



ABINGDON

From the Head: Miss OFS Lusk, B.Mus

12 February 2016

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

This half term may have been relatively short but it's certainly been full of action.

Abingdon boys have been taking part, very successfully, in a diverse range of activities over the last three weeks. In the National Final of the Senior Maths Team Challenge at Westminster, Abingdon's team of Harry Lei, Jerry Hang, Ben Schneider and Angus Shen came 21st out of 86 teams of the top sixth form mathematicians in the country. A very impressive result indeed. At the Big Physics Quiz held at Birmingham University all four third year teams finished in the top half of the 100 teams participating with one team finishing in an excellent third place. In the Schools Challenge, a national general knowledge competition, Abingdon's A and B teams again performed well in the Oxford half of the Home Counties Region with the A team narrowly missing out to Dr Challoner's in the semi-finals. Our economists are showing great potential in the Institute of Financial Services Student Investor Challenge – a UK wide investment game, where teams are given a virtual £100,000 to invest. The two Abingdon teams are both through to the semi-final having finished a very impressive 3rd and 124th out of the 10,000 teams competing. The CCF is through to the national finals of the Air Squadron Trophy competition in March having come a very close second in the regional finals. And at this year's Young Enterprise Trade Fair in Cowley, Kasa, one of the four Abingdon School companies taking part, picked up the prestigious 'Best Product' award - the third consecutive year that an Abingdon team has done so. All of the Abingdon teams did very well.

Congratulations to all the innovators, investors, mathematicians, CCF recruits and physicists.

Lower sixth boys studying Business Studies have recently visited SMEG's headquarters and learnt about the company's marketing strategy and business prospects. Also out and about were 25 GCSE and A level music students who took part in a workshop with Oxford's new Period Orchestra – Instruments of Time and Truth. The musicians studied Mozart's Symphony No. 40 as well as gaining an interesting insight into what an 18th century orchestra would have looked like. In activities at school, boarders have been baking Scottish shortbread for the residents of the Old Fire Station to celebrate Burn's night and the first year took part in a public speaking workshop run by two trainers from the English Speaking Union.

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Boys learnt about what makes good content, linking arguments and engaging an audience. The workshop will prove very useful in the upcoming Lower School Public Speaking Competition. Many thanks to the Second Hand Uniform Shop whose donation to the Annual Fund made the workshop possible.

Abingdon sportsmen are enjoying a successful run with the Squash Club securing resounding 5-0 victories over Stowe and 4-1 over Radley, fencers continuing their two-year unbeaten run with victories over Wellington College and Dauntsey's, and the Cross-Country Club picking up the team title for the 11th consecutive year at the County Cross Country Championships at Radley College. I would like to give a special mention to an act of honourable sportsmanship from the top senior runners at the County Championships. Alex Miell-Ingram, Jonty De La Harpe and Ivo Brown redirected the lead runner, and eventual winner, who took a wrong turn during their race. In doing so the Abingdon trio sacrificed finishing in 1st, 2nd and 3rd order. Very commendable. The seniors went on to a convincing win in the Wellington College Relays. Six pupils have also qualified to represent Oxfordshire in the English National Championships.

The Boat Club saw a good performance from the seniors, racing over the Schools' Head Course in preparation for the main event there in March. The first fixture of the term for the J15s and J16s was a BASHER event and both age groups rowed well. The Senior Quads were also very impressive finishing in 1st and 2nd place.

The Sailing Club competed in the Winter Match Racing Qualifier in Portland Harbour winning three races against very tough opposition. The boarders enjoyed competing at the Southwest Region Canoe Polo League Tournament and in the Warwick 100s, Abingdon's swimmers competed against tough opposition finishing in a very well deserved second place.

Hockey and Football have performed well so far this term with some excellent wins against Stowe, Eton and Bloxham in hockey and good results for football against Cokethorpe, Magdalen College School and Our Lady's. Lower school teams competed well against The Dragon on the football field although the senior teams struggled against Reading Blue Coat and Hampton. The 2nd football XI remains unbeaten and we wish them every success for the rest of the term. Many congratulations to the U13 hockey squad that defeated Magdalen College School in a nail-biting match to secure the final of the County Championship tournament.

Congratulations to Harris Ma in the fourth year who has gained a distinction in his ATCL diploma in piano. This is a remarkable achievement from someone so young. We enjoyed welcoming the Chilingirian Quartet to Abingdon this week for their biennial concert and workshop. It is always such a pleasure to listen to these very talented musicians and very beneficial for the School's ensembles that took part in the workshop with Levon Chilingirian.

I thoroughly enjoyed the senior drama productions of Anything Goes and Caucasian Chalk Circle. Tremendous performances by the cast from St Helen's and Abingdon.

The standard of these productions is extremely professional; very impressive indeed.

The Yang Science Centre, YSC, continues to be an integral part of school life and the Abingdon Science Partnership, which promotes science in the community, is going from strength to strength. Recently the YSC has seen the 4th Abingdon Brownie pack undertake their Science Investigators badge and Science Oxford ran another fascinating and very entertaining Saturday Science Club looking at 'fantastic fossils'.

We welcomed 12 families to School on Wednesday for the Chinese New Year, the year of the Monkey, and over the weekend all of the boarders of Austin House celebrated the New Year with a whole house trip to Sojo in Oxford. They were joined by many of the boarding house tutors and Helen the matron.

I welcome Miss Louisa Ross to our Housekeeping staff this month and wish her a happy time whilst at the School.

I hope that everyone has an enjoyable half term break and the opportunity to recharge batteries for the remainder of the Lent Term.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk