



Established in 1936

# The Doon School WEEKLY

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## Editorial

*There is change everywhere and the Weekly is no exception. This time of the year, as the pen is passed on to a new and energetic editorial group, it is my privilege to lead the publication into another year of active reporting. As I set to the task, I would like to thank my predecessor, Akaash, who has sustained the quality of printed material and provided stability and dynamism to the publication.*

*In the year to come, I have ideas to implement that will redefine and rejuvenate a seventy-one year old periodical. The Weekly has efficiently chronicled school events, ventilated student opinion and sensitized the community to issues of global importance, apart from providing a creative platform to budding poets and writers. Today, we are in a process of reviving the appeal of the Weekly and constructing a newsletter that will relate to the community. In the issues to come, you will find more participative features in the Weekly. The Opinion Poll and Doonspeak will now be conducted electronically through the local server. This is to ensure accuracy and better coverage of the community and respond to a long-standing accusation of unreal results.*

*The Chief of Production and his team are working extensively on better graphics and a reader-friendly layout. We are also reviving communication channels with Old Boys, students and teachers alike. In fact, in the weeks to come, there will be regular surveys on the Weekly's features and layout and this will be used to reinvent the 'four-pager'. We anticipate that the community will respond to such initiatives with enthusiasm and be more forthcoming. We acknowledge that there are roadblocks that prevent such participation. I have often encountered peers who are reluctant to contribute and are scared of criticism. They are intimidated by the complexities of submitting and publishing a piece of work. The Weekly, I agree, has not attended to this problem sufficiently, but there will be a greater effort to 'connect' with the community. With this in mind, we have provided various contact-points for interaction- the Weekly dropbox in the Main Building, that will be checked regularly, an email address (for shy members and general convenience), and Board members who will be more pro-active and approachable. We welcome constructive criticism, suggestions and articles from teachers and students alike. The Editor and his writing group will focus on providing informative, engaging and interesting content.*

*With that, I get back to work with my team. We have enough work on our hands and a commitment that we must meet. I hope that we rise to every occasion and fulfill your expectations. Happy reading!*

## talking head

*Shikhar Singh and Ashish Mittler interview Mr. Peter Johnson, Headmaster, Millfield School, on his recent visit to Chandbagh*

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us a bit about the education system in Millfield.**

**Peter Johnson (PTJ):** Well, we follow the IGCSE board, and are very happy with it. This is largely because we are able to provide our students with a broad curriculum. In fact, for the A Levels, students have a huge choice of forty-two subjects, including some unusual ones such as Cookery, Fine Art and Leisure & Tourism. As a result, our students are exposed to a wide variety of career options and are able to discover where their true passion and potential lies. The IGCSE has been so good for our school that we even made the seemingly controversial decision not to apply for the IB programme. We believe that the IB forces students to do a bit of something rather than allowing them to specialise in a particular area of interest. The IB does not take into account those students who dislike, say the humanities, and only want to take up physics and math.

Of course, in Millfield, our curriculum is not limited to the classroom, but, includes a whole host of sporting and extra-curricular activities. Everyone does some form of sporting activity ranging from popular sports like cricket and rugby to not-so-popular sports like fencing, judo and sailing. We take our music and drama very seriously - in fact, some of our students are currently performing in Italy.

The Lower-Sixth grade is also made to undertake an enrichment course where they learn about a variety of things ranging from the social history of sport to social etiquette. So, I think, all in all, Millfield does offer a holistic education to its students.

**DSW: Millfield, like many other boarding schools around the world, is often accused of being a school for the elite. What are your views about this?**

**PTJ:** A boarding school, by definition, is a school for the elite. Many people say that boarding schools should be closed down because they promote elitism. Keeping this in mind, we, at Millfield, take great pains to ensure that our school admits students from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. We have students from over forty-eight nationalities and have a huge scholarship programme. In fact, one reason I am in India is to convince our Indian alumni to sponsor an Indian

*(continued on page 2)*

## REGULARS

### MATHEMAGICIANS

In the **Senior Mathematics Colloquium 2006** held on October 17, Gaurav Gupta stood first, followed by Pranay Aggarwal in second place. Well done!

### DEBATING IN DELHI

In the National Final Round of the **Ninth Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq Memorial Inter School Debate**, held on October 18, 2006, in New Delhi, Akshit Batra and Chetan Aggarwal represented the school. Akshit Batra was adjudged the **Best Speaker** against the motion. Congratulations!

### COMPLETING THE CIRCUIT

Eeshaan Tiwary, Shivam Saluja and Suhaas Khullar have been appointed **Boys-in-Charge** of the **Audio-Visual Squad** for the forthcoming year. Good luck!

