



From the Head: Miss OFS Lusk, B.Mus

24 March 2016

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

It has been a busy term for everyone, with lots of news to circulate before this early Easter weekend.

In the Easter holidays we will say farewell to Mrs Sue Rutherford. Sue has been our Health and Safety “guru” since 2006, and she will be hugely missed. The “excellent” judgement of the recent ISI inspections in the area of health and safety was a fitting tribute to all Sue’s work for the Foundation. She is meticulous, calm and unflappable, taking care of all of us and enabling us to play high level sport, organise challenging expeditions, and do everything we want to do, but safely. We will miss her sensible and consultative approach, and wish her a very happy retirement. Taking Sue’s place is Mrs Karen Iszkula – we welcome Karen and wish her a happy and rewarding time at the School.

Mrs Eleanor Kaye, Maths teacher, goes on maternity leave in the Easter break. We wish her well for this next phase in her life.

Also leaving the School this month are Mr Daniel Arquimbau, Grounds, and Mrs Denny Furze and Mr Brian Nobes, Housekeeping. Good luck to them as they move on.

Last week we held our annual Foundation Dinner, to which I welcomed many guests who had helped and supported us in a huge variety of ways this year. The occasion is also the opportunity to remember our founders and benefactors over our 760-year history. Sir Anthony Seldon was an erudite and witty guest of honour, and he spoke eloquently to an appreciative audience.

The upper sixth form economists in team ‘Tigers’ are through to the national final of the ifs Student Investor Challenge to be held in London on 27 April. The team is in the top eight of the 10,000 entries, very impressive indeed, and we wish Zachary Muncaster, Rafi'i al-Akiti, Sam Palmer and Tom Wiblin the best of luck. The Young Enterprise team, Tetra Accessories, had a very successful trade fair in Witney winning awards for the Best Trade Stand and a Highly Commended Product.

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The CCF gave an excellent performance at the National Air Squadron Trophy Final coming third in leadership, 7th out of 18 nationally and with Sgt Harry Leafe gaining the highest individual score in the country for First Aid. The Second Year has also been out and about, visiting the Roman remains in Bath to gain first hand experience for their Latin studies.

Over 40 boys entered the prestigious AS Physics Olympiad competition and congratulations to Rob Harris who earnt a Gold Award, putting him in the top 5% of the very best students who entered on a national level. There were 5 Silver Awards and 14 Bronze class 1 and 8 Bronze class 2 winners. In the GCSE Physics Olympiad congratulations to Ben Wilson, Patrick McCubbin, Rory Buchanan, James Hogge and Scott Elkington who have all gained gold awards, putting them in the top 3.1% of the best students across the country.

Our chemists have also been doing very well. A team of Patrick McCubbin, Theo Sandstrom, Ethan McLellan and James Munday won the Thames Valley regional heat of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Top of the Bench competition. The boys go on to compete in the national final at Loughborough University during the Easter holidays. In a second Chemistry success Louis Brosnan, Alexander Hann, Alasdair Czaplewski and James Ashby won the Thames Valley regional heat of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Chemistry Challenge. They have qualified for the southern regional final, which will be held at Imperial College.

Musicians have excelled recently with a silver medal awarded to Leon Wu for his high distinction in grade 8 violin and a win for Anthony Bracey in the senior section of the Pangbourne College Piano Festival. In the Third Year, Alvin Tam gained distinction in grade 8 piano and violin and Iain Storrie won his section of the Pangbourne Festival. There was a very high standard of solo singing at the Annual Singers' Platform and many congratulations to Didier Delgorge who won our own intermediate solo instrument competition. The Choral Concert was a lovely event with the Chapel and Gospel Choirs and Abingdon Academicals all in fine voice. The Music department is very grateful to the Second hand Uniform shop, which, through the Annual Fund, donated funds for equipment for the music technology suite.

Drama students from Abingdon and St Helen's were last week performing in six plays as part of their Theatre Studies exams. These were very engaging performances and we wish them well. Last week we welcomed local primary schools for an exciting 'energy in chemical reactions' lecture, and in a slightly less explosive event, we entertained Abingdon residents to the Easter Tea Party with music from Abingdon Academicals and the Music in the Community Group. The Economics Department also hosted a very informative Institute of Economic Affairs Sixth Form Conference for students across Oxfordshire.

The Chess Club has had an exciting climax to the season in the Oxford and District Chess League, "City 4," defeating MCS Blackbirds 2 and then Witney 4 to finish ahead of those two teams and secure its place in Division 3.

Fencers had a very successful Public Schools Fencing Championships with all the boys competing well and Robert MacLennan winning the boys' Junior Epee for the second year running - a feat not achieved in 33 years! In golf, Josh Roche and Joe Sandall have been selected to play for the county having played well, as did the rest of the team, at the Oxfordshire Schools Golf Championships. Senior swimmers put in a good performance at the Bath and Otter Cup relays. In rugby sevens, congratulations to the U13 squad that won the Plate competition at Caldicott Prep and to the U12 squad that won the Plate at the Moultsford Sevens.

The Boat Club saw the 1st VIII put in an excellent performance at the Schools' Head finishing 5th of 342 crews, all the boats performed well. In the National Junior Sculling Head, the J14C crew stormed to victory and the A and B crews also rowed well.

As hockey and football finish the season there have been some good performances. Football's 1st XI finished the season with an excellent win against Radley College and the Club thoroughly enjoyed their inaugural dinner. There was also a very close match for the hockey 1st XI against Cheltenham where Harry Anderson scored the equaliser three minutes from the final whistle. Senior rugby players have been in action at the Sedbergh School Super Tens where the squad finished on a high with a very impressive win against Millfield.

I hope everyone finds an opportunity to relax over Easter. It's a very busy time with revision and there are also numerous trips out including: cricketers to Sri Lanka, the Rifle Club to Germany, rowers competing in GB junior trials, sculling camp and training in Bordeaux, DofE sailing, CCF Easter Camp, language exchanges to France and Spain, history trips to Florence and WW1 battlefields, Lower School adventure trips and also a pre-season tennis camp. My thanks to staff who are giving up their holiday to supervise these events.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk