying to claw their way into the music world, and sung 'Imagine' By John Lennon. He was at an advantage as he did not have to prepare make-up wise as his already 'Lennon-esque' physique and looks meant he had time to prepare his mid-song passages talking about the oppression of the teaching staff and their constant struggle against the iPod Generation. He also managed to wangle some rather controversial anti-Bush, anti-Blair comments,

much to the joy of the hippies in the crowd.

The winners of the competition were the Jackson Five who danced sang and thymed their way into the judges' hearts with obvious effort to look like the original five, all with original hair pieces. The Runner-up was another Jackson Impression as Manno moonwalked his way into second place as Michael Jackson.



Thanks yet again to all the organisers, the back stage help and another huge round of applause for the gutsy Wilson's boys who put their reputations on the line. Our apologies go to the boys who could not perform, especially to ABBA who trained so hard on the front lawn of the school.

I'LL SEE YOU IN COURT!

Will Roberts, court reporter, on the trial that the successful Year 8 Mock Trial Team prosecuted

The Year Eight Mock Trial Team (right) took part in the competition on 10 March at Woking Magistrates' Court. They played roles ranging from Court Artist to Prosecution Lawyer and, on, the day, were judged the winners of the Surrey Heat, winning £250 and proceeding to the Regional Finals in Southampton on 19 May. William Roberts played the role of Court Reporter, and his report is printed here.



Today, Mr Sam Beatter has been convicted of abusing a white female rabbit. Mr Beatter, 41, of Rodley, has been convicted after a trial at Woking Magistrate's court.

his all started when RSPCA officer Chris Jenner was called to the Beatters' residence after a complaint about the horrible smell. He found a female white rabbit and sheds with 50 rabbits inside. However, the rabbits in the sheds were in reasonable condition, albeit they could have done with more exercise.

Reputation

Sam's daughter, Ceri, had saved a dog's life a while back and ever since, according to Sam, "People have brought us

animals". He had earned the trust of the local people to look after their animals. However, with this verdict, it is fair to say there will be no more animals left on the doorstep.

The Charge

Mr Beatter was charged with a breach of Section 1, Sub section 1a of the Protection of Animal Act 1911, which states that no one should directly harm an animal

maliciously, or not do something to help an animal when you own it.

The Trial

Chief defence lawyer Olly Hughes and his partner Josef Fuglewicz-Wildridge put up a good defence for their client, however the prosecution proved too much for them and the verdict came as guilty, as he was responsible for the rabbit at the time and neglected to take it to the vets with enough haste. Mr Beatter was sentenced to a fine plus court costs and community service. Mr Beatter said about his sentence "I am unsure this is a fair outcome. I did not abuse this rabbit and I do not feel justice has been done." The rabbit in question had to be euthanized to prevent further suffering.

SUPER-PHOTOPIERS FROM OUTER SPACE

Daniel Casey is drawn into the B-movie madness of the Art Trip to Canon's

America, Italy, Spain and Russia...the school offers a range of exciting trips for the budding globetrotter. Water-sports, skiing, surfing – visceral tonics for those wanting a thrill – however, there is now a new epicentre of adrenaline in the veritable smorgasbord of trips that Wilson's offers in the Canon's trip. No, this doesn't involve gunpowder and pirates – yaarrggh! – but it does offer a trip to Crawley. Photocopying your idea of fun? Ask in the reprographics room. Well, the Canon's trip offers the Ferrari of photocopiers for students to test drive: turbocharged colour printing, mind-blowing special effects and a reputation for extreme speed. With all this excitement brewing like a storm in a teacup, the Art Department set out for Canon's.

Looking out from the windows of the ramshackle bus, I could see the background gradually fading into the urban jungle. No – not a jungle – but a suburban wasteland, a desert. And there, like an oasis, was the Canon's building. Well, actually, it looked rather nondescript, but we knew that this was better than the drudge of a normal school day. It seemed as if the Canon's building was dead as there just seemed to be an endless backdrop of characterless walls and dull people. It was a hellish, carpeted warren, full of people who could easily be mistaken for extras in *The Office*. Perhaps the only fun to be had was to set the place alight. But that damp dread of monotony soon dissipated when we got into the photocopying rooms.

Our task was to create motifs – perhaps for packaging – and, at first, manners and politeness prevailed. The novelty of "super-photocopiers" with hundreds of unnecessary but brightly-coloured buttons enthralled and amused us, but when we were told that we only had an hour left, panic seeped into the room like nerve gas. Paper was flying everywhere, people were shoving each other out of the way and suddenly a scene from *The Lord of the Flies* broke out, with heads jammed into

photocopiers and ink smeared across flustered cheeks like tribal war paint. Survival meant commandeering a photocopier – wait...no – not yet...wait...now – GO GO GO – this is not a drill! He's gone to the toilet or –whatever – it doesn't matter, grab that photocopier, quickly!

But the real horror began in the canteen. If you've been to the Ritz, then you luckily have enough money to avoid this place. I'm joking (of course). Whilst I was eating my lovingly cooked food, I could see a familiar face on another table, staring at the baguette he had bought. Face screwed up like scrap paper, he tentatively lifted the baguette to his mouth. Eyes clamped shut, he took a bite, then another, then a third, and then he flung the offending item into the air, fell off his chair and screamed "I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! AR-RGGH!", his hands covering his ears. Someone consoled him by telling him that his breath couldn't get any stinkier.

However, the trip was enjoyable and helped us to see that art doesn't have to be a painting on the wall, or a sculpture. We were creating art that we would see everyday. The rooms were like the halls of an art gallery – apart from the noise. Did I say rooms? It was more like Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. Not rivers of chocolate, but fountains of ink. Not boulders hewn from solid cocoa, but strata of snow-white, precision photocopying paper. The photocopiers themselves were like helpful Oompah-Loompahs: they saw to your every wish.

Actually, it was nothing like Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory – it was just an office – but at least it filled a paragraph. In conclusion, the trip was very enjoyable and, by the end of the day, we were all deeply absorbed in conversations discussing the merits of using 100gsm A4 film thickness paper for inkjet printers. Thanks to Mr Smith and the Art Department.

FOR YOUR DIARY

- 25 April: Year 7 Parents' Evening
- 8 May: Key Stage Three Examinations begin
- 11 May: Year 11/12 exam leave begins
- 14 May: GCSE/AS exams begin
- 15 May: Year 10 Geography field trip to Croydon
- 25 May: Year 13 exam leave begins
- 8 June: Art Exhibition
- 12/14/15 June: Year 9 Geography field trip
- 18 June: Year 12 return to school
- 26 June: Year 11 Science Module
- 28 June: Year 11 book return / 6th Form Open Evening
- 29 June: Year 13 book return
- 2 July: New Year 7 Induction Evening/Year 11 Work Experience
- 5 July: New Year 7 Induction Afternoon
- 6 July: Year 10 Project Business Day
- 12-13 July: Management Conference
- 17 July: Sports Day
- 20 July: Term Ends

STOP PRESS!

As Omnibus went to press, the First Eleven progressed into the semi-finals of the National Cup with a 5-1 victory. This the first time the school has achieved this in fifteen years and is a fantastic achievement by Mr Simmons and the boys of the team. A longer report will follow in next term's Omnibus; below you can see the first goal of the match, photographed by Mr Pryce-Hawkins.

