

A variety of activities is made possible for students who might have Oxbridge on their agenda and this year was a busy one on this front. The Autumn Term was naturally dominated by this year's potential entrants and the battle to demonstrate how their academic aspirations went beyond Advanced Level. A number in this gifted Year 13 group made a respectable showing, five getting 'pooled', but we were pleased that three received offers: Guy Rush for Land Economy at Robinson College, Cambridge; Gemma Ellis for Japanese at Pembroke College, Oxford, and Georgina Neal for Chemistry at Exeter.

In October pupils and staff took the opportunity to meet travel writer Will Randall, and to listen to a selection of his many anecdotes of life on the road. Randall is the author of books on the Solomon Islands, India and Botswana, and so is in a good position, not only to entertain, but to offer advice about others' future travel and Gap Year plans. It's to be hoped that some of those present will take up his call to go beyond the beaten track and find themselves some real adventures to experience and remember. I doubt, though, that they'll be able to match Randall's own very special gift for getting into scrapes and living to tell the tale.

A regular weekly meeting for Year 12 was instituted for discussion of Oxbridge-related issues and the following up of themes more or less academic! Topics discussed have ranged from mediaeval art to modern film, from Purcell to heavy metal, from Machiavelli to Marx – there were even good intentions about getting some science in there, but Dr Higgins will now be presenting the fruits of his considerable wisdom at the beginning of next term! Year 12 students have been made aware of possible ways of enhancing their chances of entrance and encouraged to make contact with colleges. A number have even joined the National Academy for the Gifted and Talented!

A group visited Cambridge in June to check out possible courses and colleges ranging from the traditional to the more modern. As part of this grand tour, Dr Malcolm Underwood of St. John's, showed young historians a wealth of Tudor archives, from the household accounts of Lady Margaret Beaufort, through the private letters of Henry VII, to the Marian Survey of 1556 (we even saw an original copy of Vesalius' *Fabrica*!), while Matthew Tubbs was treated to a personal tour of Corpus Christi by Admissions Tutor, Dr Janet Rogers. It is hoped that, quite apart from the intrinsic benefits of such activity, the whole business of application and preparing for interview next term will be eased by this early start.

Mr Mark Robinson, Senior Academic Tutor

TOP: YOUNG HISTORIANS, CLAIRE BUSH AND MATTHEW TUBBS,
WITH ST JOHN'S HISTORIAN AND ARCHIVIST, MALCOLM UNDERWOOD;
CENTRE: A WEALTH OF TUDOR ARCHIVES;
BOTTOM: THE MARIAN SURVEY OF 1556.

