We welcome all the teams participating in the Chuckerbutty Memorial Debates to our campus



Sanjiv Bathla turns contemplative in the high Himalayas

Unlike Srinagar, where objects and people are blown out of existence, or Kargil, which is now more famous for gunsmiths, 'La-dwags' or the land of high passes, better known as Ladakh, is still a paradise. Even today, it is being discovered by each one of us who visits this uniquely beautiful landscape. A vast treasure of natural resources, a desert through which the Indus (Sengge Tsangpo) flows, carving its destiny all the way from Mansarover, it is flanked by the Karakoram and the Himalayas. Believe me, this 'Little Tibet' can take a life time to discover.

The opportunity to spend almost a month, when 40

years of my life have rolled by, came in thanks to our school participating in a social service programme through the Round Square project. Shoaib Ahmed and Shubham Gupta, along with myself travelled to Leh in July of this year to be part of this rich experience. We engaged in productive service, an enjoyable trek leading to the base of Stoke Kangri and rafted

down the Indus and Zanzkar. It reminded me of a Round Square project that I had attended in Jagjit Nagar, near Solan, when I was in Sc-form in 1983. Thirty-six of us from around the globe, made (I hope) a small difference to Ladakh without having left too many footprints behind.

A couple of days to acclimatize in Leh, and then further east upstream to a quaint valley, Stakmo, was where we camped in tents. Total media exclusion, no electricity or gadgets. Little farms, mud hills, a sparse forest and plenty of rushing streams, made up the landscape. There was a tiny monastery with two lamas, one of whom doubled as the *sarparth*. The shocking statistic was that our presence almost doubled the village population of forty-five residents: 15 yaks, 4 donkeys, a few blue sheep and a confused ibex that would emerge high up on the ridge once in a while. The common greeting 'Juley' for just about anything, confirms the belief that 'in the end everything is okay. And if it is not okay, then it is not the end'.

Our service started without much delay. Our work would start at 6 in the morning so as to maximise on the daylight. Six to seven hours of manual work was fol-

lowed by an hour to wash our clothes and our shivering selves in the narrow, cold stream. Loads of China clay had to be brought down a mountain via a human chain, rocks had to be broken, mud bricks fashioned: the water had to be brought up without the help of animals or machines, and finally, there was construction to extend the monastery. I was impressed by the amount and quality of work our team of boys and girls actually accomplished.

We visited Pangong Tso Lake (12,700 ft) situated in eastern Ladakh, which is 130 km in length, straddling the Indo- Chinese border, via the Changla Pass. The

winding narrow roads, with muddy snow stuck along the side of the Shadow Mountains, led us to this highest salt water lake in the world. The water is unbelievably blue and the lake sits there,looking like lapis lazuli. Subsequent to the 18 days of lifting mud bricks, breaking stone, plastering walls, cutting wood, we left for a six-

day trek, covering the distance from Shangla La to Shangpo, Matho La to Mathopo, both the passes about 5,400 mts (16,000 ft), then went to the base of Stok Kangri, which is their highest peak, and finally down to Stoke Valley which is close enough to Leh. There was eight to ten hours of walking each day with a couple of days in rain and hail. Wet shoes, clothes and a wet sleeping bag, pitching wet tents each day, wasn't the most comfortable way to be, yet, the scenic beauty, the sound of the streams and the colour of the sky would take away all the fatigue of the day and reinforce the enthusiasm to look forward to a beautiful tomorrow. I kept waiting for the perfect day in paradise. The salty, yak butter tea with sugary cottage cheese wasn't something I could get used to in my wildest dreams. In all earnestness and to display excellent hospitality, the locals will never let your cup be empty, so it was best to leave it full or savour it like a soup.

Once back in Leh, we set off immediately on a rafting trip up the Indus, all the way to where it meets the freezing glacial waters of Zanskar, and then a little further down. It feels like an ocean where both the (Contd. on page 2)

1. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, September 9

### ${f R}$ EGULARS

#### WATER KINGDOM

Dilsher Khanna represented Punjab in the **Junior National Aquatic Championship** held in Chennai during the holidays from June 28 – July 2.

The school participated in the **Council's Inter-School Swimming Tournament**. The school won the tournament with nine gold, six silver and two bronze medals.

# Gold Medals Dilsher Khanna (3) Vishesh Kochher (2) Angad Bawa Ayyappa Vemulkar Arjun Singh Arjun Singh Chandra Narayan Deo Pratham Mittal Silver Medals Vishesh Kochher Arjun Singh Arjun Singh Chandra Narayan Deo Jaiveer Singh

#### **Bronze Medals**

Angad Bawa Ayyappa Vemulkar

In the recently concluded **Inter-House Swimmning Competition**, Oberoi House won in both the senior and junior sections. Many records were broken. Dilsher Khanna broke the record in the 50 m Breaststroke, 200 m Freestyle, and the 400 m Freestyle events. Sriyash Kishorepuria broke the record in the 800 m Freestyle and Pratham Mittal in the 50 m Backstroke events. Aseem Kumar broke the record in the 50 m Breaststroke in the junior section. The Oberoi House relay team (mediums) broke the 4x100 rely record. Vishesh Kochher equalled Dilsher Khanna's record in the 50 m Breaststroke event.

The House positions this year were as follows:

1st: Oberoi333 points2nd: Jaipur329 points3rd: Kashmir259 points4th: Tata253 points5th: Hyderabad241 points

Well done!

#### INTER-HOUSE DEBATING

The final round of the **Inter-House Senior English Debate** was held on Saturday, September 2, in the Kilachand Library. The two finalists were Oberoi House and Hyderabad House. Hyderabad House emerged this year's winners. Shikhar Singh bagged the Best Speaker and the Student Judges' Choice award and Akshit Batra was declared Second Best Speaker. Congratulations!

### SOCCER UPDATE

In the **RIMC Soccer Tournament**, the school played Vasant Valley and drew, 1-1, lost 0-4 against MP Sports College and were defeated by the Tibetan School, 1-5. Better luck next time!

#### TT TALK

The school was represented by Arpit Panjwani and Amit Gupta at the **IPSC Table Tennis Tournament** at BITS, Pilani. They reached the quarter-finals. Well done!

#### (Contd. from page 1)

rivers merge. River-running there is a grand experience, especially if you capsize, but I would rather do the more thrilling rapids of the Ganges.

Ladakh is mystic, poetic and beautiful with an abundance of literature and art tucked away in the gompas, waiting for it to be discovered. Going through pages of a diary of the sixth Dalai Lama, Rigdzin Tsangyang Gyatso, translated by Coleman, in the Alchi Gompa, reminds me of a few words that touch a chord in me, as I pen this down:

The swan wants to stay longer and longer, W ith the lake it loves. Then when ice covers the surface The swan leaves with no regrets.

Spending many days in Ladakh can take one through various emotions. Some days seemed longer and more difficult than the others. It seemed, at times, that morning would never come. Some nights were freezing and yet more unexpected hail and rain would seep through our tents. There was a hat-trick of sorts, when three mornings in a row, I was woken up at dawn by donkeys nudging my tent. I would often confuse myself with the thought that here is better than there, and then when you are there, here becomes there and there becomes here and then you want to be there again. Perhaps I also suffered a mild vacation deficit disorder by the end of it all! But the poetry in the air made time pass faster and the work much easier. Some Ladakhi poetry can be equated to Shakespeare, Byron, Keats: not that I know all their works! However, I would like to conclude by quoting Gyatso again:

We've had our short walk together, this joy Let's meet a little early in the next life, as friends forever.

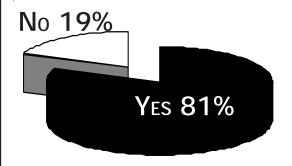
### CAREER CALL



The career's notice board will be focussing on **Wildlife** and **Fcrestry** as professions, this week. All conservationists and nature lovers should have a look.

# OPINION POLL

Do you think the singing of 'Vande Mataram' in schools on September 7 should be compulsory?



