



ABINGDON

From the Head: Miss O.F.S. Lusk, B.Mus

Friday 7 September 2012

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

Welcome to Abingdon for the new academic year. We begin the year with a very strong school roll, wonderful exam results and the planning for our new Science Centre underway. To all colleagues and boys joining us for the first time, I wish you all flourishing and happy times as part of this community.

Interest in Abingdon continues unabated. Once again we were hugely over-subscribed and our roll stands at 929 to accommodate demand and the higher birthrate, which is a national feature of the third year cohort. We welcome 207 new boys and boarding is full for the second year in a row. I have written separately to the parents of new boarders as I fully understand and appreciate the trust you place in Abingdon when you decide to give your sons a boarding education.

Much progress is being made on the plan for our new Science Centre and parents will have received the invitation to visit the School on Tuesday 18 September at 6.30pm to hear more about our exciting plans. There will be an opportunity to view outline plans, talk to senior staff and our consultants and let us know your views. I very much hope that you will be able to attend.

I am also looking forward to meeting parents at the following events:

2 nd and 4 th Year Head's Reception:	Monday 10 September at 6pm
3 rd Year Parents' Social Evening:	Friday 14 September, 7.15pm
5 th Year and U6 Head's Reception:	Monday 17 September, 6pm
L6 Meet the Tutors evening:	Thursday 20 September, 7pm

Abingdon's exam results were absolutely fantastic! My warmest congratulations to all the boys on their success.

At A level this year's results equal the School's best-ever performance with the highest-ever percentage of passes awarded the A* grade. 80 boys gained 3 or more A level passes at A* or A which is outstanding. Results like these do not come easily and represent years of hard work from boys and staff and support from their families. These results are testament to the breadth of an Abingdon education where boys are encouraged to achieve academic excellence alongside equally impressive performances in the music, arts and sporting arenas.

Core statistics:

Number of boys sitting A levels:	144
% of passes at grade A*	28%
% of passes at grade A* and A	73.9%
% of passes at grades A* to B	92.7%
% of passes at grades A* to C	98.8%
% of passes at grades A* to E	99.8%

Number of boys with 5 Grade A*s or more	1
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Number of boys with 4 Grade A*s or more	7
Number of boys with 3 Grade A*s or more	16
Number of boys with 2 Grade A*s or more	33

80 boys gained 3 or more A level passes at grade A or A*.

The GCSE results were equally impressive with close to 50% of all passes being awarded the top A* grade. It is particularly impressive when you consider the number of iGCSEs studied by Abingdon boys. The iGCSE is considered to be more demanding than GCSEs and is currently taken in ten subjects at Abingdon, increasing to twelve this year.

Number sitting GCSEs: 153

% of passes at grade A*	48.1%
% of passes at grades A* and A	81.7%
% of passes at grades A* to B	96.3%
% of passes at grade A* to C	99.7%
% of passes at grade A* to G	100%

% of pupils gaining at least 5 passes A* to C	100%
% of pupils gaining at least 5 passes A* to G including English and Maths	100%
% of pupils gaining at least 5 passes A* to G	100%

Number of boys with 12A*s	2
Number of boys with 11A*s or more	13
Number of boys with 10A*s or more	29
Number of boys with 9A*s or more	39
Number of boys with 8A*s or more	50
Number of boys with 7A*s or more	60

All parents are encouraged to view the results on the website www.abingdon.org.uk to see the subject breakdowns and comparative analysis over several years.

Naturally, the splendid achievements in their A levels meant that the vast majority of our Upper Sixth proceeded to their university places without a hitch, with 90% of the cohort winning places at their first-choice institutions and most of the others safely accepted by their insurance choices. A handful of boys found places in Clearing or took alternative courses. Beyond Oxford (nine places won) and Cambridge (10 places won), our boys' destinations remain overwhelmingly within the most prestigious Russell Group universities and this year sees particularly high numbers going to Warwick, Birmingham and Imperial; Edinburgh, Bristol and Durham remain as popular as ever. One notable feature of this year's experience was that Clearing seemed less hectic; undoubtedly, the combination of fewer applicants to UCAS and the freedom of universities to take uncapped numbers of AAB candidates has meant that there has been a little more room for manoeuvre. Nevertheless, in an increasingly discriminating market the most competitive courses at top universities will be as demanding as ever in their requirements.

This year we commemorate 1563-2013 – 450 Years of Benefaction.

In 1563 Abingdon's old medieval grammar school moved from a small building in Stert Street, where it had been for more than 300 years, and was re-established in a new schoolroom that had once been part of Abingdon Abbey, the conversion being paid for by a donation from a former pupil, John Roysse.

The ordinances (agreements) were signed between Roysse and the Borough of Abingdon on 31 January 1563, believed to be Roysse's 63rd birthday, ordinance 2 stating that "there shall be perpetually three score and three children taught within the said school". The roll is somewhat larger these days! The dimensions of the schoolroom coincidentally were 15' x 63'. All this gave rise to the significance of the number 63 to the School.

Later in the same year Roysse conveyed to the Borough two of his properties in Birchin Lane in the City of

London. The rents from these properties supported the Headmaster's salary for the next 300 years. The properties were sold in 1866 for £9,000 and the money was put towards the building of the present school - which cost £7,000.

2013 therefore marks the 450th anniversary of the greatest single benefaction to Abingdon School. The anniversary of this date (the year 1563, rather than 31 January) was marked by the School to our certain knowledge in 1763, 1863, 1913 and 1963.

In 2013 we shall continue the tradition of acknowledging this date. However, we shall not only be acknowledging Roysse but all the School's benefactors, from Thomas Tesdale who in 1610 left £5,000 in his will for the education of Abingdon boys at Oxford - which led to the establishment of Pembroke College, Oxford in 1624 - to Nigel Hammond (OA and former master) who in 2008 left the School his entire estate bar one or two small legacies. Financially Tesdale's benefaction was much larger than Roysse's; it was intended to guarantee an Oxford education for 13 Abingdon boys and these closed scholarships were definitely the reason some boys came to the School in the 17th and 18th centuries, thus helping its prosperity. However, the number of scholarships were reduced until the last Abingdon Scholar at Pembroke went up in the early 1970s.

From 31 January to 21 April 2013 there will be an exhibition on the history of the School in Abingdon Museum - "From Abingdon to Zanzibar - a history of Abingdon School over 450 years". During the course of the year, our Archivist Mrs Sarah Wearne will upload a website exhibition - A History of Abingdon School in 63 Objects. These exhibitions will give the School the opportunity to demonstrate what the School has been, the men it has educated, and the benefactions it has received, over 450 years - for example, Major General Christopher Palmer Rigby, OA 1833, who was the British Consul in Zanzibar during the 1850s and worked to abolish the slave trade there.

It is my very great pleasure to introduce new colleagues

Miss Amy Atkinson – Geography

Amy studied Geography at St John's College, Cambridge and recently completed her PGCE at St Anne's College, Oxford.

Mr David Border – Chemistry

Educated at the University of the West of England and Christ Church, Oxford, David holds a degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences and a PGCE in Chemistry. He has been teaching Science at St Birinus School, Didcot for the past year.

Ms Alexandra Cardinal von Widdern – German

Alexandra joins Abingdon as Head of German. She is a Linguistics graduate after studies in her native country Germany and the UK. She has taught in the UK for nine years in a variety of schools, among them at Leighton Park as Head of German and most recently at Reading School.

Mr Robert Colborn – Classics

Rob is currently completing a DPhil on Roman astronomical literature at New College, Oxford, where he has spent the last seven years.

Mrs Celia Collins – Learning Support

Celia read English at Wadham College, Oxford; following which she taught at a number of Oxford colleges and at Geneva University. Celia joins Abingdon as Head of Learning Support from Wycliffe College where she held the same position since 1999.

Miss Maris Elmore – Maths

Maris has recently completed her PGCE at Lincoln College, Oxford after undertaking her MMath, Masters in Mathematics at Hatfield College, University of Durham in 2011.

Mr James Fox – Biology

James joins Abingdon as Director of Rowing and Teacher of Biology. Originally from Kenya, James came to live permanently in the UK when he studied Biology at Imperial College, London. He comes to Abingdon from Winchester College where he was Head of Rowing and Teacher of Biology.

Mr Rajeet Ghosh – Geography

Raj studied Geography at Manchester and has recently completed his PGCE at Oxford University.

Ms Elizabeth Hancock – Art & Design

Elizabeth studied Fine Art at Pembroke College, Oxford and subsequently broadened her practical art, craft and design skills through studio practice, exhibitions, residencies, commissions and collaborative work. She has recently completed a PGCE at Oxford Brookes.

Mr Simon Marriott – Head of Boarding

Simon joins Abingdon as Boarding Housemaster of School House and Head of Boarding. Educated at Canford School and Trinity College of Music, London, Simon was, until 2007, Deputy Head and Head of Boarding at St Peter's York. He left St Peter's to become more involved in national educational policy. He has significant experience as a boarding inspector. Simon is a musician and has been Director of Music at two HMC schools.

Mr Steve Newton – Design & Technology

Steve joins Abingdon from Oakham School, Rutland where he was a Teacher of Design & Technology. He was educated at Loughborough University qualifying in Industrial Design and Technology.

Mr Martin Poon – Maths

Martin studied for a Master in Mathematics at Exeter College, Oxford and has recently completed a PGCE in Secondary Mathematics at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

Mrs Gilly Prior – English

Gilly took her BA in English from King's College London and a PGCE at Queens' College Cambridge. She comes to Abingdon from The Cherwell School where she was Lead Teacher for KS3 and has worked as a county advisor on best practice for teachers across Oxfordshire

Rev Dr Simon Steer – School Chaplain

Most recently, Simon served as Principal of the London School of Theology. He was previously the minister of two churches in the USA, Education Director at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and has worked with development agencies in Indonesia and India. Simon did his theological studies at Princeton Seminary in the USA, Jesus College, Cambridge and the University of Tubingen in Germany. He has a PhD in Biblical Interpretation.

Mr Richard Taylor – Biology

Richard studied Biological Sciences at Balliol College, Oxford where he also completed his PGCE. He joins Abingdon from Cokethorpe School where he was a Teacher of Biology for the past three years.

Dr Piers Taylor – Chemistry & Physics

Piers studied Chemistry at Bath University where he also completed a PhD. Following his studies he worked as a Post Doctoral Research Assistant at the University of Bristol. Piers recently returned to the UK after working as the lead teacher of Chemistry and Physics for a bilingual school in Mexico.

Mr Michael Triff – Director of Philanthropy and member of SLT

Michael has spent most of his 20-year career working in or for not-for-profit organisations, both in the UK and USA. For ten years, he served as a director of fundraising, marketing, and/or communications for a range of environmental and heritage charities. Since 2010, he has run a social enterprise, delivering management training and leadership development programmes and courses to early-career managers of charities. Michael holds a Master's degree from the University of Georgia and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Texas.

Mrs Amber Waite - Chemistry

Amber has taught Chemistry and Physics at Headington School Oxford for the past year, having returned to teaching after directing the education programme at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew since 2009. She was trained as a biogeochemist, and worked as an engineer designing oceanographic chemical analysers and as an oceanographer exploring the chemistry of deep sea volcanoes prior to becoming a science and maths teacher in the United States.

We welcome our Language Assistants who will be here for one year:

Mrs Ying Yuan – Chinese Assistant
Miss Elise Fondu – French Assistant
Miss Tristana Gillet – French Assistant
Miss Lara Ehrenfried – German Assistant
Mr Hector Portela Albarran – Spanish Assistant

To the Sports Department we welcome:

Mr Calum Crichton – Sports Centre Duty Manager & Post Graduate Sports Assistant
Mr Olly Deasy – Post Graduate Sports Assistant

On the Support side we welcome:

Mr Ross Corrigan – Assistant Maintenance Operative
Mr Daniel Arquimbau – Gardener
Mr Andy Groves – Boathouse Manager
Mr Taiwo Amos – Accounts/HR Intern
Mr Luke Harnett – Theatre Technician
Mrs Helen Bennett – HR Administrator
Mrs Cecilia Coates – Chemistry Technician
Ms Elena Kruglyakova – Biology Technician

To the Music School we welcome:

Mrs Charlotte Brennand – Piano & Vocal Coach
Mr Alex Hehir – Music Technology
Mr Aidan Thorne – Guitar

Other colleagues have had changes in their roles:

Mr Ian Fishpool has been given the title of Senior Teacher to recognize his many roles in the Common Room.

Head of Art:	Mrs Emily O’Doherty
Head of English:	Miss Rachel Yarrow (since June)
Modern Languages Co-ordinator:	Mrs Jane Mansfield
General Studies Co-ordinator:	Miss Natalie Spurling-Holt
Head of Middle School Scholars:	Mr James Hallinan
Assistant timetable:	Mr Oliver Lomax (since June)

Congratulations are extended to Peter Hadfield (Catering Manager) and Dean Evans (Economics, Head of Lower Sixth) who each celebrated their marriages over the summer. Ben Phillips (Drama) and his wife welcomed the arrival of their son Reuben.

