



# ABINGDON

From the Head: Miss OFS Lusk, B.Mus

4 March 2016

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

Life at Abingdon continues at the usual busy pace with plenty going on both inside and outside the classroom.

I welcome Mr Hamilton Walcott to our ICT department this month, and wish him well for his time at the School. We said farewell this week to Mr Gary Hill, Lifeguard and Leisure Assistant, who leaves us for pastures new.

Over half term 11 fourth year boys and six girls from St Helen's immersed themselves in German language and culture through the Bielefeld exchange. Sixth formers studying Economics and Business Studies enjoyed an extremely busy and interesting trip to Brussels taking part in a wide range of activities including visiting the Council of the European Union, publishing houses, banks and a brewery and exploring Bruges, Brussels and Antwerp. We have been hosts to Spanish and French exchange students this week and to ten boys from the US who spent the day with us on Monday. The CCF was very privileged to be the guests of the Coldstream Guards at the Victoria Barracks and at Windsor Castle. They learnt about life on duty as well as enjoying a tour.

Last week, we welcomed BAE systems and the RAF to school to present a science roadshow to boys in the Second and Third Years. The Lower School Archaeology Club and some classics students enjoyed a visit from the Archaeology Department at Reading University. The boys conducted an archaeological geophysical survey of sites around the school campus. Many thanks to Dr Rob Fry and Dr Christine Milton who made the day possible.

In other activities the Entomology Society visited Oxford University Entomology Department for a fascinating opportunity to see collections from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Darwin, Wallace and Livingstone. Interestingly the boys also saw how the specimens collected by Abingdon boys on last year's Honduras fieldtrip are contributing to current scientific work.

As ever the diversity of Abingdon boys' accomplishments is impressive. We have had three boys Scott Elkington, Jamie Farrow, and William Sheffield pass levels 2, 3 and 5 respectively of the ART Learning the Ropes training course in bellringing. 17 boys attended the three-day Model United Nations conference, picking up 11

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awards between them and a team of six boys has won through to the national final of the Institute of Chartered Accountants National Business Game, BASE. In chess, nine boys took part in the Wiltshire Junior Open Chess Championships and all played well. Many congratulations to Rafi'i Al-Akiti who won the intermediate section and to Saxon Supple and Lawrence Putt who were 2nd and 4th in the beginners' section. Five of the 11 chamber ensembles who took part in the preliminary round of the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival got through to the semi final, which was held on Wednesday. The annual chamber evening was a tremendous success with 15 ensembles, directed and presented by the boys, playing a wide range of music. We also thoroughly enjoyed the Music Scholars' Concert this week.

Crescent House boarders saw off the opposition in the inter house football competition at the weekend and congratulations to JJ Gooder who received the "golden boot" for the highest scorer with five goals. Boarders are currently enjoying a new 'enrichment' programme aimed at preparing them for life beyond Abingdon. Activities include learning the basics of finance, such as applying for student grants, as well as cooking, cleaning and ironing. The programme is supported by the boarding house matrons, Di Faulkes (School), Helen Whitworth (Austin) and Jo Deaves-Small (Crescent), who I would like to thank very much for their help with this very valuable programme.

Many congratulations to sixth former Charlie Quarterman, of the Zappi Race Cycling Team, who won the first round of the Copa De Espana for the second consecutive year. Over half term our current 1st VIII attended the Great Britain Junior Rowing Trials in Boston, Lincs, having all posted qualifying 5k ergo scores in January. Tom Digby and Adam Teece were the top pair on the Saturday and won the Pairs event. On the second day of the trial Tom changed disciplines and raced in the sculling event, winning the Double Scull. A tremendous result and excellent performances from all the boys. The Boat Club also enjoyed a successful fixture against St Edward's. This year we have three OAs in the Boat Race on Easter Sunday. Many congratulations to James Cook (Oxford) and Felix Newman and cox Ian Middleton (Cambridge).

We have had two boys selected for national squads recently; congratulations to Max Carter Keall, for the England U16 Hockey squad and Rob MacLennan for selection to Great Britain's team for the Fencing Junior World Championships. Over half term 11 Abingdon boys represented the premiership rugby club, Wasps, at age group level and congratulations to OA (2015) Theo Brophy Clews who made his debut for the London Irish Premiership side at the age of 18. In golf, Seb Hickman, Joe Sandall and Josh Roche lost by the narrowest of margins to Warwick School in the regional final of the ISGA knockout competition. Fencers enjoyed a win against Winchester and at the School's annual Sprints Swimming Gala, Abingdon was the overall winner in all three age groups. The footballers have got off to a good start this half term with lower school teams winning against Our Lady's and Caldicott and the 1<sup>st</sup> XI beating The Forest School and Merchant Taylors'. The Hockey Club had mixed results in their first fixture back against Marlborough.

Looking ahead, we are very excited by the announcement of a visit by former NASA Astronaut, Michael Foale CBE, a veteran of six Space Shuttle missions and extended missions on both Mir and the International Space Station. Michael will be in conversation with Frank Close OBE, and this event is open to all. Further information and how to buy tickets is available on the school website.

Looking much further ahead, the Griffen Ball will be held on Saturday 25 June and tickets are available for parents in all year groups from the website.

I hope that everyone is enjoying their association with Abingdon as the Lent Term proceeds.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Felicity Lusk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Felicity Lusk