

St Clare's Newsletter



No 9

May 2002

New Place (*sic*) on Banbury Road



In January we were able to move into refurbished 131 Banbury Road, purchased last year. Large comfortably furnished classrooms now house the maths department. Smaller rooms suit tutorial classes. A music room suite with a grand piano and space for the chamber music group to rehearse is a welcome addition to our facilities. A functions room offers a congenial space for entertaining and meetings, and was put to use for a literature seminar by Oxford poet Kate Clanchy in April. On the top floor there is accommodation for up to seven students and a residential warden. At the suggestion of Paul Saville, we are calling 131 New Place. Some will recognise the reference to Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Alumni Office Develops

St Clare's now has a Development & Alumni Office. For nearly 10 years, alumni relations have been directed by Jay Bosworth, assisted since 1998 by Sylvia Corrie. Both will continue to be members of the new office in its expanded role. This includes building on existing relationships with alumni and extending links to other areas, including trusts and foundations. We will be raising funds for various projects such as better facilities and scholarships. One important initiative will be the St Clare's Careers Network, for current students and for alumni, on a global basis. Running the Development Office will be Kay

Honner (sitting right), who has 15 years of experience in Oxford University colleges. For the

last four years she was Development Director of Green College. The fourth member of the team is Anu Meha Soota (far left), IB alumna from 1998. Anu Meha is organising the June 1st celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the International Baccalaureate course at St Clare's.

Following this event for IB alumni, we will be holding a series of events open to all



alumni when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the College in 2002-2003. Alumni will hear more details from us soon.

International Education in Action

The origin of St Clare's stems from an initiative after the Second World War to bring together young people from different countries to study together, and in doing so, to know and understand one another better. In the nearly fifty years since, courses have come and gone and the make-up of the student body has changed. Day-to-day concerns take a great deal of our attention, as we work to provide high quality courses, meet regulations and balance the books. But the aim of promoting international education and understanding remains central and crucial to our work.

In celebrating this year's 25th anniversary of the IB at St Clare's, and looking forward to next year's 50th anniversary of the College, we have been considering how we prioritise and make explicit this internationalist vision.

Interaction between Liberal Arts and English language students is beneficial to both, and certainly helps us to fulfil our mission. We have recently decided to make the Bardwell Road premises the base for both programmes, and for the Advanced Studies Programme and University Foundation Course. The premises will be refurbished over the next couple of years, as funds permit. This common base will strengthen interaction during the working day, already taking place through shared classes on the Advanced Studies Programme, through activities and shared College residential accommodation. Liberal Arts students, mainly American university students taking a semester abroad, like all our non-British students, are gaining an international perspective by living in a foreign country and experiencing a different culture.

St Clare's has one of the longest established English language programmes in Britain. From the start, the learning of the language was through the discussion of serious issues. Studying English language at St Clare's was an education for the mind, not simply training in the language. We have recently reconfirmed our commitment to this approach. We encourage students to engage with contemporary issues of international significance in and outside the classroom. For the first time this year, all English course students were involved in an international day with Liberal Arts students.

The two-year International Baccalaureate Diploma course clearly encourages engagement with international issues. Subjects such as Geography, Environmental Systems and History develop knowledge of global concerns. However, content and cognitive skills cannot be enough. My vision, and I have the support of staff on this, is of an education for global citizenship that explicitly develops values and skills alongside knowledge. Some of this happens already. In the science project, for example, students develop the skills of working collaboratively. In language and literature classes they learn to appreciate different cultural perspectives. But there are opportunities to teach skills such as conflict resolution in a wider context.

Besides tolerance, necessary in an international community, we can do more to affirm other shared values such as respect, empathy, compassion, justice, responsibility and honesty.

Knowledge and attitudes enlarge minds, but it is experience and action that change lives. We wish to see greater emphasis on these elements, in developing citizens of the world. We wish to build on and re-orientate the IBO's requirement for students to undertake service as part of the CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) component of the Diploma. Committing time and engaging personally is the most effective way to learn responsibility in and towards

society. We are sharing ideas with other like-minded international schools and colleges on how we can strengthen the IB, and our own pre-IB programme, as an international education. Our work on the IB programme will certainly have impact on our other programmes.

As we prepare for our golden jubilee, and beyond, we are working to develop and implement more fully our mission of promoting international education and understanding. The tragic events of September 11th and the more recent situation in Israel and the West Bank give us a greater sense of the urgency, and growing awareness of the vital importance of this work.

*Boyd Roberts
Principal*



Bringing in the wider world

With students and staff from over 50 countries, every day is an international day at St Clare's. But on designated International Days, classes—and thinking confined to specific academic subjects—are suspended.

In the aftermath of September 11th's tragic events, the timetable gave way to a day on Dealing with Conflict, drawing on the expertise of college staff to stimulate thinking. Psychologist Grendon Haines gave a presentation about conflict in families and, in student-led groups, we discussed how such a family model helps to understand conflicts in other areas of life. This was followed by workshops on a range of issues, from political conflicts in the Middle East and Northern Ireland to understanding road rage and terrorism.

But the most enjoyable part of the day was a student-organised variety show in the evening. About thirty students performed songs, dances and recitations from a variety of cultures. Shown above is Georgina Barnett from Bali who gave a stunning display of Indonesian dance with Kamilia Sjadjzali. Other acts included choreographed salsa dancing by a mixed group of South Americans, Chinese and Europeans; recitation of Polish and French poetry; Jamaican reggae; a display of Kendo and a presentation on Islamic prayer by Aziz Jalal from Saudi Arabia.



The first International Day for older English Course and Liberal Arts students took place in March on the theme of Globalisation. Visiting speaker Christopher Saville argued that globalisation in education should mean more than wealthy young people jetting abroad to a comfortable college. Such opportunities are available to very few. While it is hard to address global inequalities, at least students everywhere should have an education in global awareness. Later, students in mixed nationality groups discussed differing political and legal systems and attitudes to gender and sexuality.



Paul Saville, Richard Walton and speaker Chris Saville

In March, during the IB Environment Day students had a high degree of personal involvement working in national groups to research and put together a display about an environmental issue, such as recycling, nuclear waste, or loss of forests, in their own country.

Another new venture is a series of Enquiry seminars organised for Liberal Arts students. These seminars on current affairs are held in the medieval atmosphere of Blackfriars, a Catholic college affiliated to Oxford University, which gives an appropriate tone of seriousness to the occasion.

The seminar in March was given by Charlie Milward, a Physics teacher, who has been a volunteer for Amnesty International for twenty years. First considering what human rights are, he went on to explain the work Amnesty does to protect them. He aroused the conscience of his audience to consider the plight of those living under repressive regimes, without freedom to express critical ideas, under threat of imprisonment or torture. More contentiously for his largely American audience, he explained Amnesty's position against capital punishment.

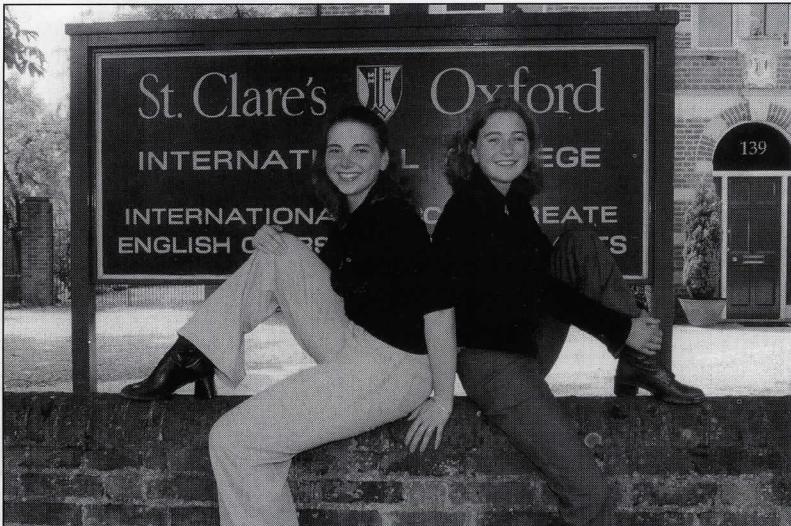
World class students

For the second time in three years a St Clare's student has achieved the maximum score of 45 in the IB Diploma.

