



ABINGDON

From the Head: Miss OFS Lusk, B.Mus

20 November 2015

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

A very busy three weeks have followed half term with the Independent Schools Inspection, ISI, of both the Senior and Prep Schools taking place last week. Many thanks to academic and support staff, parents and boys whose input was much appreciated. I hope to receive the findings of the inspection before Christmas but this is dependent on ISI. I shall let you know as soon as I am able.

On Monday we welcomed the next Abingdon School Headmaster, Mike Windsor, to school. Mike spent time with staff and boys and he very much hopes to be able to visit Abingdon again soon to meet parents. He is however fully committed to his current school, Reading Blue Coat, until the end of the year.

We say farewell to Paul Holifield, known as Charlie, who leaves the School this month having worked at Abingdon for 15 years. During that time Charlie was an important member of the Estates Team acting as the main electrical technician for the school. He was involved in several major projects at the school, most recently helping with commissioning of the Yang Science Centre. Charlie will be difficult to replace and we wish him well in his new job.

We welcome Mr Hector Saiz to the School this month, who joins the ICT team as a support technician.

Our congratulations to Mr and Mrs Peter Hadfield on the birth of a son.

Last week saw the annual Remembrance Day parade and service, which was a sombre, poignant occasion with the whole school gathered to remember those who died in conflict. The CCF was very professional and disciplined and I know the ISI inspectors were impressed by the conduct of the School.

Boys and staff are thoroughly enjoying the new Yang Science Centre, which has very quickly become an integral part of the campus and a lively hub of activity. The enthusiasm of staff and boys is palpable. The Physics Department is currently hosting an exhibition on the Antikythera Mechanism in partnership with the University of Birmingham and the Institute of Physics. The exhibition will culminate with a lecture from Dr Maria Pavlidou on Friday 27 November when she will bring a

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working Bronze Model of the mechanism. On Monday this week the boys welcomed visitors from Crocodiles of the World and enjoyed handling an alligator, python, tortoise and giant millipedes. You can see more of what the boys and staff have been up to on the website.

Abingdon Science Partnership hosted a Science Oxford Saturday Science Club event last Saturday where very enthusiastic 5-9 year olds, and their parents, took part in experiments looking at 'Spooky Science' in the new Outreach Laboratory. The previous weekend, the YSC held a robotics workshop, attended by several schools.

The music department held its inaugural Solo Instrumental Competition last week, beginning with the Senior Section. This three-part competition will continue with the intermediate and junior categories in the Lent and Summer terms. The senior competition was over subscribed and had to be restricted to those who have gained grade 8 with a distinction. Helena Rakowski, Director of Music at St Helen's, had the unenviable task of adjudication and many congratulations to David Chung and Anthony Bracey who were placed joint 3<sup>rd</sup>, James Anderson-Besant in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Leon Wu in 1<sup>st</sup>. In other music news, congratulations to Bryce Jersing in the 5th Year who won gold in the U15 Quick March category and bronze in the U18 category of the 9th Independent Schools Bagpipe Competition. Congratulations also to third year Jason Ng who gained a distinction in his professional piano performance diploma, ATCL. This is a remarkable achievement in such a young musician.

In other successes Magnus Gregory has been awarded an Arkwright Scholarship. These scholarships are for outstanding individuals who show potential in and who are looking to follow a career in design or engineering. We currently have three Arkwright scholars in the Sixth Form. Many congratulations.

Our lower sixth artists, following an enjoyable visit to Tate Modern with the Fourth Year, studied perspective and the architecture of some of Oxford's historic buildings and visited Modern Art Oxford. What a lovely way to spend time in Oxford. In other trips, the CCF visited the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton, Physicists went to Diamond, the 526m synchrotron near Harwell and this year's Young Enterprise teams took part in a business skills seminar at Our Lady's.

Abingdon is very fortunate to welcome some tremendous speakers each term and this term has been no exception. The Economics Society enjoyed a fascinating insight into 'the behavioural responses to income taxes among the very rich' from James Browne, a senior research Economist at the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Last week the Society welcomed Teddy Watson, a Sector Consultant from the Said Business School.

Our sportsmen continue a very successful term. The Squash Club enjoyed wins against Bradfield, RGS High Wycombe and St Edward's and are through to the National U19 Boys Competition with a good seeding. In fencing there were Gold and Bronze medals for U14 Epee at the Southern Region Team Competition and wins for the squad against Charterhouse and Dauntsey's. The U18 basketball team

were victors of a very exciting match that was won in the last three minutes against Radley and the U15 tennis team have competed as one of the top 16 schools in the country for that age group. The Boat Club has started the season well with excellent results at the Fours Head and eight boys qualifying for Great Britain Junior Trials.

The Rugby Club played some tough matches against Sherborne with wins for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV in the first ever block fixture against this strong rugby school. The 2<sup>nd</sup> XV and U15 XV are through to the final of the County Cup following convincing wins by both teams against Chipping Norton. Last Saturday's fixture against Rugby School resulted in a very pleasing eight wins and one draw from nine matches.

Congratulations to fourth year David Bunn who competed for England in the Junior Home Internationals Orienteering event winning the individual group and placed 3rd in the relay competition. Ethan Moody competed for the Great Britain team at the Techno Worlds windsurfing competition in October coming a very creditable 9th in the Silver Fleet. Many congratulations also to Max Carter Keall who is through to the first round of selection for the national U16 hockey squad and to Charles Stoker who has been asked to attend the National Age Group Squad Academies.

Term is certainly progressing well with a tremendous sense of purpose at Abingdon. It won't be long before we see signs of Christmas emerging around the School.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk