

# THE Friends of Winchester College



renowned artists. Exhibitions in the Long Gallery and subsequently the Angelus Gallery have been of national and international interest as well as being supportive of local artists and establishments. The offices of Southern Arts and also museums, particularly Southampton were co-opted for travelling exhibitions, educational programmes and occasional workshops. The exhibitions were advertised extensively to ensure benefit for a local and greater community. These developments have been continued and flourish through the Kenneth Clark Society and the relationship with the Roche Court Educational Trust in East Winterslow

In 2006 Art School won an award from the Good Schools Guide for being the best boys Independent Art Department and the History of Art Department received awards from the same body in 2004 and 2006.

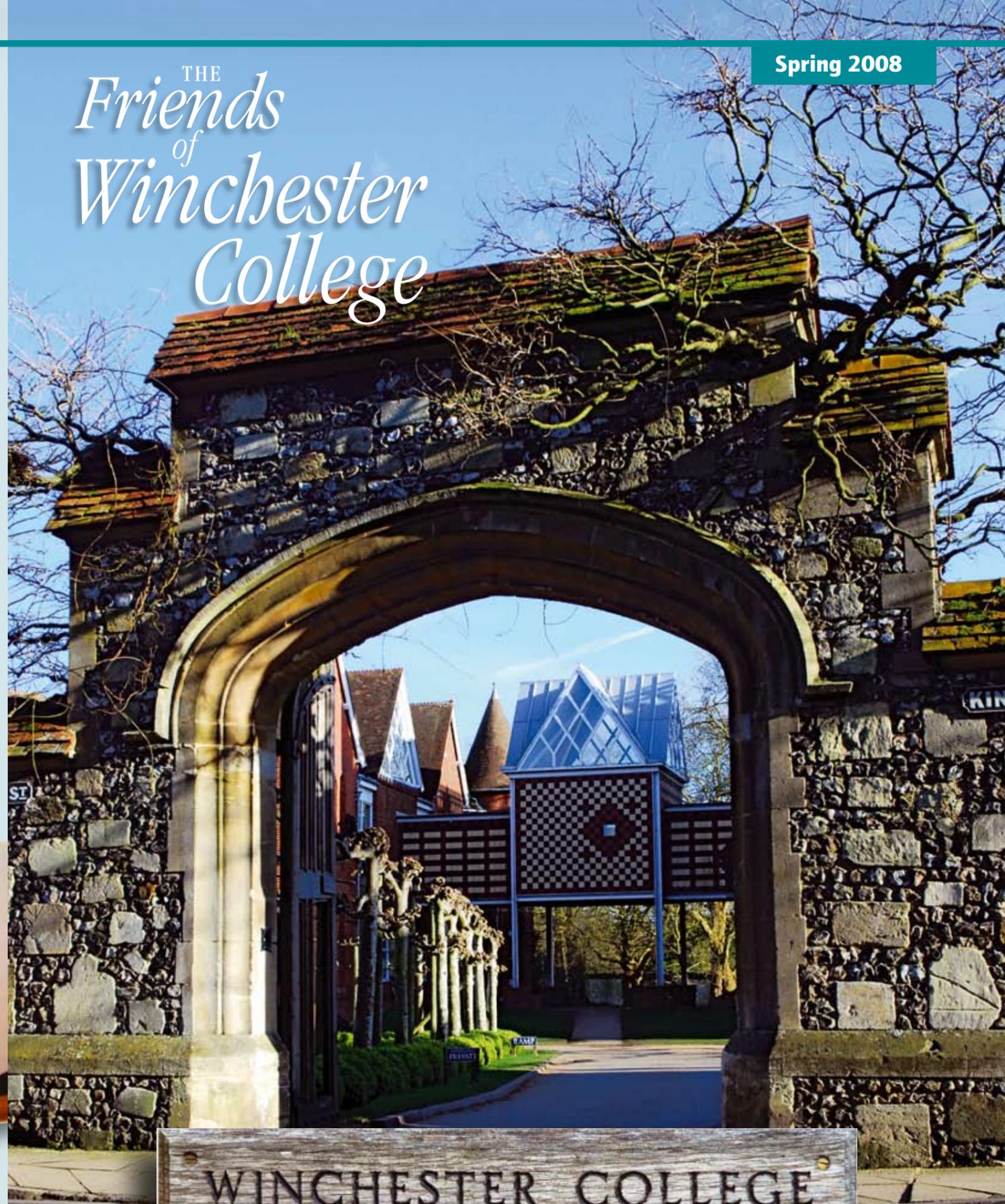
What the 'philistines' would have thought of all this is unknown, but the Founder would surely applaud the direction and development of "a pupil's personal awareness of the implicit spiritual and moral relationships between the creative and the higher cultural purpose of Art". When William of Wykeham commissioned the foremost craftsmen of his time to create the magnificent school buildings, he acknowledged the artists – mason, carpenter, glazier – by having their portraits incorporated into the East window of the Chapel.

Travel Scholarship is awarded every year from a fund created by his former pupils.

The conversion of the College's 1870s romantic neo-medieval sanatorium in 1985 proved to be a monumental and signal event for the educational ethos of the School. Now it possessed an Art School with facilities allowing for a wide range of contemporary and traditional approaches through its extensive facilities, including computer suite, printmaking facilities, spacious painting, ceramic and sculpture studios. Art was now being provided for in the timetable up to O Level and both the Headmaster, John Thorn, who had a passion for the arts and a vision for an art school, and the Warden, Lord Aldington, had a critical influence on these developments.

A tradition for excellence steadily grew and standards rose year by year. A natural progression was for History of Art to be incorporated into the timetable and now many boys study both this and Art.

Regular lectures were instituted with eminent speakers from major universities, galleries and museums and with



## Contact details

The Friends Office, directly above Cornflowers, is at:

17 College Street, Winchester, SO23 9LX  
 Telephone: (01962) 621217  
 Facsimile: (01962) 621218  
 E-mail: friends@wincoll.ac.uk  
 Website: www.winchestercollege.org

Design by Bernard Fallon Associates.

The Winchester Art department had a slow, very slow beginning as art was considered an individual activity, executed largely for the artist's own satisfaction and its disciplines were not easily extended to any other educational activity.



Museum Gallery with some of the original plaster casts (1949)

Having said this, there were Drawing Masters in the 19th century, chief among them being Richard Baigent who held the post for fifty years and took a few private art pupils. His best testimonial is the fine set of prints executed in 1838 depicting the Old Commoner buildings before they were demolished.

From 1878 accommodation was in rented rooms in Wolvesey Palace; there was even an attempt to buy the building in 1891, which, if successful, might have prevented the return of the Bishops of Winchester to live there in 1927. Art was not housed permanently until 1897 when the Quingentenary Museum was built, and studio facilities were incorporated into it. The Headmaster's personal generosity equipped the larger gallery with casts and portfolios of photographs for studying the history of architecture, sculpture and painting.

The first Art Master with full teaching status



was Alexander Macdonald who was considered a safe enough choice in the eyes of those who associated Art in the 1890's with the diabolical forms of Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. He was engaged at a salary of £50, to be supplemented from the fees of individual pupils who would pay two guineas a year. However, a naturally slothful disposition, overwhelming shyness and a comfortable private income, left him disinclined to recruit pupils. It was up to the enthusiasts to seek him out for themselves. One who did so was the young Kenneth Clark who found him dozing at his house in Kingsgate Street. His pupils had dwindled to about three and he seldom found the energy to



visit the drawing school. He must have been dismayed by the appearance of an eager pupil. Instruction consisted of an endless routine

of pencil studies and never a glimpse of a tube of paint. Kenneth Clark persisted and won the School Drawing Prize for four years virtually unopposed.

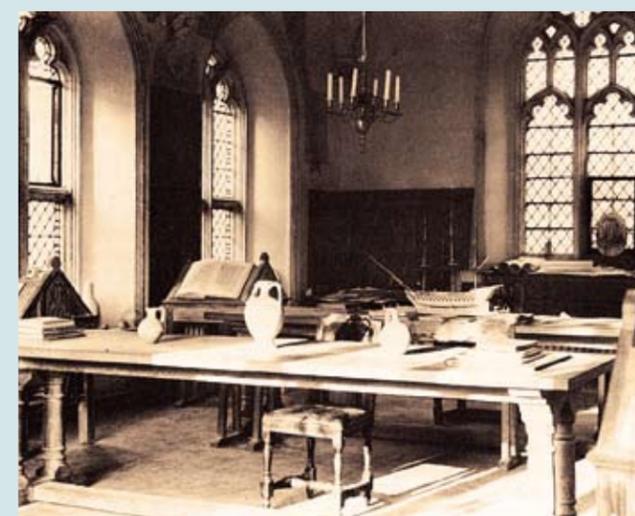
Fortunately, inspiration was at hand. In 1898 Monty Rendall commenced his illustrated art lectures. These lectures were based on three hundred and twenty large photographic reproductions, which he had accumulated from time spent in Italy, in the Louvre and in the British Museum. This enterprise was pioneering work, a bold and successful proclamation of the value of art in education at the very time when this was most needed. In the public schools of the nineties the arts were either unknown or suspect; if music was namby-pamby, painting was worse – half-way already to immorality. The aesthetic sense of

schoolboys was therefore deliberately starved and young masters who desired the favour of their elders had to be as philistine as they could manage. Yet here was an influential member of the Staff whose virility could not be doubted, joyously waving the aesthetic banner and proving that to be virtuous it is not necessary to be a barbarian. Rendall's presentations continued until his retirement in 1924 and regular art lectures have been a feature of Winchester's cultural life ever since.

Rendall, headmaster since 1911, confessed to the Governing Body upon Macdonald's retirement in 1922: "His successor will have little to

unteach: he will find hardly half a dozen pupils to teach at all". In the same year, Kenneth Clark's last, his report suggested that he should "keep art as a hobby, and retain a sense of proportion" – which, to the delight and edification of millions, is exactly what he did.

Macdonald was succeeded by an Old Wykehamist, Gleadowe, a graduate of the Slade School but a Civil Servant by temperament, not a schoolmaster. His taste, draughtsmanship and sense of design were exquisite, and he has left his mark in many corners of the College buildings. The windows in College Hall, the west window in Chantry, the wrought iron gates in Meads, Frazer Tent, the bridge over Logie, the Mallory memorial in Cloisters: all these show different facets of his skill. His error was that of taking too refined a view of school art and the creation of a new drawing school on the top floor of Chantry. This is an exquisite room, perhaps the most beautiful in the College,



The Art Room above Chantry (now Wiccamica Room)

with its simple vaulting and ample windows on all four sides. In 1924 it was fitted out with magnificent oak tables and replicas of mediaeval reading desks. These furnishings had to be constructed in situ as the narrow spiral staircase made it dauntingly inaccessible. It had the look of a place where even to drop a pencil-shaving would seem an offence. It would have served nicely for a dedicated monk settling down to a few months quiet work on a manuscript, but could never have been the instrument for getting more

boys interested in art. Gleadowe remained on the staff until his death in 1944 by which time his pupil numbers had dwindled to the "disgracefully small".

It was left to Gleadowe's successors, Erik Sthyr and particularly Grahame Drew, to broaden the appeal of art, with the help of a more favourable wind from the housemasters. The Drew