Miranda Rose was one of 32 students to win top marks out of 40,000 across the world taking the exam in May 2001.

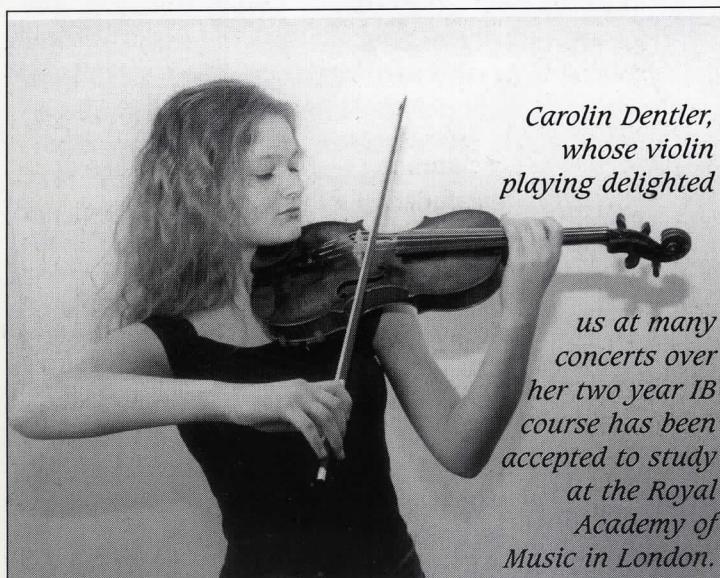
Interviewed for the Oxford Times, Miranda said, "I am very happy. I had been predicted quite high results but I thought I had done badly in English. I've been very lucky, with great teachers at St Clare's." Miranda, who comes from Oxford, has been accepted to study

English at Oxford University. Miranda is shown below with Charlotte Bathe (right of photo) who achieved the same success in 1999. Charlotte, who is also British, is now studying natural sciences at Cambridge University.



2001 Richard Smart Prize from the Council for Independent Further Education.

Two students achieved near perfect scores of 44 points: Renata Jerierska and Wojciech Slowinski, both from Poland. With Miranda they were awarded the



◆ Homeless support group

A new service organised by students this year is the Homeless Support Group. IB and Liberal Arts students take leftover food from the dining hall to Oxford's Nightshelter every evening. Besides giving this practical help, the group meet weekly for discussion and talks by visiting speakers to understand the psychological and social problems faced by those sleeping rough—a distressingly large number in Oxford.

Tanzania update

Now in its second year, the St Clare's project to raise money to help a rural primary school in Tanzania (STEP), has continued its good work. During the summer of 2001, Chris Ndhlovu, an IB student from neighbouring Zambia, was funded by the St Clare's Bishop Riches travel scholarship to visit the school, a two day bus journey from his home. Chris saw the improvements made with last year's donations of £7920 and helped to lay a new concrete floor. He used St Clare's video equipment to make a film about the school. Back in Oxford his video helped to promote interest in the project among the student body.

This year students organised several fundraising ventures. Entrance charges at regular College events, such as concerts and parties, and a successful football competition with teams from four other schools raised a total of about £500. The STEP team hope to raise more from recent letters to local businesses. Alumni who would like to make contributions should do so through Roni Hameiri, staff adviser, at St Clare's.

One hundred years of service

We will be sorry to say goodbye to three long-serving teachers in June. **Julita Edwards** is retiring after over thirty years of teaching Spanish at St Clare's. She and her partner, **David Ripley**, with 23 years of teaching English behind him, are moving to Spain. David is looking forward to working freelance as a teacher, teacher trainer and examiner as well as developing his painting. Julita's talent for living will have an outlet in decorating their new house near Barcelona and integrating again into Spanish life.

Generations of St Clare's students have enjoyed their stimulating lessons, openness and originality. Both gave their time generously outside the classroom, inviting students home for meals, organising study weekends away and taking groups to concerts and plays. Julita particularly enjoyed the challenge of teaching complete beginners in the IB ab initio course. Using only Spanish she channels the students' creativity into developing their own characters and stories which form the basis of the course.

Also retiring this year is **Jackie Yeo** who has taught IB Chemistry for 15 years. Jackie was also involved in overseeing students on the Pre-IB course in its early years. She is looking forward to spending more time riding and looking after her horses.



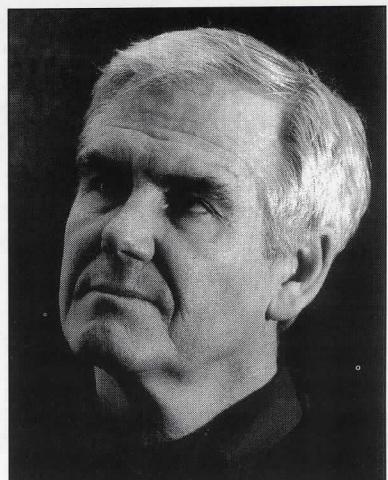
Chris Glover, Careers and Higher Education Adviser, will also be retiring next month. After over 20 years of advising students how to get into university, Chris Glover is herself going on to study history at Harris Manchester College, Oxford University.

Chris's encyclopedic knowledge of the IB and of courses in Britain and elsewhere was appreciated by students on all courses. She had a talent for responding to student's interests and helping them focus on realistic goals. In her supervising of UCAS applications, she was adept at bringing out the strengths of each student.

Before coming to St Clare's, Chris worked in the Royal Air Force and then in the careers service, so she had a wider experience of life than just the world of education. Initially without a degree herself, she gained first class honours in an Open University degree in politics while also doing her job and raising two children.

Rory Kelly is not leaving! His commitment to promoting International understanding was recognised publicly in January when he was given an award by ECIS (European Council of International Schools) for his work in International Education. Rory, shown right in a photo by student Maria Bondochenkova, has run the International Affairs discussion group for 16 years. He regularly leads study visits to Northern Ireland, Poland and Prague.

This year he started a new initiative designed to give students the philosophical background to understand world events. This evening seminar series, called Philosophy, Politics and Economics, has proved popular with discussions on Inequality, Human Rights and Green Politics. The largest turnout was for a debate between St Clare's maths teacher Ori Golan from Israel, and Dr Mahmoud Hawari, a Palestinian research student. An audience of 150 packed the Hall for an intense but peaceful confrontation.



International student writing

Over 125 student writers entered St Clare's international writing competition. On the theme of "cross-cultural encounters", it was organised and judged by the English department to mark our 25 years in the IB programme. Co-sponsor Blackwells bookshop gave vouchers worth £350, prize money matched by the College.

Publicising the competition to schools in Britain and abroad brought entries from 11 countries including Canada, Mexico, Russia, Australia and Senegal. The diversity of students' approaches, many of them reflecting on personal experience, made interesting reading. Four

St Clare's students made the final short list. The three top places went to entries from other schools in Britain.

First prize, worth £400, went to Ying Wang Staton for a vivid description of Inner Mongolia. (See extract below.) Ying Wang, 16, attends the School of St Mary and St Anne in Staffordshire. She came to Britain when she was eight and speaks fluent English and Mandarin.

Winner of the second prize, £200, was Katie Pollard, 15, at Dr Challoners High School, Bucks, for a powerful piece evoking the thoughts of three very different

individuals at a scene of wartime devastation. A relief worker, a journalist and a refugee all move from the confines of their personal concerns to a decision to risk their lives to rescue a child lying injured by a landmine.

Third prize, £100, went to Rebecca Heselton, 17, from Bruton School for Girls, in Somerset. Her poem "Blended Harmony", describes a friendship between a black and a white child, whose differences became something of beauty in a singing performance. Winning entries were displayed in full on the St Clare's website.

Hohhot might easily have been the Beijing of the early 1990's—the same friction caused by the indefatigable desire to grow bigger, stronger, and be a part of the modern world, scraping raggedly against the inertia of culture, customs and an old way of living. The result is a cramped and sprawling growth.

The new MacDonalds is advertised in old and convoluted Mongolian text. A modernistic parking meter has recently been installed in front of one of the oldest Lama temples in the country. The wooden mule-powered cart, which has pulled cabbages for countless centuries, must now drive in the same lane as the latest Audi with the 3.0 litre engine. The battle has taken over the entire city.

I hear my stomach growl, half with hunger and half in reaction to the new, alien aura of this strange city. Thankfully, it is time for breakfast. Stepping out of the security of the car, I am directed into a small dingy room by the driver.

Inside, the room is dim. Small, cramped-looking people huddle around a few tables, murmuring in low voices. A wrinkled old woman stands behind a crumbling waist-high counter. She indicates a table censoriously with her finger. The other guests stare at us suspiciously as we enter.

There is a smell of eastern spice and musty wood; it stings my eyes. Nervously, I sit down at one of the

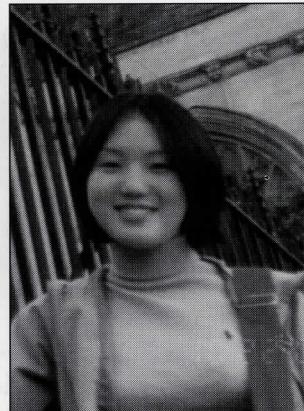
tables. My companions follow. A flash of grimy white apron passes before my eyes and a large bowl is dumped unceremoniously before me. I pause, staring in horror at what looks like grisly pinecones, broken zips and bloated cod liver oil tablets in a murky brown gelatinous substance. "Sheep's entrails," the guide smirks, leaning in close, evidently amused.

I try not to scowl. Instead, I smile feebly back at him, trying to act interested in the terrible bowl of brown in front of me, and trying equally as hard not to imagine what it tastes like. The room suddenly falls silent, and I feel the conspicuous stares of a dozen pairs of eyes upon me, preparing to judge my entire merit as a person on my reaction to a bowl of sheep's insides. I pick up the chopsticks and take a deep breath.

I lift what seems to be some sort of tentacle and insert it reluctantly into my mouth. I chew hastily and gulp the piece down as soon as I can before immediately taking a large draught of tea.

For a second, through the thick throng of salt, chilli and vinegar, I taste the stomach—at least, that's what I think it is—the irrefutable taste of dusty grass and bad harvests. My mouth feels dry.

The faces in the room lower again; I have passed this bizarre test, albeit without the flying colours.



• English Course SCOOL

St Clare's, Oxford, On-Line, (SCOOL) is developing its services and increasing its audience. Designed to offer after-course support for English course students, it is open to all alumni and can be accessed through the St Clare's website. It consists of three services: a newsletter written by St Clare's teachers and sent as an email every few weeks; a language and discussion clinic offering practical help and a chance to share experiences; and a website with 150 pages, (media, games, language study) and links to other sites of interest.

There are about 200 subscribers to the free email services. Themes of recent issues were how to write a CV, studying at British universities and a virtual tour of Oxford. The website has had nearly 600 visitors in the last 12 months. Some of the feedback from users: "I use the epostcards to communicate with my friends". "My favourite is the Oxford pub game".

"The reading room is interesting with a good choice of topics and links". Most alumni users are in Japan, Poland, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia and Sweden.

• Teachers on a wider stage

St Clare's was well represented at the February IATEFL conference on Teacher Training in Barcelona. Jan Kelly, Teacher Development special interest group co-ordinator helped arrange the whole event. Imogen Rigden spoke on "Teaching develops teachers". Richard Walton, Director of Studies, gave a talk entitled "Annual appraisal, portfolios and anti-stagnation strategies".