At the first staff meeting presentations were announced to colleagues across the Foundation who have been part of this community for more than 20 years. Congratulations and thanks to these colleagues for such lengthy stints to date:

Mr Nick Pritchard	Maths	43 years
Mr Jeff Drummond-Hay	Sport and PE	39 years
Mr Nick Dougherty	History, Prep School	30 years
Mr Nick Revill	MFL Teacher	28 years
Mr Ian Fishpool	Senior Teacher	27 years

Mr Nick Barnard	Estates Manager	25 years
Mr Michael Stinton	Director of Music	25 years
Mr Michael Cox	Maintenance	24 years
Mr Andy Broadbent	Sport and PE	24 years
Mrs Claire Delo	Head of Science, Prep School	24 years
Mrs Jenny Fishpool	Classics	24 years
Mrs Denise Thornhill	Housekeeping	23 years
Mr Stuart Evans	English, i/c Other Half	21 years
Mrs Sue Wigmore	English	21 years

I thoroughly enjoy hearing the reports of the trips that have been out and about over the summer. They are enormously challenging and the boys' feedback shows just how much they take from their experiences whether it is at the annual RAF Summer Camp at RAF Shawbury or further afield. Lower 6th geographers had an incredible time visiting Indian cities considering aspects of 'globalisation and inequality'. They witnessed flooding from the heaviest monsoon rains for 30 years in Jaipur and visited the Dharavi slum in Mumbai as well as the more typical tourist attractions of the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort.

15 students from the fifth and sixth forms travelled to Honduras spending a week in the Cusuco rainforest followed by a week of marine biology on the (otherwise uninhabited) island of Cayos Menor. The boys were assisting scientists from Operation Wallacea with ecological and conservation research. Abingdon boys also joined the girls from St Helen's for an enormously enriching theatre studies trip to Japan with the focus on learning the art of Bunraku puppetry.

This summer's visit to Moldova saw pupils working with children and young people, teaching English and organising sporting, craft and social activities. The boys gained a tremendous amount from this visit as well as the opportunity to see the sights of the capital Chisinau, visit the UK Ambassador to Moldova, and watch the top Moldovan football team take on the might of Bangor City FC! Ten boys also undertook voluntary work in Africa as part of the South Africa Partnership. The boys built fences, painted walls and laid the foundation for a new school in Mozambique.

I am delighted to report that Omri Faraggi was awarded an individual bronze medal, one of only 37 medals presented, at the International Linguistics Olympiad in Ljubljana at the end of July. This is an outstanding achievement and we applaud him. More medals were won by Abingdon oarsmen who were selected to represent Great Britain at the Coupe de la Jeunesse, in Spain in July. The boys came away with a bronze medal in the coxed four and won gold in the Eight. Other successes include five boys who completed their PADI dive qualifications and were lucky enough to undertake the course in the Red Sea.

Congratulations also to the AFU which begins the new academic year with news that their film "Warp Cops", has been selected for the prestigious Bradford Animation Festival in November. It will be entered in the competition for the best film made by young people. It was lovely to catch a fleeting glimpse of Abingdon boys on the river in the short film that started the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Abingdon was indeed very well represented with three OAs amongst the torch bearers and Philip Johnson, OA 1990, who was the project architect for the Olympic stadium, a magnificent achievement.

Boys are busy preparing for the new sporting term. We hope to build on the success of last year's rugby season and for the first time Abingdon held an elite rugby academy during the summer holidays as well as tennis and rowing camps. Our sailors have also been busy honing their skills in Greece and Italy over the summer.

At the first assembly it was my pleasure to introduce our new prefects. Led by Heads of School Mathew Hartshorne and Oscar Newman, they are a team of talented and fine young men. Congratulations to these boys on their appointment as Prefects:

Azarel Adebajo, Sasha Barras, Max Brittan, Jacopo Blumberg, Rory Brampton, Toby Brown, Tom Browne, Luke Carter, Matthew Carter, Joel Cooper, Max English, William Horlock, Christian Huck, Tom Kyngge, Toby Marlow, Richard Matthews, Elliott Mills, Peter Moore, Tom Pugh, Charlie Roberts, Henry Sensecall, Jack Wardell, Angus Weir, Alex Whitworth, Jack Williams and Matthew Workman.

Congratulations to our scholars who take up their scholarships this term. To be awarded a scholarship at Abingdon is a remarkable achievement because so many boys would be deserving of this recognition and competition is tough. A scholarship is not only in recognition of ability and talent, it is an honour to be worn with pride, certainly, and the realization that each scholar will seek to use their special talent to enrich the whole school community. I hope that our scholars enjoy wearing their special tie.