**Next Week's Question:** Do you think that morning Toye is more productive that the evening one?

# SPLASHING SUCCESS

**Utkarsh Aggarwal** and **Pratham Mittal** report on the recently concluded Inter-House Swimming Competition

Five days of intense competition, erratic weather and fluctuating positions saw Oberoi House – the underdogs, yet the defending champions – lift the trophy. Behind the joys of triumph and celebrations were hard, tiring practices and long hours at the pool. Swimmers took time out from a busy term amidst music, soccer, debates and, of course, academics, to practise hard. This was reflected in the high standards that were witnessed this year.

The competition saw the budding talent of many swimmers, 'yester-juniors' who made a mark in the mediums category, the ex-mediums who outshone the seniors, and, of course the seniors who improved on their previous year's standings. New talent emerged and many records were broken, despite the disruptions that were unavoidable (blame the weather!) and a few that could have been avoided (blame SJB!). Mostly, all the events saw narrow finishes and intense competition.

The first day, unfortunately disrupted by rain, had the qualifying heats, and the events that were being looked forward to had to be shifted to the forthcoming Saturday.

During the following days, records were broken in Breaststroke and Freestyle in seniors by Dilsher Khanna, who set a new record in all the events he participated in, showing unmatched standards and exceptional talent. In mediums, both the records that were broken came from Oberoi House. In the junior category, Aseem Kumar set a new record in his event.

So while Tata House dominated the Breaststroke category with Sharad Bajla , Dilsher Khanna and Vishesh Kocher winning their individual events, Oberoi House dominated the Backstroke category with Rajat Sabharwal, Pratham Mittal, Nitish Saini and Sambudha Naha winning all their events. Jaipur House reigned in the senior category with Ayyappa Vemulkar and the Atals leading the way with close competition from Hyderabad's Arjun Singh, Jaiveer Singh and Arjun Gulati. The school swimming captain, Chirag Nangia, leading the team of Kashmir House which did well in the long-distance events and in the junior events, had to be content with a respectable overall performance.

Though we all cursed wasting the Sunday outing for the competition, yet there were no regrets as the rip-roaring competition consumed us all. So with the loud cheering and with the presence of a large number of visitors, the swimmers fought for the much-awaited races which had the whole school on edge.

The school swimming team, with enough practice from the previous days, went off to Carmen School, in the middle of the competition, to do the school proud in the Council Schools' Meet, bagging 17 golds, 6 silvers and 2 bronze medals.

The last day of the competition started with unconfirmed standings, and this had the team captains quite tense, resulting in exceptional performances, as everyone gave it one last shot. The results: significant, yet not the end of the road, did come out eventually, much to the joy of some and the grief of others. It's the participation that matters and not saving yourselves some blushes by refraining from competing. A big hand to all the participants.

## COMFORT ZONE

Abhaas Shah enjoys the compulsory transfer

Mixed feelings dominated my mind when I came to know of the new Holding Houses that would accomodate Jaipur House boys. Rumours about the new Houses' luxuries and five-star accommodation (the *logs* actually are five-star, by the way) were tentative, but I knew that nothing could replace the homely feeling of the original House. When I entered the new Holding House for the first time, it was like a dream; something so glamorous, I tended to forget I was in school. The last few days of our holidays were filled with excitement and speculation about what Martyn House would be like.

I must say, Martyn House not only lived up to our expectations, but exceeded it as well. The luxury coupled with the space and freedom given to us made Martyn House a Dosco's (a Jaipur House boy's, actually) paradise. Everything from the bathroom to the TT table, right up to the soft boards on the toyes and fluffy pillows to sink into, were welcomed with much appreciation. The House was, truly, in tip-top condition – spotless windows (the situation is just a bit different now), new furniture along with fans and lights that functioned properly. Having been appointed the maintenance in-charge of Jaipur House (and not a very good one at that), you bet I could feel the major difference between the two. Another bonus was the location of Martyn House. With the music competition coming up, having the Music School as a neighbour is definitely helpful. Also, the tuck shop and the general store, the phone booth and, most importantly, the Main Building and the old tennis courts are in close proximity. The next pleasant suprise was the easy accessibility to the Net available to us, with five computers catering to our needs. Clocks and balconies strewn around the House were an added benefit.