• International Cabaret

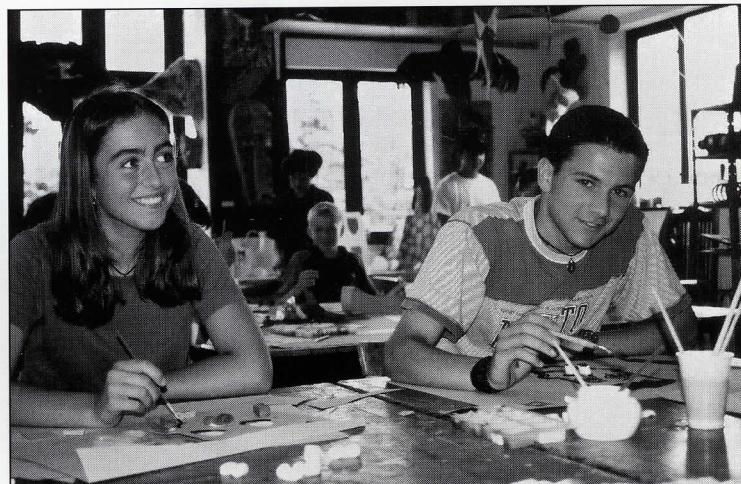
A talented and enterprising French student, Matthieu Dibie, organised and performed in a cabaret style entertainment featuring numerous hidden talents from the adult English course. Notable highlights included an adaptation of Monty Python's famous "parrot sketch", a scene from Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction" and routines from the Rocky Horror Show. Penny Larrs provided support and linguistic guidance.

St Clare's in summer

Alumni who were here during the academic year may not realise that St Clare's keeps going all year round, with a range of short courses during the summer on three different sites. Most of these focus on teaching English language, some aimed at different age groups from those we normally have during the year. We also run courses for teachers and for native speakers of English. An important aspect of the summer programme is bringing people together from around the world to have a good time and experience Oxford and England, so excursions and other social activities are central to the experience. The team of three activities staff increases to eight, some of them alumni, who organise karaoke evenings, treasure hunts, football and much more.

This summer will be the first year of the St Clare's IB Summer Institute offering intensive teaching for those who wish to improve their skills and knowledge in specific academic subject areas. This is aimed at IB students who have completed their first year and also those about to start an IB course. Fellowships for IB teachers to undertake private research are also being offered.

Also at the International College site, Tony Lurcock will again be running a three week course for students from Mount St Mary College, in Newburg, New York. Thirty students are coming over with two faculty members to study two history courses (Roman Britain and the English Civil War) and two literature courses (Thomas Hardy and Modern Drama).



For several years now we have run English summer courses for younger students. These are held in the spacious premises of a local boarding school, Rye St Antony, with accommodation, classrooms, sports facilities (including a swimming pool) all on one site. Lessons, in two groups for 10-12s and 13-16s, are supplemented by a wide range of out-of-class activities such as sports, horse riding, pottery and studio art (see photo above).

Meanwhile English language courses for adults continue at the Academy site in Bardwell Road, and the International College site becomes the base for 2-4 week courses for 16-18 year old students.