Scholarships:

Name		Year	Scholarship	Previous School
Jonathan	Ainslie	L6	Drama	Elstree School
Oliver	Beaumont	3	Blacknall	Abingdon Prep
Michael	Bicarregui	L6	Academic	Abingdon Prep
Thomas	Bishop	3	Sport Scholarship	Chandlings
Sam	Cartlidge	L6	Art	Chandlings
Patrick	Cole	3	Drama Scholarship	Moulsford
Toby	Collins	3	Lady Wantage	Abingdon Prep
Thomas	Cope	4	Drama Scholarship	Crosfields
John	Corran	3	Sport Scholarship	Abingdon Prep
Thomas	Dingwall	3	Sport Scholarship	Combe CE Primary
Thomas	Fabes	L6	Academic	Chandlings
Thomas	Foster	3	Drama Scholarship	Chandlings
Hamish	Garland	3	Abbot de Blosneville	St. Andrews Prep
Tom	Hampshire	3	Abbot de Blosneville	Crosfields
Nick	Harris	3	Young and Summers	Thorngrove
Matthew	Hart	L6	Sport	Oratory Prep
Ben	Hatton	3	Young and Summers	Oratory Prep
Horatio	Hirst	3	Sport Scholarship	Dragon
Rhys	Humphries	3	Blacknall	Abingdon Prep
Heyse	Ip	L6	Art	West Island School
Charlie	Landells	3	Young and Summers, Drama Scholarship	Moulsford
Patrick	Leggett	3	Lady Wantage	Hermitage Primary
Jeffrey	Leung	4	Fourth Year Academic	La Salle College
Daniel	Matthews	L6	Sport	Abingdon Prep
Sebastian	Mulford	3	Abbot de Blosneville	St. Edmunds RC Primary
Carl	Olavesen	3	Lady Wantage, Sawbridge Music	New College School
Angus	Parker	L6	Academic	Abingdon Prep
Jake	Pennington	3	Lady Wantage	Abingdon Prep
Ethan	Sarphie	3	Young and Summers, Drama Scholarship	Abingdon Prep
William	Sheffield	3	Blacknall	St Mary's Prep
George	Skingley	3	Boxall Scholarship - Art	Thorngrove
Giles	Stratton	3	Young and Summers	Brockhurst
Luke	Tuite-Dalton	3	Abbot de Blosneville,,	Moulsford
Jonah	Walker	3	Mercers' Company Boxall Scholarship - Art	Abingdon Prep
Henry	Waterson	3	Lady Wantage	Ferndale
Angus	Williams	3	Young and Summers	Oratory Prep
Archie	Williams	3	Blacknall	Moulsford
Alastair	Wilson	3	Blacknall	Crosfields
Wilfred	Wong	4	Fourth Year Academic	The ISF Academy
Cameron	Woodrow	1	John Roysse Academic	John Blandy Primary

Lower School Awards:

John	Allen	1	Griffen All-Rounder	St Aloysius RC Primary
David	Bunn	1	John Roysse Academic	Dunmore Primary
Alasdair	Czaplewski	1	Griffen All-Rounder	Long Furlong Primary
William	Ginks	1	Griffen All-Rounder	United World College
Yazan	Odeh	1	John Roysse Academic	Stephen Freeman Primary
Liam	Rogers	1	John Roysse Academic	Whitchurch Primary

Exhibitions:

Name		Year	Subject	Previous School
George	Aylard	3	Music	Cheam School
Edmund	Breen	3	Music	New College School
Thomas	Buckle	3	Music	Abingdon Prep
Patrick	Cole	3	Music	Moulsford Prep
Edward	Hall	3	Music	Ashfold School
Jack	Lewis	3	Music	Christchurch Cathedral School
Stuart	Pearson	3	Music	St Laurence's CE Primary
Alex	Reynolds	3	Music	St Mary's Prep
Camerson	Thomson	3	Music	Christchurch Cathedral School
Luke	Tuite-Dalton	3	Music	Moulsford Prep
Jack	Walsh	3	Music	Chandlings
Alistair	Wilson	3	Music	Crosfields
Freddie	Hodge	3	Art	Cothill
Joel	O'Byrne	3	Art	Appleton Primary
Edward	Purkhardt	3	Art	Oratory Prep
Henry	Waterson	3	Art	Ferndale Prep

The Michaelmas term will be hugely busy and productive. I wish everyone a very happy term at Abingdon School.

Yours sincerely,

Felicity Lusk