



ABINGDON

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

6 March 2015

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

This term is certainly proving to be “the concrete in the middle”, as former Headmaster Michael St John Parker (1975 – 2001) always said about the Lent Term. The Upper Sixth have finished their mocks, the scholarship exams are taking place this week and much work is going on in classrooms as each department works through the remainder of their syllabus.

We welcome two new members of staff this month: Mr James Fletcher is Sports Centre Supervisor at Tilsley Park, and Mr David Haines joins the grounds team.

We said farewell to several colleagues in February. Ms Alexia Severis has been school counsellor for three years and we thank her for all she has done in her time at the School. She has relocated to Devon. Mr Matthew Feates has been part of our IT department for four years – he leaves us for a new position at Sophos. Mrs Ann Howe leaves the Housekeeping department having been with us for two years. We wish all these colleagues well in their new roles.

We have enjoyed a particularly impressive and diverse range of achievements from boys over the last few weeks. 16 students came to Head’s Praise for commendations ranging from flawless stage management of *Les Misérables* and outstanding music performances at the joint schools World Cancer Day, to excellent work on the new MFL magazine, Polyglot, and administering a holiday quiz. Bryan Kwan and Churk Chung have both won Arkwright Scholarships. These are a national award that recognises outstanding potential in design and engineering. Sasha Bond and Bruno Rogers were very impressive in “Les Joutes Oratoires”, a French debating competition, winning through to the final where they were narrowly defeated by Radley.

Michael Dewar and Theo Brophy Clews have been selected by opposing national squads for the U18 Scotland v England rugby international on 8 March and Will Carter Keall has made the England U18 hockey squad for the second year running. Charlie Quarterman won the 80km Circuit del Guadiana cycling race in Spain over half term and Henry Waterson and Sam Wilmot will represent the English team in small-bore rifle shooting. Tom Digby and Adam Teece were the first pair home in the latest GB Junior Rowing Long Distance trial and Calum Farwell and Max Townley came 14th.

In the UK Open Karate International Championships, Joshua Valentine won a gold and a silver medal.

We also had five ensembles through to the national Pro Corda Music Festival which took place this week and 65 of our young musicians played beautifully in the Annual Chamber Music Concert.

Many congratulations to all the boys.

Over half term the Economics and Business Studies trip to Frankfurt was intensive and enjoyable taking in, amongst a myriad of activities, a Deutsche Bank presentation on the structure of German banking, the European Central Bank and a rare opportunity to see the trading floor of the stock exchange. Also in Germany 24 fourth year boys enjoyed the culture and sights of our exchange partner school, Bielefeld, and thoroughly enjoyed the annual football match, which this year ended in

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a penalty shoot-out win to England. Closer to home fifth year sailors braved the cold as part of their Day Skipper qualification preparation, sailing out of Plymouth, and four boys tried gliding as the result of a kind invitation from Bob Bickers (OA 1961). A platoon from the CCF's Recruit Company visited Abingdon Airfield and the 612 Volunteer Gliding Squadron whilst the Army Section recently participated in their Lent term field day at Dalton Barracks.

The Chess Club has enjoyed a string of impressive performances and remain top of the Oxford and District Chess League. The club also won both the beginner and intermediate sections of the Wiltshire Junior Open Chess Championships and performed well at the Team Chess Challenge. On Sunday the Club battled hard for a place in the National Schools Championship Plate competition, coming fifth, ahead of 15 other teams and qualifying for the second year in succession. Abingdon is Oxfordshire's sole representative in the finals stage of this tournament.

In sport the swimmers set five new school records at the Abingdon Sprints Gala, winning 14 out of 18 events, and all three squads won their age groups. The U16 A and B hockey teams remain unbeaten and the A team qualified for the last 16 of the National Cup. 25 boys have been selected for county and regional hockey squads. The Fencing Club added Dauntsey's and Winchester to their unbeaten run and at the Southern Region Age Group Epee Competition eight of Abingdon's fencers won medals. The Cross-country Club put in a good performance at the Radley Relays and at the South East Championships. Football saw 50 lower school boys play in a competitive fixture against Caldicott and the 1st XI continue their unbeaten run in the Thames Valley Football league with a win against Shiplake. The J14s had their first taste of racing in a match against St Edward's whilst the rest of the Boat Club performed well at the Hammersmith Head in preparation for the upcoming Schools' Head. Our golfers added to the string of sporting successes by defeating St Edward's in the Independent Schools Golf Association Area Plate.

We welcome exchange students from France, Spain and the USA this half term and I hope they have a very enjoyable stay here with us at Abingdon.

My thanks go to the boys who made the ladies from the Older and Bolder exercise class very happy with Valentine's Day roses; I think they were much appreciated. If you have a very brief 32 seconds to spare, do take a look at the video of boys creating music using 555 timer oscillator circuits. What concentration and subsequent pleasure! Certainly brought a smile to my face.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk