



ABINGDON

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

27 March 2015

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

This may be the shortest term but the end has come around unbelievably quickly. I thank everyone, staff and boys, for a really productive and solid term.

We welcome Ms Kate Jennings who is the new boarding house matron in Davies House. Ms Jennings comes to us from St Edward's School where she was also a house matron. I am sure the boys of Davies House will make her very welcome.

Mr Alex Cann, theatre technician, has left to pursue other options and I wish him well.

Lower sixth formers interested in a career in engineering had a preview of the new Science Centre this week. They toured the building with the Architect, Engineer, Construction and Project managers. The boys submitted questions in advance, on subjects ranging from innovative materials to computer design, and were given detailed answers from the construction team. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the site visit.

As part of our Science Partnership the Chemistry department hosted 150 children from local prep schools at a spectacular show about Heat, Light and Chemical Changes. The visitors were particularly impressed by the explosions and had great fun wielding mallets to break fruit frozen by liquid nitrogen.

In other events, boarders braved the cold for a bracing walk and picnic on the Ridgeway and lower school boys visited Bath to see for themselves the setting for stories from their Latin course. Sixth formers attended the Institute of Economic Affairs conference, an international student science conference and an open day at Oxford University's Materials Science department.

Congratulations to sixth former Tim McGovern who has won BBC Radio Oxford's Young Sport Reporter competition. Tim had to submit a 60 second report on a sport he is passionate about and his prize includes a day's training with a professional broadcaster. In other successes the RAF section of the CCF competed against the top CCF sections in the country coming 5th in the final of the Air Squadron Trophy competition, very impressive. Also congratulations to the two

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: 01235 521563 Fax: 01235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

ensembles that reached the final of the Pro Corda National Chamber Music Festival. We have enjoyed a diverse range of music this term including the Senior Scholars' Concerts, the Annual Singers' Platform and the Choral Concert.

Boys in the Fifth Year and Lower Sixth performed very well in the GCSE and AS Physics Olympiads. Particular mention to Jack Bowen and Adam Al-Yousuf who were both awarded Silver Certificates in the AS Olympiad competition. This puts them in the top 10% of over 2000 entries from the best physicists in the country.

The Chess Club battled to an exciting finish in the first round of the National Schools' Championship Plate Competition with a narrow victory over Sir Thomas Rich's School. Chess and debating are strengths of the school and it's good to see the younger boys keen to participate. The Lower School did very well in the Blenheim Palace Public Speaking Competition. Particular congratulations to Jack Mulcahy who won an award for an 'Outstanding Speaker'.

In other news this term, David Bunn was part of the winning English team in the European Orienteering Championships and Drew Farwell won his age group at the English Schools Long Range Challenge Shooting Cup. Robert MacLennan is the U16 southern regional fencing epee champion. Last week Robert also won gold in the Boys' Junior Epee competition at the Public Schools' Fencing Championships. The whole team performed exceptionally well winning the Hilary Hammond trophy for the second consecutive year.

The Cross-country Club won their final fixture, in the inaugural Teddy Hall relays, to round off an excellent season. Earlier in the term the U14 Badminton team were crowned county champions and came fourth in the South of England Regional competition. The three senior football teams all performed extremely well in the Thames Valley League with the second XI winning their league and the 1st XI and 3rd XI both coming second in theirs. In other football news, congratulations to Francesco Cipriani who has been recruited by the Arsenal Soccer School.

The Hockey Club finished off a successful season with an enjoyable dinner on Saturday and some excellent performances against Eton, Bradfield and Shiplake. The 2nd XI finished unbeaten in the Independent Schools hockey League, a tremendous result. The swimmers enjoyed the Bath and Otter Cup at the Olympic Park, narrowly missing places in the finals and our young golfers came a well-deserved fourth at the Oxfordshire Schools' Team Golf Competition. The rowers performed well at the Schools' Head and look forward to the forthcoming regatta season. We wish them luck at the Head of the River this weekend. There are three OAs in crews for the Boat Race. James Cook rows for Oxford and Ian Middleton coxes Cambridge. Felix Newman is in the Cambridge Goldie crew.

On Monday I once again took my life in my hands to start the 47th annual Road Relay. It takes a bit of courage to stand firm as the boys stampede up Park Crescent at the start of the race. Do take a look at the short video clip http://www.abingdon.org.uk/47th_annual_road_relay_mar15/ - even more courage was needed by our school photographer!

There are more than 20 trips away this Easter, I don't think I have known a busier holiday in the time I've been at Abingdon. We have boys on return exchange visits to the USA at Chaminade College and France at Aix-en-Provence. Sixth formers are off to Spain and Berlin and third years to the WW1 battlefields. There's a DofE practice walking expedition to the Lake District and the CCF camp at Westdown. The Lower School also have their adventure trips to Liddington (First Year) and Plas Pencelli (Second Year). Pre-season training begins for cricketers in Kent. Senior rowers compete in the GB junior trials and train in Temple-sur-Lot and our sailors are also away honing their skills. Hockey finishes their season at KES in Bath whilst footballers compete at the International Youth Festival in Paris.

I am very grateful to the staff who give up their time to organise and accompany these trips; they are invaluable for the boys. I fully appreciate the amount of work that goes into the preparation and the commitment of a substantial proportion of the holiday. Very many thanks.

For those boys taking examinations next term the Easter holiday is dedicated to revision. It is important to rest and recoup but it is also vital to get on top of your work. Time spent revising now will reap dividends and will avoid any last minute panic so please use the time wisely; it will be well worth it. Far better to enjoy the summer after exams knowing you have done your best and worked as well as you can.

If you would like to take a look back at this term in pictures, there is a lovely selection on the website homepage.

I wish everyone a welcome and enjoyable Easter break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Felicity Lusk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Felicity Lusk