However, a few shortcomings may also be mentioned here. The toyes were painfully small, with not even enough space to keep our books in. The demotion of Scs from the privacy of their studies to the vileness of dormitories must also be given deep thought. At Martyn House, we have also been deprived of our beloved TV and music system. Though we now have the benefit of having lockers right next to our beds, they aren't very roomy.

On the whole, for better or for worse, I'd say it is a welcome change. Martyn House is bright and lively during the day, in contrast to the nights when the drawn curtains lull everyone to sleep.

All in all, Martyn House is definitely most livable in.



# The Doon School Weekly is proud to commemorate 50 years of the Inter-School Chuckerbutty Memorial Debates

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#### THE CHUCKS EXPERIENCE

**Tushaar Kuthiala** (ex-519 T 'o6) recounts his involvement with the Debates

For the past three years, Chuckerbutty has always meant a time of frantic activity and hectic schedules. This year, it's good to be just a spectator. I organized the debates in my A, S and Sc forms, and I like to think that both it and I changed for the better during those three years. Of course, the fact that we reached the finals for four years in a row and won in my final year, didn't hurt either.

Organising the debate was hardest, but conversely, most interesting, in my A form. I had no idea whom to approach for what and how to observe the proper protocol; fortunately, neither did anyone else. The format we followed had been established the previous year, so was safe enough to be acceptable but not old enough to be stale, even if you did almost die of boredom during the three hour-long Preliminary Round. That year, everything I did was new, it was like discovering another dimension of Doon where I learned about things such as who to call for generator back-up, which people made acceptable judges, and how to ensure that no teacher's ego was bruised in the quest for ushers, supervising tabulators and the like.

By next September, I was a pro. The task of organising Chuckerbutty seemed almost too easy. Then Harsahej Bakshi had his brilliant idea of a 'jam session', or as we put it tactfully to Mr. Burrett, a musical evening. This added a new facet to planning Chucks and I had to persuade a variety of teachers to shift events around to make our night of music a reality. The 'jam session', by the way, was the most successful and popular event of the entire weekend.

In my final year, I wanted to accomplish two things before I left. I wanted to change the format of the debate and make it more interesting for everyone and more challenging for the teams, and I wanted to break our three year-old habit of losing to a Kolkata team in the final round. Incidentally, the trophy has always travelled back to Kolkata ever since teams from that city were invited in 1996. Keeping my twin aims in view, I started working on a proposed new format as early as March, and scheduled as many SEDS debates in this format as I could. I broke the format to Dr. Bajpai in May with NRK and KRS looking on with some apprehension, and after crossing that hurdle we were ready to roll. Getting everything ready took its toll, but I was helped by the fact that I had finally learned to delegate responsibility. I think everyone connected with organising the debate wanted to murder me by the end of it, but I had a blast during that weekend, seeing my format being used and finally winning the debate after ten years.

Coordinating the debates for three years was a reward in

itself. In my Sc form, I felt almost as if the Debates were an old friend. The Chuckerbutty Debates represented the sum of my hard work and achievement in the field of debating while I was in school. For this, I would like to thank Dr. Singh and Mrs. Khambatta for listening to my wildest ideas and giving them a rational platform. I'm looking forward to being back at the Debates this year, but please don't hold me responsible if you don't like the format!

Q&A

Ashish Mitter and Naman Goel in conversation with S.D.Singh, former English teacher, Housemaster and masterin-charge of the Senior English Debating Society at The Doon School

DSW: Tell us a little about Mr. Chuckerbutty and why a debate has been named after him.

**SDS:** Mr. Chuckerbutty passed away more than half a century ago, and as a result, there are very few people alive who knew him personally. I am fortunate to be one of those people. To the best of my knowledge, he had a job with the State Civil Service, which he found rather boring. He resigned from his job and came to teach at Doon. In fact, it's incredible how such an enterprising and knowledgeable man almost lost himself in the Civil Services.

Although he was at Doon for a very short time, he was extremely popular with his colleagues and the boys. He was a dynamic teacher, and had varied interests ranging from debating to mountaineering. He was keen on environmental issues and crop cultivation on campus, and a vocal supporter of the belief that all boys should do some amount of social work while at school.

While on an expedition in the Himalayas, he contracted pneumonia, and by the time he was willing to admit it, it was too late. He was cremated in the mountains.

At the time of his death, he was master-in-charge of the Senior English Debating Society. I took over the reigns of the Society after his demise and realized the Society had been reduced to a shadow of itself with his passing. We deliberated at some length on how to honour the man, and finally decided to host a debate in his memory. The students enthusiastically supported the idea, with the boys contributing from their own pocket money to ensure that the debate was held. The first Chuckerbutty Debate was a small affair, with only local teams like St. Joseph's, RIMC, and Welham Girls etc. taking part.

The idea caught on and it became an annual fixture. We tried to ensure that the standard of debating was fairly high. The



fruits of that endeavour are visible today, with the Chuckerbutty Debate being one of the most prestigious school-level debates in the country.

#### DSW: What was the format of the debate when it first started?

**SDS:** The debate was a prepared one, with the topic being revealed three weeks before the debate. We believed that this would ensure a higher standard of debating in school, and allow young debaters to become more confident. I think asking a 16 year old to speak unprepared is a bit unfair, as he has to collect his thoughts, analyze the topic and present his arguments in a clear and concise manner within a very short period of time. By having a prepared debate, we were encouraging boys to perfect their delivery and anticipate the arguments of their opponents and thereby weave it into their own debate.

#### DSW: How were the topics of the debate decided when you were in school?

**SDS:** The power to choose the topic for the debate rested wholly with the SEDS. The members of the Society met and proposed a number of topics. Thus the students had a large say in the Chuckerbutty Debates. Although I was in favour of such a system, it was not without its flaws. I remember once when we decided that the topic for the debate would be 'We should educate our parents', the Principal of Welham Girls' School, Miss Linnell, was up in arms. She demanded that we change the topic or else she wouldn't allow her team to take part. Ultimately, we relented. (laughs)

DSW: Who were the best debators you saw in school? **SDS:** As I have said, the Chuckerbutty debates were a local affair in those days, and hence the best schools were probably Doon, Welham Girls and occasionally Woodstock. However, I think that the latter were often penalized because of their American accent! Doon has always had a strong debating tradition. In the 50s, the Aiyar brothers (Mani Shankar and Swaminathan) stood out. So did the Seth brothers (Roshan and Aftab). In the 60s, Wajahat Habibullah and Bhaskar

DSW: Was he actually that good?

ter, Dr. Kanti Bajpai, was, I think, very good.

SDS: (laughs) Oh, yes! He had a very analytical style and was able to hold the concentration of the audience.

Chakravarthi were the best. In the 70s, the present headmas-

#### DSW: When you were in school, how was debating viewed as an activity? Were debators viewed as sissies or were they respected?

**SDS:** I think that they were viewed by schoolmates as sissies. I don't think they were respected as a boy who excelled on the sports field, and that's a shame. We consciously tried to change this attitude and gave as much as an impetus we could to debating After all, there must be something wrong with our system if a person like Vikram Seth can get recognition in the outside world, but hardly any in school.

#### DSW: Do you think that debating is still relevant in today's world?

**SDS:** Absolutely. I see debating as a part of an all-round education. It teaches you vital skills and gives you a lot of confidence. We, in the English Department, use debating to improve English skills amongst the boys. We also use theatre for this purpose.

DSW: If Mr. Chuckerbutty were to be alive today,

#### what would be think of the Debates?

**SDS:** I think he would be very happy with them. After all, he was very interested in debating as an activity. I think it is a good thing that we instituted this debate in his memory. It's just a gesture of how grateful we are to have known a man like Mr. Chuckerbutty.

# Its Only Words Nargish Khambatta and Shaurya Kuthiala

5 O years is a milestone. The 50th year of the Chuckerbutty Debates is one such milestone that narrates a story that needs to be told...

When the Organizing Committee of SEDS met and decided to dig up some information on Nabendu Chuckerbutty in whose honour the Chuckerbutty Memorial Inter-School English Debates have been instituted, we got acquainted with a man whose deeds have left a deep impression.

