

A RIDDLE WRAPPED IN A MYSTERY, INSIDE AN ENIGMA

**Mary Carew-Miller '20, had grown up on
The Gunnery campus and knew what it
probably was: the long-lost Stray Shot!**



Winston Churchill applied this phrase to Russia in 1939 but we may just as well apply it to Mike Zhang '20's spectacular find in Kirby Brook between the baseball field and the Mayflower Inn driveway. Mike, a freshman, newly arrived from China, was pursuing a favorite hobby, fishing, with the hope of securing a pet for his room. Instead, he found a seriously old, rusty, muddy, and very heavy metal ball with unintelligible gouges all over it. He approached some of his classmates including Mary Carew-Miller, Cailin Kessman, Jarred Drickler-Bourgart, and Will Hambley. Luckily, Mary, whose father is Academic Dean, Chip Miller, had grown up on The Gunnery campus and knew what it probably was: the long-lost Stray Shot!



(L to R): Cailin Kessman '20,
Will Hambley '20, Jarred
Drickler-Bourgart '20,
Mary Carew-Miller '20,
Mike Zhang '20

Mike Zhang was excited about his find. "I feel so honored to be part of the Gunn tradition, and the fact that I had only been here for a week just makes the experience so much more magical."

The group left Mary guarding the find while they went to get Mr. Miller to confirm their guesses about the ball. After a good wash and a weigh-in (87 lbs.), the ball still puzzled Mr. Miller who consulted the school archivist. But there were still more questions than answers. It wasn't the first ball which came into play in 1959 because it was smaller than a beach ball. It wasn't the third ball which was procured by Shane O' Mara in 2003 to replace one lost in 1997 because it weighed a lot more than 36 lbs. and it was larger than a large softball. We're not sure where the third ball is—perhaps buried on the Green.

The second ball has had a very checkered history. It is about the size of a soccer ball. As detailed in Red & Grays and Gunnery Bulletins, it is covered with engraved initials and the crest and other ownership indices of former holders. We think, but are not certain, that the first ball was lost in the mid-1970s and this ball came into play then. This ball was "misplaced" in 1997. Supposedly, it was found and given to Jim Graham in the Development Office anonymously in 2009. That ball, however,

was remarkably free of markings. In any case, Charlie Finnemore built a special case for it from which it was promptly stolen over Alumni Weekend (the one in the case is a wooden replica).

In January 2013, Patrick Baker, Scott Schwind, and Van Wilshire all from the class of 1989 teamed up with Alli Carlin '97 and Brandon Dufour '02 to retrieve the ball from the Linen Rink and present it to the prefects at school meeting. This ball also had no markings. We think that the finding, stealing, and retrieving of the ball in 2009 and 2013 was a HOAX. We think the intrepid freshmen of the Class of 2020 have found the 1997 ball where it had been hidden 20 years ago. Tests still have to be conducted by our science students to determine rust rates and language students will be engaged to decipher the markings to help tell us how long the ball has been lodged in the creek. Mr. Miller thinks it may have been before 1997. Do we have anyone willing to confess to having perpetrated a very successful hoax which has provided a lot of marvelous Gunnery stories? Any tips or information can be sent to Paula Krimsky at krimskyp@gunnery.org.

As we investigate, the newly uncovered ball will be guarded by the head of school and the search for the 2013 ball hidden by Kyle Searles will continue.