## Unquotable Quotes

*It was an excellent Pagal Khana!*

**ARY** seeks asylum.

*I need frozen ice for my swollen hands.*

**Ashray Batra** in desperate need of help.

*I want a sketch of South Africa with Berlin in it.*

**Shikhar Singh**, the globe-trotter.

*You will make the computer go hung.*

**Shikhar Singh** reveals his nervousness.

*Put off the sun.*

**Uday Pratap Singh** can't take the heat any more.

*I'll give you a rap across my gab.*

**Piyush Upadhyaya** in a temper.

*It is a slow process, but it takes time.*

**VNP** is in no hurry.

*I have tasted all the flavours of Axe deodorant.*

**Akshay Nihalani** is hungry for more.

*I need a rabies injection, a mosquito bit me.*

**Mohit Seth**, mad with mosquitoes.

Change is the only constant



student to study at Millfield. We also, consciously, induct students from the local community, and this ensures that we have a firm grounding in our immediate surroundings.

Of course, one of the best ways to ensure that our students are constantly in touch with the world around us is by promoting social service. Our children are involved in social service activities at various levels. Some of them work in local primary schools and old people's homes. Others run fair trade stalls. We also have a Students' Committee which handles charity work and actively raises funds in this regard. This committee is given a free hand in sponsoring charities around the world. Recently, it sponsored a school in Ethiopia. As a school, we sponsor a school in a township in Cape Town. We hope that when students leave us they have a strong social conscience.

**DSW: What are your views on co-education in boarding schools?**

**PTJ:** We have been a co-educational school since 1938, and considering that Millfield was founded in 1935, it was quite a radical step at the time. I think that co-education should most definitely be encouraged – it provides for a much healthier learning environment. For example, while I am teaching *Romeo and Juliet*, I like to have girls in my class, as they give the feminine perspective to the play. Without this perspective, the play is incomplete. Co-education prepares children for modern society where men and women are equal in all spheres. While I have nothing against single-sex schools (there are many good schools which are single-sex), I prefer working in a co-educational institution.

**DSW: What challenges is Millfield likely to encounter in the future?**

**PTJ:** We are known primarily as one of the best sports schools in the UK. I understand that even Doon generally sends its sportsmen to Millfield. However, we also lay great emphasis on music, art, drama, and of course, academics. In fact, our school has been rated among the ten best schools for music in the UK. One of our biggest challenges is to earn recognition for our achievements in these fields. Of course, like every other school, we must always look to improve. We have come a long way since our foundation in 1935. We have world-class facilities and fabulous students, but we must always guard ourselves against arrogance and complacency. We must inculcate an attitude amongst all members of our community that there is always scope for improvement.

As a headmaster, I, too face a number of challenges. To maintain the high standards that we set for ourselves, we must hire the best-quality teaching staff and I am directly responsible for this. I also feel that I have to be around in school and interact with the students as much as I can. To me, this is the most important thing – I try not to miss a single day of school.

### CAREER CALL



The careers' notice board will highlight **law** as a career option this week. All aspiring lawyers should take a look.

# Our 'Senti' Midterm

*Pradyot Shahi recounts fondly his SC form midterms*

Can you imagine school life without the midterm treks? They have always provided a welcome break in the hectic term. In the days preceding the autumn term's break, the only thing buzzing in our heads was the dash for the hills. Doditaal for the midterms was a unanimous choice by all of us, specially Mukho and I. Armand wanted to test his stamina and wanted to have fun and we knew that ANJ was interested in Doditaal, so we roped him in too, and the group became an escorted party. ANJ had organized an Ambassador as transport and that meant that the tent poles which were 6 feet long, had to be adjusted in the car, with one of us taking turns sitting on it with a sleeping bag as the only barrier between the pole...and you-know-what.



You just can't have enough of Doditaal. Two of us had visited this place in our C form and it had left a lasting impression. So we decided that this would be the destination for our 'senti' midterms. We reached Sangam Chatti at three-thirty, and hiring mules, we started our trek, planning for a night halt at Bevra. Though we had our doubts about Armand's trekking capabilities we were surprised by his speed and confidence. Chatting, posing for photos, and, taking our time, we reached Agoda. The sun was going down and ANJ suggested we camp at Agoda for the night.

Mukho was our Man Friday with the stove and the cooking while ANJ appointed himself as the official dish-washer; for entertainment, we had Armand. Having skipped lunch, the

team was ravenous and we were irritable with Mukho barking orders (though no one listened to him). By the time we had finished with the cooking, the S form party arrived and the whole campsite sounded like a marketplace, with boys exchanging notes, pitching tents and...discovering spiders. Seeing these spiders as big as our palm, we were scared stiff. Armand was at his theatrical best, emitting high-pitched screams, until one of the S formers came to our rescue.

