



ABINGDON

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

1 May 2015

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Governors and Boys of Abingdon,

Welcome back to the summer term. The campus was a joy to return to in the April sunshine.

This term I welcome Mr James Ferrito to Abingdon as ICT Helpdesk Administrator. We said farewell to the following colleagues this month: Mrs Georgina Redman, temporary classics teacher during Mr Franklin's sabbatical; Mr Matthew Fisher, School Staff Instructor; Mrs Julie Parkin-Morse, temporary HR Manager; and Mrs Kate Jennings, Boarding House Matron. I wish all these colleagues well in their new positions.

The Abingdon community celebrated two marriages over the Easter break: Mr Ian Middleton (teacher and Head of Chemistry) and Miss Victoria Hicks (teacher of French); and Miss Claire Vickers (teacher of English) and Mr Ian Tilley. My congratulations to both of the happy couples.

The Easter holidays seem a while away now but they were a very busy time for many members of staff. The US, French and South African exchange visits went very well as did the Third Year's tour of the WW1 battlefields. The boys traced the memorials of three OAs, Major Sydney Baker, Private William Lewington and Serjeant Leonard Burge at Pozieres Cemetery. What a poignant thing for the boys to do, it certainly adds relevance to their studies. You can read more about the three OAs in our online WW1 archive.

Over 90 cadets and staff took part in the annual CCF Easter Camp on Salisbury Plain and there was a DofE practice sailing trip and walking expedition in preparation for their assessments later this year. Three fifth year boys also completed their Day Skipper Sailing Course, a very impressive qualification to gain at 16, the minimum age possible. The First and Second Years thoroughly enjoyed their adventure trips to Liddington and Plas Pencelli, relishing a wide range of activities from caving to zip wire. The U15 football team travelled to Paris and came a very credible third in the ESF International Youth Festival of Football against stiff opposition from across Europe. Also over the holiday, Charlie Quarterman continued his cycling success coming third in the Junior Tour of the Mendips and third in Geluveld, Belgium.

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In what was a tremendous experience 11 of our musicians played in an orchestra of 120 at the Royal Festival Hall as part of the Strauss project. How fantastic, many congratulations to them all and in particular Alexander Foster who played the Principal Horn and gave an impressive solo. Congratulations also to James Anderson-Besant who won the Abingdon Music Festival Maestro Conducting masterclass/competition.

The School gathered at break last Thursday to see 12 lower sixth physicists launch a balloon into space. This was the culmination of over 12 weeks' work and it was a very exciting moment as the balloon took off. It travelled 30000 metres before falling back to earth several hours later and landing just outside Standlake. There is some fantastic footage on the website of the balloon's travels. The boys spoke so enthusiastically about the project and what they have learned. This is just one of the many projects that have benefitted from the Annual Fund so many thanks to you all for making these enrichment activities possible.

Congratulations to fifth year Robert Harris who was awarded a Gold in the Physics Olympiad GCSE challenge and to lower sixth formers Jack Bowen and Adam Al-Yousuf who were both awarded Silver in the AS Physics Olympiad. Angus Shen received a Bronze in the second round of the Maths Olympiad and Anthony Bracey is through to the second round of the Linguistics Olympiad for the second year in succession. Both Anthony and Sebastian Mulford were awarded Golds and we wish Anthony the best of luck with the next round.

The Chess Club played very well in a tough match against Mill Hill County High in the quarter finals of the National Schools' Championship Plate competition. Many congratulations also to first year Cameron Butcher who won the English Bridge Union's Simultaneous Pairs competition beating 99 other pairs from all over England. The Young Enterprise teams did well in the South Oxfordshire and Vale Young Enterprise Area Final and Be.spoke are through to the Oxfordshire County Final in May.

Last week saw an informal but very impressive art display of scholars' and exhibitors' work: please do take a look at the gallery on the website.

Summer sport has got underway with pre-season cricket in Kent and matches against Tonbridge, Sutton Valence and Bradfield College. The first fixture against Magdalen College School saw excellent wins for the 1st and 3rd XIs and the 2nd XI were playing well before the match was abandoned. The golfers had a good win against Wellingborough and are through to the ISGA National Plate finals in June. The rowers also had a very successful training week in Temple-sur-Lot over the holiday and we wish them luck for the upcoming National Schools' Regatta.

The Science Centre is really taking shape and it is on time and budget so fingers firmly crossed that it will continue to progress smoothly for opening in the autumn. At Tilsley Park the athletics track is currently being repaired and the site is already much improved.

The boarders have settled back into school life, thoroughly enjoying a trip to woodlands outside Reading for what seems to be a fun, if fiercely competitive, round of paintballing.

Many congratulations to upper sixth formers Tim McGovern, George Hale and Archie Wimborne who ran the London Marathon on Sunday, raising money for Mind and Able Child Africa. Very impressive indeed.

This is such a short term for the Fifth Year and Sixth Form as well as being the end of an era for the Upper Sixth. Such mixed feelings; we are always sad to see the Upper Sixth move on but what exciting lives they have ahead of them. In the latest edition of 'Words and That', the School's student led literary publication, upper sixth former James Beazley, who is the editor, put into words his thoughts on leaving school at the end of this term:

Soon, I'll sit in chapel
Knowing it is done.
G and T's speech is said,
Jerusalem is sung.
Although it is summer,
The bleakest of all days
Greets us from the morning sun
For now we must part ways.

To the moment I may succumb
For tears I will be blind,
Not in fear of what's to come
But in knowing what lies behind.

Very evocative. We keep the Upper Sixth until half term but today I wish the Fifth Year all the best as they go on study leave and also to the Lower Sixth whose study leave begins at the end of Thursday 7 May.

Yours sincerely



Felicity Lusk