Nabendu Chuckerbutty passed the Provincial Civil Service examination and was appointed a First Class Magistrate, a post he held for four years. The sheer ennui of the job and disillusionment with the administrative structure made him resign. He turned to cooperative farming for the next nine years, in Lakhimpur Kheri. A true maverick, he lived frugally in a mud hut, ploughed the land himself, ran a night school for the peasants and their children and pumped most of his savings into the project. He was personally responsible for reclaiming 125 acres of waste agricultural land.

'Ch' as he was referred to, had a brother, Purenendu, who was a pilot in the Indian Air Force. The untimely death of his brother in an air crash made him give up his experiment with cooperative farming and come back to Dehradun to comfort his parents. He joined The Doon School as a physics and geography teacher and John Martyn, in one of his articles in the *Weekly*, wrote that after a hard game of football or hockey, 'Ch' would bicycle off to see his parents. He was fondly remembered by his colleagues as a gentle, cultured human being, with matter-of-fact self-confidence and a zest for life that was infectious. Besides being in charge of the Rifle Club and the Senior Debating Society, he was known to motivate his boys to actually grow the crops they were studying about!

Nabendu Chuckerbutty was erudite, active on the games field and also helped with the production of 'plays and playlets!" A "*Im vivar* in the real sense and always cheerful," he was known for his "quiet serenity, deep sincerity, liberal mind, modest disposition, generous nature and warmheartedness."

On one fateful expedition, accompanying Gurdial Singh to Dibrugheta Alp, he succumbed to pneumonia and passed away on June 14, 1956. His parents were devastated when they were handed over his ashes and so was the entire school community. Since then, 'Chucks' has become an eagerly awaited event on the debating circuit. As John Martyn wrote in the *Weekly*, "Nabendu Chuckerbutty was the ideal schoolmaster. He lived a life that was so good. And he always travelled light. We can be sure that he was ready for the next stage of the journey."



# C R O S S W O R D

#### Ashish Mitter

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1. College in Oxford and Cambridge 6. Snake in 'Jungle Book' 8. Rowers' tool 9. Water after miles of sand 11. Indian Othello 13. Whatever or whichever 14. Final 15. Australian wild dog 17. Bird of the night 19. Delhi University **21.** Medieval term for a North African 22. Cambodian Communist leader Pot **23.** Long period of time **24.** Controversial students' organisation **25.** Indian state in brief **27.** Indian public broadcaster 28. Conjunction 29. Small pin used to join two parts **31.** Hindu chant **32.** Where a golf game begins **34.** Constellation **36.** Author Morrison Omen **38.** Common tree in Dehradun.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Meaningful Dialogue

In his article, Saurav Sethia had talked about the absence or curtailment of the power of expression in Doon School publications and the success (?) of the underground publication RATS. Why do we need an underground publication to air our views? We have facilities like tutorial meetings, House Councils, School Council etc. to air our views, apart from the fact that we have a vibrant staff-student relationship that allows frank and open discussions, as well as, tutorial outings, midterms and staff-student interaction during various school activities including sports. The Headmaster's recent initiative to have a small group of masters and ten-fifteen Sc form students invited over to his residence for an informal get-together followed by dinner is another positive step in this direction. I think with so many options available to us, we do not need an underground publication or the DSW to air our views. The need of the hour is to strengthen various forums that will encourage and promote healthy discussions on a wide variety of issues. Go ahead and air your views and maybe these above-mentioned forums will become more meaningful.

Regarding censoring: sometimes the articles written are treading on sensitive issues which may appear to be harmless, but could be hurtful or cause bitterness in our relationships.

(Vinay Pandey)

# Toye Designing Competition

There will be a review of the Toye design currently used in the Houses, with the aim of bringing in a more modern Toye, in terms of design, materials used, comfort and aesthetics.

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'The Ideal Toye.' Your drawings must be in three views: plan, cross-section and three-dimensional. You should also give dimensions and materials to be used. The drawings must be presented in a file along with three xerox copies to the Dy Hm's office by September 30. The three best designs will be rewarded and will be sent to the Architectural committee.

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