The next morning, we left early, before breakfast, and a mule was arranged for Armand from Bevra. The trek to Doditaal is still wild and peaceful because it's just you and nature for company. I was trying to remember the route and the old landmarks whereas Mukho was on his usual sprint trying to keep to his time schedule. Having ANJ for company, we kept the pace slow, stopping at the wishing tree, smelling the pine and enjoying every moment.

The best part of the trek is the lake that takes you by surprise, appearing out of nowhere. You walk around a bend in the trail and bang! - you see the lake. The exhaustion of the trek is forgotten as you sit down to feast your eyes on this beautiful treat which nature has to offer. Doditaal is a crater lake and is in a valley, and this adds to its beauty.

Pitching a tent with Mukho and Armand is not an easy task. There is more chaos than order and a minor miracle is required to get it pitched. ANJ was having a great time observing our efforts, and later, joining in. The night saw Mukho working at the stove again because he did not trust Armand's cooking skills and he didn't want to stay hungry. Having had an early dinner we all got into our sleeping bags, promising ourselves to wake up early to see the lake in the morning light. ANJ and Armand sang us to sleep with 'sweet' lullabies!

Darba Top was on the next day's agenda and after a light breakfast we left camp. Having climbed about two kilometres, Mukho suddenly felt that he had lost the way and Armand was also tired. Deciding to turn back, we used the stream as a guide to retrace our steps. Armand tried his best to spear a fish for his lunch. Getting back to camp we started making arrangements for dinner, and we were planning to have a campfire when the S formers brought news that there was a group of Welhamites on their way. The campsite got too crowded for comfort with us Doscors, Welhamites and the other trekkers.

Armand was the master of ceremonies at the campfire and the S formers were missing their friends in the opposite camp. Who else to turn to for help other than the counsellor! ANJ suggested that they send an emissary to officially ask the teacher in charge of their party if they would be interested in joining us at the campfire. The emissaries came back dejected and heartbroken. The tribal dance around the fire attempted to uplift the mood. The group being tired, and anticipating the long trek the next day, turned in early. There was a rumour in camp of a leopard sighting, but we all slept through it.

The trek back to Sangam Chatti was covered in one day and was tiring. Armand did not have his pet mule for company, so he missed him all along the trek and has carried home fond memories. I did not want to leave Doditaal, but civilization has its magnetic powers. Sitting in the car, all of us were quiet and contemplating our time in school and the numerous midterms we had gone on. We thought of the transformation these experiences had brought about in us and how naive we were when we joined school and how confident we are now. There were a lot of memories jostling in our minds, too emotional and personal to be shared even with these close friends. Our trek to Doditaal succeeded in achieving its purpose: providing us with the rare opportunity of reliving a previous experience and reinforcing it for all time to come.

# GOING SOUTH

*Naman Goel and Mansher Dhillon interact with the Exchange students from South Africa - Mitchell Levieux from St. Stithian's School and Xander Du Toit from Bridgehouse School*

**Doon School Weekly (DSW):** What were your first thoughts on reaching here?

**Mitchell Levieux (MCL):** I noticed the lush green fields.

**Xander Du Toit (XDT):** What did I get myself into?!

**DSW:** How is the school different from your school?

**MCL:** The atmosphere is very open here. The subject choices are very different here. Back home we can take a mix of subjects.

**XDT:** It's very restricted out here. In a day school like mine, we have much more freedom. We joke

a lot with our teachers; in fact, I can say we are most equal to our

teachers. Seniors and juniors are more or less equal in our

school. There is a lot of school and house spirit on display here. It is great to see so

much more effort being put into sports and academics over here. Your academic system is more culture oriented. One

more thing, my school is co-educational.

**DSW:** What are the similarities?

**MCL:** House and school spirit is an integral part of our school as well. The system of

toys is similar and my school too, is an all-boys institution.

**XDT:** Hardly any similarities, except for the fact that even we play seasonal sports.

**DSW:** What have you liked about the school so far?

**MCL:** I admire the house spirit and passion for sports. I love the Saturday night movies, the computers in the house, and, of course, the *Weekly*.

**XDT:** The discipline is very impressive. Apart from that, I like the general atmosphere and how the boys are always willing to help each other. I like the idea of having newspapers for each boy.

**DSW:** What do you dislike about the school?

**MCL:** I do not like the fact that tuck is not allowed. I do not particularly like the senior-junior equation, but it's heartening to know how much juniors respect their seniors.

**XDT:** Well, the food is not quite up to the mark, and, of course, there aren't any girls here. There are two things that I don't understand: why are there so many restrictions and why do juniors have to listen to the Scs?

**DSW:** What do you think about the town?

**MCL:** It's good how all the 'happening' places are centralized (Astley Hall) and I think 'autos' are a really cool and cheap means of transportation.

**XDT:** I hate the traffic, the buses, etc. In fact I've begun to understand why that place just outside school is called 'Suicide Alley'. I think MacCozy's is quite a cool place, but not for the wrong reasons! Strangely enough, I don't quite fit into an 'auto'.

**DSW:** Do you like Indian food?

**MCL:** Well, I didn't really like the CDH food, but as far as real Indian food goes, I like

Prezzi's food, especially the butter chicken everyone drools over.

**XDT:** I haven't had much Indian food (apart from the CDH food), but I can say that butter chicken didn't quite meet my expectations (sorry, you guys). But I thought the naans and dal were quite good.

**DSW:** Was it your choice to come here, or did you have other plans?

**MCL:** It was my choice to come here, and thankfully, I've made quite a good decision. In fact, my mother visited India last year and told me it would be a good place to go to.

**XDT:** No. Actually, I wanted to go to Japan, but there was no school there on the list. So I asked for any school in Asia and voila! - I'm here.

**DSW:** What have you told your friends about this school?

**MCL:** I have told them about the great and friendly atmosphere, about the food in school being bad but the food outside being amazing.

**XDT:** I've told them that the guys are pretty cool here and how everyone here (staff included), are very hospitable. Of course, I've told them about the food not being that great.

**DSW:** How was your whole experience of midterms?

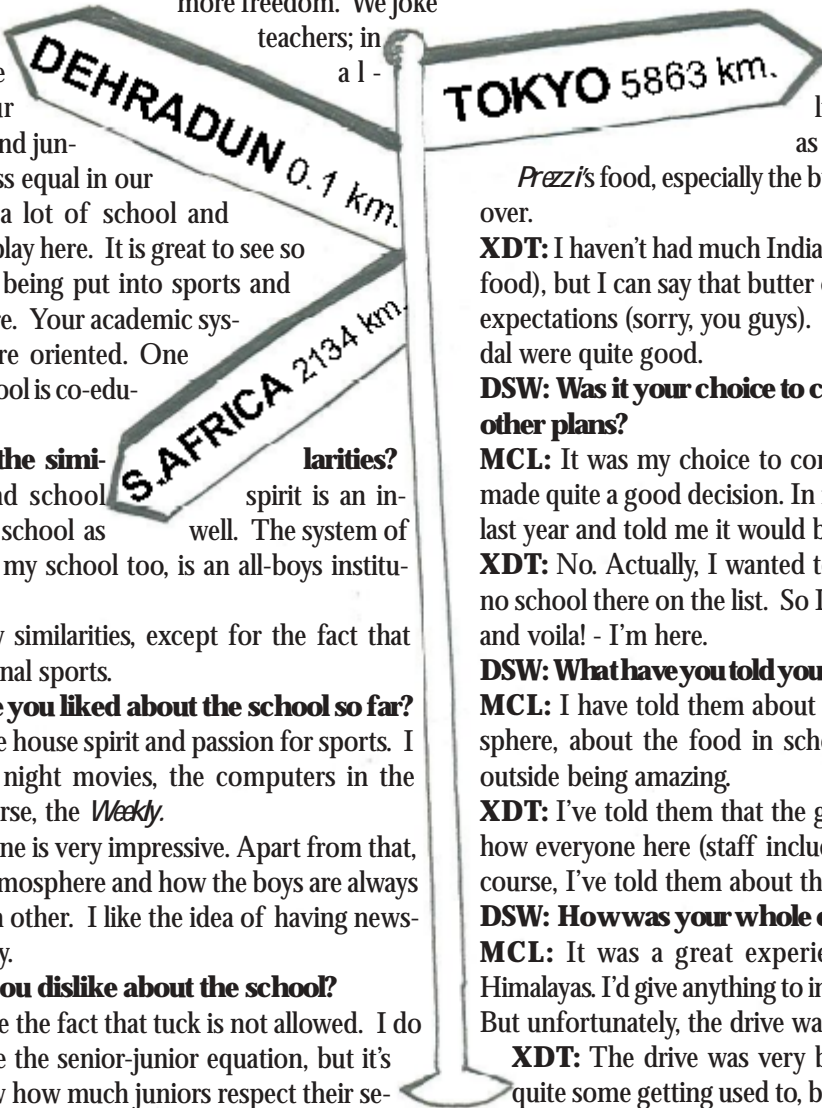
**MCL:** It was a great experience to be trekking in the Himalayas. I'd give anything to inhale that fresh air once more. But unfortunately, the drive wasn't very enjoyable.

**XDT:** The drive was very bad, and the first night took quite some getting used to, but apart from that, it was real fun.

**DSW:** Sum up your time so far in Doon in two words.

**MCL:** Exhilarating. Different.

**XDT:** Death. Row! (I had to think of only two words, what do you expect?!)



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