



ABINGDON

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

13 June 2014

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

There is a sense that summer has arrived at last and we are all enjoying the activity of the busy lead up to the end of the academic year.

This summer four of our governors are retiring. Kathy Burk has long been associated with schools in Abingdon and has given tremendous service to both Abingdon and SHSK. She chaired the governors' education committee and we have benefitted considerably from her understanding of academic matters. John Bunce, an OA governor, has worn two hats as Chairman of the OA Club and as a governor where he has led on a number of important projects. Chris Owen has given outstanding service for many years and been a great support to members of the senior common room. Tanya Hawley, as a Mercers' Company governor, will be remembered for her wise counsel and commitment to pastoral matters and her care of the staff. To all these governors, grateful thanks are extended on behalf of Abingdon School for many years of commitment, dedication and excellent service.

We welcome to the Board of Governors Miss Penny Chapman. Penny trained as a solicitor and is currently head of the Charities and Education Group at Bircham Dyson Bell LLP. Penny's particular specialism is advising boards of trustees on governance and constitutional matters; her clients include a number of leading independent public schools and higher education establishments. As a mother of three teenage sons Penny can be found most weekends cheering loudly on a touchline. We also welcome Councillor Angela Lawrence, Mayor of Abingdon, to the Board of Governors for the civic year 2014-15. Angela has been a town councillor for the last 7 years. She has always been keen to be involved in the community, from setting up a playgroup 27 years ago in the town, to being a school governor at Rush Common Primary School for many years when her children were pupils there. She is also a governor at Fitzharrys School. Angela was actively involved on the Management Board of Abingdon and District CAB and is now a committee member of Friends of the CAB.

A number of our Maintenance team leave us this month. Daniel O'Dell has been at the school for two years and is moving on to a new position. We wish him well. Michael Cox is retiring after 27 years at the School. Michael worked at both the senior school, where he was a general Maintenance Operative, and then moved to carry out the same role at the Prep School. For the last 3 years he has carried out a

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caretaker/porter role. Mick Cox joined the School as a painter in 2007, became Caretaker of Crescent House in 2012 and retired in April 2014. We wish them both long and happy retirements. John Cowan joined the Maintenance Department in 2001, and in addition to this role he took on a minibus run for the Prep School in 2008. He left the Maintenance Team in April 2014 but is continuing with the minibus run for the Prep School.

Lawrence Pacey and Elise Fondue have been with us this year whilst undertaking their PGCE courses. They leave us towards the end of June and we wish them well with their future careers.

This year, as well as around 100 boys going on work experience at the end of their fifth year public exams, the School Careers Department and the Old Abingdonian Club have provided a number of short internships for lower sixth formers. These internships will include two London hospitals, a building company, a communications agency, a triathlon events and training business and a jewellery business. These internships will offer the 13 lower sixth form boys who were chosen from those who applied very valuable experience that will prove useful when applying to universities and for when they step out on their careers beyond university. These internships have this year been generously offered by Old Abingdonians and governors, and it is hoped that in future more and more of the boys in the Lower Sixth will be able to go on these and similar placements.

The ASPA/OA travel awards are made by ASPA (Abingdon School Parents' Association) and the Old Abingdonian Club to members of the lower and upper sixth form who are undertaking some form of travel and activity either during the summer holiday, between finishing school and starting university, or in their gap year. They are awarded once a year and the value received by each pupil can be anything between £50 and £500 depending on the activity and its benefits. A total of up to £2000 is awarded each year – up to £1000 from each organisation. There are conditions attached to the awards and the pupil has to complete a detailed application, as well as take part in an interview process. Interviews are taking place shortly and announcements will be made about this year's successful applicants. ASPA has also been very active with social events, with a bbq and a formal dinner in May that were thoroughly enjoyed by all. My thanks to ASPA for all that they do for the School.

Many congratulations to our Composer-in-Residence, Simon Whalley, who recently attended the first performance of his new commission, a setting of Psalm 99, in New York at the enthronement of Allen Shin, the new Bishop of the City. Congratulations also to the 12 boys who successfully auditioned for the Strauss Project which involves a residential weekend followed by a concert at the Royal Festival Hall in 2015. The young music scholars enjoyed their concert just before half term and we look forward to watching their progress through the school. James Magé has used his talent well, raising money for Sobell House by playing the piano at the Churchill Hospital.

Nine pupils were invited to take part in this year's Intermediate Maths Olympiad; congratulations to all those who took part especially Joseph Nash and Anthony Bracey who received distinctions and William Lam, Ivan Leung, Narun Tantichirasakul, Lewis Wu, Seb Hickman and Benjamin Schneider who were awarded merits. Joseph Nash came in the top 50 for his age group in the country – an impressive achievement.

The Fourth Year had a very successful visit to Berlin over half term. They saw a range of fascinating historical sites from the Nazi regime and the Cold War including the Gestapo Headquarters, a Stasi prison and a preserved section of the Berlin Wall. Also over half term the canoeists completed their Bronze DofE assessment on the River Medway; blessed with fine weather the boys couldn't fail to enjoy two days on the river and an overnight camp.

Following on from the impressive Art and Design exhibitions before half term I look forward to seeing the A level and scholars' work at the end of the month. Design Technology have been showcasing their year's work which can be seen on the website; do take a look, there are some lovely projects showing how the boys' skills develop from the Lower School to A level.

We are all hoping that the excellent performances at the National Schools' Regatta, over half term, bode well for Henley at the beginning of July. The 1st VIII retained their title in the Queen Elizabeth Challenge Cup and the 2nd VIII won a silver medal in the Elsenham Cup. The younger crews also came home with good results. The Cricket Club has had a very positive season so far. Overall it has won 71% of its games with five batsman recording centuries and the 1st XI losing only one of its block fixtures to date. 24 boys have been selected for county representative sides.

Congratulations to Magnus Gregory who has been selected for the U18 GB Kayak squad to compete in the European Marathon Kayak Championships and to Michael Fabes who won the U17 Oxfordshire 3000m Championships. Congratulations also to Ethan Moody for his windsurfing success and to the staff and boys who that took part in the Blenheim Triathlon over the weekend.

The exam season continues but it won't be long before it's all over for the boys and thoughts will turn to their long summer break.

Yours sincerely

Felicity Lusk