



ABINGDON

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

4 July 2014

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

There is so much to enjoy in these last few weeks of term, whether it's induction days for new boys, prize-giving for our newest old boys, concerts, the community service tea party, the Griffen Ball, assemblies, bbqs. Many thanks to all the staff - academic and support - for their help with these events.

We say farewell to a number of staff at the end of this term. Mrs Sallie Swain leaves the Admissions Department to go to the Prep School as School Secretary. Mrs Marie Haynes, Mrs Julie Haynes and Mrs Anne Thomson all leave our Housekeeping department at the end of this term. Brian Harris has been at Abingdon since January 1998. He started out as a porter and became Head Porter in 2005. He is retiring after 16 years' service. Brian Smith has been a porter here for 9 years and is leaving to explore pastures new.

We thank our five language assistants and wish them well for their further studies and work back home: Manuel Krone, Marta Santana, Julia Durand, Julie Domingues and Bishan Huang.

Charmian Hart has been a wonderfully loyal asset to the drama and film-making department for nearly a decade. She has turned her creative hands to everything from costumes, make-up and props to ticket sales and table decorations, on top of an ever-growing list of administrative tasks. Her designs for unusual event badges have been a trademark delight. We will miss her keenly, but wish her a richly deserved retirement.

Dale Lodge joined the History Department in January, and has also made a great contribution to the CCF, after many years of service life.

Dr Leo Dudin came in 2010 straight from life in industry, and leaves, four years later, to run the Chemistry Department at Uppingham. He has been effective in the classroom and been heavily involved in sailing, latterly leading it.

Both Damian Shirazi and Steve Brenchley have made great contributions to the development of sport at Abingdon. Damian has spent hours coaching cricketers

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: 01235 521563 Fax: 01235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

throughout the year. Three years ago he started our Football Club, and has been building a healthy competitive fixture list. Under Steve's direction tennis has flowered and become very popular. Steve has organised many extra opportunities for boys to develop their tennis skills. His drive and determination has been shown in his leadership of hockey. They both leave for other leadership roles, but we will be building on all the work of Damian and Steve and their colleagues. Steve has also been involved in supporting boarding throughout his time here.

Lina Man joined eight years ago to start up Mandarin and to teach Mathematics. Boys have benefitted from the challenge of this language, and produced impressive results. Lina has been a live-in tutor in Crescent throughout her time, too, and been in charge of shooting. She moves to Switzerland.

When Dr Peter Willis arrived from industry in 2004 he taught Chemistry but quickly transferred to Physics. For the last six years he has been an active, creative and thoughtful Director of Studies. He has helped us to formulate plans to change the shape of the Abingdon week, and to plan the new Science Centre. He has played a significant role in the recruitment of our thriving boarding community. I am particularly appreciative of Peter's enormous contribution to helping us build links with our community in Hong Kong. He leaves to join the Senior Leadership Team at Cokethorpe in charge of all academic matters.

David Boyd joined Abingdon from his PGCE and was rapidly promoted within three years to run a day house, which he has done for the last eight years. The boys in his house have appreciated his support and care: they know he will always look out for them in times of need. In addition he was given the role of ICT co-ordinator to help departments embed developments within their curriculum. He now leaves to take responsibility for this area at a school in Hong Kong.

When David Haworth first came to Abingdon in 1994 he taught Physics, led the CCF and ran the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Having been promoted to Head of Physics at Trinity Croydon he returned to lead our ICT team eleven years ago. A renaissance man, with many talents, the boys have benefitted from his commitment to the RAF section, to gliding and to outdoor pursuits. In the rapidly changing world of technology he has spent many hours developing a bespoke database and has sought to guide our ICT developments with patience and care.

Jayne Jennings retires after a long teaching career during which she has served as Head of Department both here and elsewhere. She has taught French and German at Abingdon since September 2008. She has always been very committed to the pastoral care of her tutees, organising breakfasts and outings for her tutor group as well as supporting them through the university applications process. Jayne has a real passion for languages and is always keen to discuss the finer points of meaning and nuances of words and expressions. So much so, that she has decided to go back into full time education herself and she leaves Abingdon to begin a new stage in her career as a translator and interpreter.

Gaynor Cooper, our Librarian, who has been here since 1993, also retires this term. Her enthusiasm is boundless, and she is keen to share her knowledge to enable boys develop their reading and their research skills. Boys are involved in joint author visits, they shadow the Carnegie, and they are involved in the Oxfordshire Kids' Lit Quiz. Gaynor was a prime mover in establishing the Oxfordshire Book Award. Gaynor has worked closely with the librarians of maintained and independent sectors. The esteem in which she is held is evident at the events she organises so ably. Gaynor has also supervised the boys on Duke of Edinburgh Award trips, music tours and ski trips, and will be leading the party to China next month. I rather suspect an active retirement awaits, with our best wishes.

I wish all those leaving us bright and happy futures and thank them for their service to Abingdon.

The Drama Department and AFU have been very active with the Fourth Year performing GCSE coursework, the Lower School working with professional actors on Shakespeare plays and rehearsed readings of the eight original plays written for the National Theatre's New Views Scheme. The AFU have been busy filming at school and out on location in Oxford; we look forward to seeing their new material in the autumn. The postponed lower school production of "*Who you Gonna Call?*" finally took place before appreciative audiences. The cast was excellent and Louis Edward, Jacob Henney, Callum Ravden, Nathaniel Reading and Alexander Thulin all received Head's Praise for their performances. There was some time for relaxation for the department as the sixth form drama students and staff celebrated the end of A levels with supper in Oxford followed by a play.

The Art Department held superb exhibitions of A level and scholarship art which you can see examples of on the website - if you didn't get a chance to view them first hand. The Music Department leaves for Barcelona tomorrow, for what promises to be a fantastic tour if the pre-tour and Jazz concerts were anything to go by. What a lovely way for our senior musicians to conclude their time at Abingdon playing together in beautiful venues in Catalonia. Big shoes to step into but judging by the lower school's gala concert the boys are up to the task. A special thanks to Didier Delgorge who has played the piano at the end of lower school chapel services for the last two terms and congratulations for winning his class at the Abingdon Music Festival.

The Lower School has produced some impressive end of term performances not only with drama and in the gala concert but also on the sports field with records set at sports day and opponents defeated in tennis and cricket. They have also visited Fishbourne and enjoyed the 'Be the Best' celebration. Other sporting successes include the U15A tennis team, which has had a tremendous season winning the Oxfordshire Independent Schools and Oxfordshire Schools Tournament. The U15 cricket team also beat Bloxham to win the Oxfordshire County cricket T20 final. Very well done to all.

The inaugural Abingdon and St Helen's swimming fixture against the Abingdon Vale Swimming Club was fiercely contested and it is hoped it will become a permanent

fixture in the Swimming Club's calendar. The Boat Club has been preparing for Henley and at the time of writing have been successful in all their races. The younger rowers and second VIII have also rowed well at Marlow and BASHER regattas and in competition on our home stretch of the river.

Many congratulations to Magnus Gregory who won a silver medal at the European Kayak Marathon Championship and for his selection to the GB squad for the Sprint European Championship. Magnus won the John Rayson (OA 1942) Award of £500 to support his bid to be selected for the GB Junior squad.

We wish Christian von Eitzen the best of luck as he captains the Oxfordshire boys' team at the English Schools' Track and Field Championships on 11 and 12 July.

And finally for sporting news, well done to the Abingdon Croquet Federation who, having lost in their first ever fixture to Winchester, put in a much better performance against the girls of St Helen's, winning, I fear, with perhaps rather ungentlemanly enthusiasm and underhand tactics!

I would like to congratulate the winners of this year's ASPA/OA Club Travel Awards Jonathan Ainslie, James Telford and Alexander Turner who I am sure will make the most of their exciting opportunities. Further congratulations go to Thomas Purkhardt who received his Gold DofE award at a ceremony at St James's Palace, to George Hale and Henry Tipple who received Head's Praise for setting up and running the Geographical Society and to Maxwell Moyle for his outstanding contribution to the ATOM Science Festival.

I am looking forward to having a bit more time to look at the School's WW1 archive collection, prepared by our archivist Sarah Wearne and put online by our website manager Naomi Constable. The information on the OAs who lost their lives in the war, their young faces, the gradual change from optimism to stoicism as reflected in the pages of the school magazine and the moving Roll of Service, hand-amended by the then Second Master, all serve to bring home the tragedy of the times.

Over the summer Abingdonians will be travelling to Moldova, China and India. I would encourage them to embrace the culture and way of life as well as appreciating all that they see and the people they meet. I know they will be excellent ambassadors for the School.

It's been another fantastic year at Abingdon and it's very hard to believe that 2013/14 is now drawing to a close. The boys have gained much, I hope, over the past year and will, no doubt, be looking forward to the long summer break. For our U6 leavers the end of this year is a particular milestone as they step out into their adult lives. I thank all parents of those leaving for their commitment to Abingdon and support as together we have educated your sons.

My special thanks to all colleagues who've made everything possible for the boys this year. Without the dedication, talent and commitment of our teachers, along with the support staff, Abingdon couldn't do what it does so well – educate these

marvellous boys to the highest possible standards. My thanks to our governors led by Adrian Burn, and also to the Senior Leadership Team: David Dawswell, Bruno Delacave, Graeme May, Mark Hindley, Jane Jorgensen, Michael Triff and Crispin Hyde-Dunn for helping me lead Abingdon.

I wish everyone the best of summers, time to relax with family and friends and lots of fun and enjoyment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Felicity Lusk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Felicity Lusk