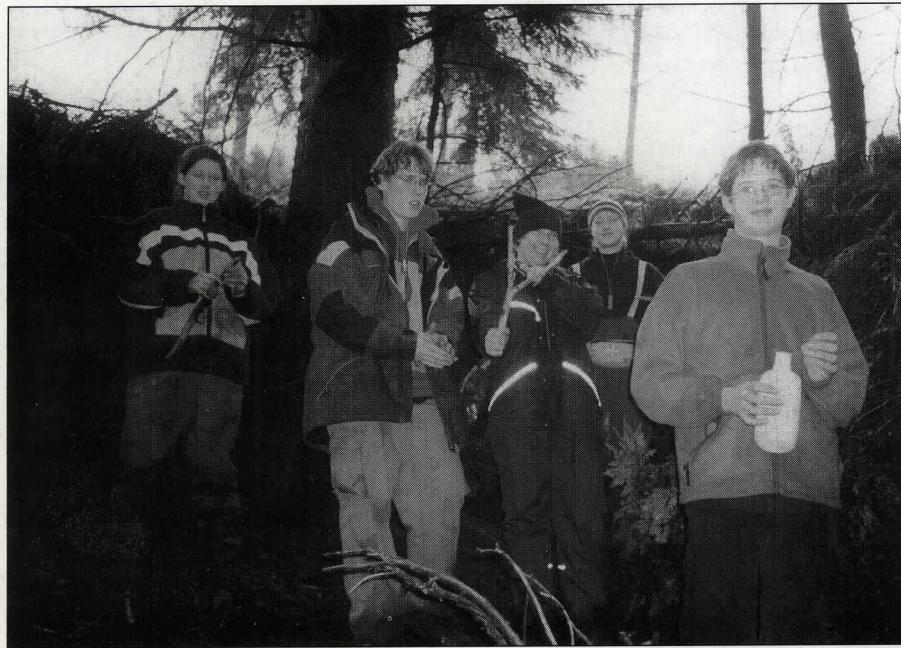
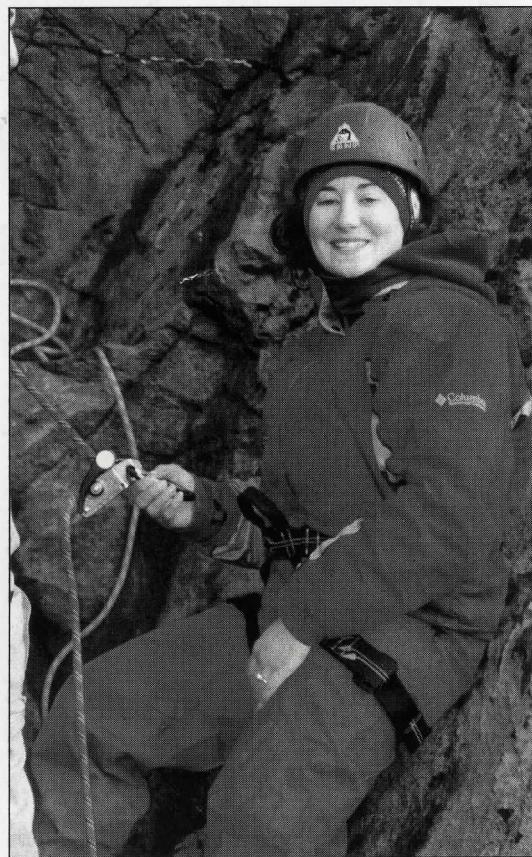
Outdoor adventure

Under the new leadership of Paul Edmunds and Kevin Hennessy, the Activities Department (formerly SAO) are focusing more on outdoor adventure. Paul is a qualified caving guide and rock climbing instructor. He has 12 years of experience working at outdoor centres. Paul leads a new CAS activity: adventure sports. Every week 15 students learn techniques at the climbing wall at Oxford Brookes. They put these to the test on real rock faces during weekends away in Wales. Shown right is LA student Katie MacDonald in St Clare's climbing gear.

During the October half-term, Paul took a group to Vercors in France

where they had the chance to try mountain biking, caving, rock climbing, hill walking and dog trekking. For the Easter break, Liberal Arts students went on a similar outdoor course in Italy, Austria and France.

Jo Swannell led a student group taking part in Wilderness Challenge, an outward bound competition for 16-25 year olds. Each team had to do various tasks such as orienteering, building a shelter, making traps and snares, and spent two nights under the stars. Points were awarded for how well they performed in each task. One of the two St Clare's teams made it through to the national final in March, which was even more challenging.



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After a surprise 4 am start, participants were taken to a desolate spot where all their gear was confiscated. They were told they were in a simulation of a plane crash. Second year IB student Ruth Weston said, "the hardest part was carrying the injured 'pilot' up a hill on a stretcher". Then they fished for food. As they had no luck, they were given a fish to cook as best they could. The St Clare's team did theirs flavoured with soup powder in two coke cans over a fire. "Delicious," says Jo. This initiative earned the team some points, but not quite enough to beat the dynamic venture scouts from Newcastle. "Still," said Ralph Evans (IB1), "we learned about our capabilities in testing situations."