



From the Head's Desk

In common with many schools we turned our fund-raising efforts this term to the Tsunami Appeal in an effort to bring some relief to the areas struck by the disaster. Assemblies early in the term helped to raise awareness of the geography of the region and the economic impact of the destruction; we then turned our attention to immediate and longer-term fund raising. I have been moved by, and very proud of the efforts students have made; they contributed £425 to UNICEF following Non-Uniform Day and Austerity Lunch, and staff donated a further £375 to the Disaster Emergency Committee.

However, students wanted to make a longer-term commitment, and we have made a formal link with Adopt Sri Lanka (www.adoptsrilanka.com) to further this aim. Students organised a fantastic Rock Concert, a Valentine's Disco, and Cake and Pancake Sales to raise a magnificent £1,000 in 10 days; this money is now ready to be given directly to a named school which we will 'sponsor' until the end of 2007. Our aim is to donate between £300 and £500 a term during that time, and we hope to be able to visit the school to provide practical help, and to receive Sri Lankan students and staff at Friends'. A letter to students and parents in the coming months will give full details of the school with which we are to be twinned.

For a school of our size to raise £1,800 in four weeks is a remarkable achievement, and it shows the commitment of this community to help people whose lives have been so dramatically affected. The realisation of how lucky we are in comparison has been a powerful lesson, and I hope that the link we have established will flourish in the next three years and we will be able to look back with satisfaction at the difference our support has made.

This is a short but busy term; I hope parents will enjoy this issue of The Avenue and marvel, as I do, at the quantity and quality of events and activities that have been undertaken.



From the Junior School Head's Desk

The term has ended on a successful note as we are very proud to have received the Silver Award in the national Eco Schools scheme. The award recognises the tremendous effort put in by pupils, parents and staff in making the School much more aware of the benefits of working together to improve the environment, encourage citizenship and promote healthy lifestyles.

Uttlesford District Council recently visited the School to explain how refuse collection and recycling work in our area. Ed Lock, part of the recycling team at Uttlesford, presented the award to members of the Green Team (see below).

As with our Senior School colleagues, we were all moved by the impact of the tsunami and our pupils, parents and staff all responded with immense generosity. Our Swimathon raised £3,200 – this is normally split between the Alex Ruffell Memorial Fund, which supports a school in Zimbabwe, and the Junior School. On this occasion, the £1,500 which would have gone into Junior School funds will be put towards our whole school project, Adopt Sri Lanka.

Red Nose Day is fast approaching and we anticipate raising more money for charities in Africa and here in the UK, with a mad March hair day. Finally, our Junior School production of Peter Pan is approaching even faster than the end of term itself, leaving us all with plenty to do before the chance to relax over the Easter Holidays.





The Avenue Spring 2005

Eat your 'art (ichoke) out, Jamie!

A 'Name that vegetable' competition was on the menu in March, when pupils were given the challenge of identifying more than 20 pieces of fruit and vegetables provided by Colin Jones of the Fresh Food Group in Colchester.

Pupils were able to sniff and feel a variety of produce from Britain and abroad including celeriac, rhubarb, purple sprouting broccoli and lychees. One of the most unfamiliar vegetables was horseradish, closely followed by the Chinese radish.

Although Jamie Oliver may have made headlines recently with his adventures in the world of school catering, the event at Friends' was just one of our regular food-related activities. Recent highlights have included a 'Potato Day', an international evening and an Indian meal and cookery demonstration for boarders.

"I am always looking for new ways of encouraging children to try alternative foods," says Catering Manager Gary Oakshott. Combined with a thriving Food Technology department and cookery club, pupils at Friends' have plenty of opportunity to learn about a wide-ranging and healthy diet.



Science Museum sleepover

Class 4M had a sleepover with a difference at the Science Museum in London. They arrived bearing sleeping bags and toothbrushes, stayed up until nearly midnight making rockets and buggies, then tried to get to sleep on the museum floor.

In the morning they rose bright and early for breakfast and more activities, including a visit to the Launch Pad to experiment with a variety of gadgets and watch a 3D film at the Imax theatre. Teachers, parents and pupils all arrived home safely, tired and a little dirty, but having had a challenging and exciting time.

Development progress

The development plans to improve the Junior School, Sixth Form and boarding facilities, refurbish the main school building and build a new creative and performing arts centre are progressing. Presentations have been made to staff, pupils and parents and there will be an exhibition in School on Saturday 9th April for neighbours and other groups associated with the School.

The development work is being carried out by Tim Ronalds Architects, a practice which is committed to building sustainable and environmentally sensitive buildings. They have been responsible for arts, education and public projects across the country, including the development of the Hackney Empire, and have particular expertise in working with schools.

Introducing Buddhism

Sadhujivin, a monk of the Western Buddhist Order, visited Friends' School to speak to Year 8 students as part of their study of the religions of India.

He talked about the spirit of Buddhism and urged students to see themselves as unique and precious, and as essential to the universe as one tiny piece of a huge jigsaw. He explained that there was no need to fear death because we are part of the great cycle of death, life and renewal.

Two members of the Harlow Buddhist community then spoke about how they had come to follow this religion and what it meant to them.

One Year 8 parent said it had made a very strong impression on the children to meet someone who had dedicated their life to their religion.

Head of Religious Studies Helen Golden said Sadhujivin had shown how religion is a vibrant, dynamic force in people's lives. "He showed us that Religious Studies is not about learning about the past but is about applying those ideas to the world of today."



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Global reading

"Which animal keeps falling asleep at a very strange tea-party?" and "What kind of dragon is Norbert?" were among the questions asked by Librarian Janice Weatherall in a World Book Day Quiz. Around 60 Senior School pupils took part and were rewarded for their efforts with a chocolate bar each.

In the Junior School, World Book Day saw the curriculum for each class centred on a nursery rhyme or poem, and at intervals during the day ERIC (Everybody Reading In Class) was observed. Year 1 and Reception also walked down to the Friends' Meeting House and listened to a story-telling session run by Anna Evans of Barefoot Books.



Claire, Clementine and Cecily are seen here taking part in "The Enormous Turnip" by Ian Beck

Jazz Group set to shine

Friends' Jazz Group is set to star with a short performance on stage ahead of a concert by an unusual professional ensemble, Mr McFall's Chamber, on 19th March.

The Edinburgh-based group seeks out music that bridges the divide between classical and other styles. Their concert, "Six Feet of Blood", is presented by Friends' School and is set to include numbers by Frank Zappa, Raymond Scott, King Crimson, and Astor Piazzolla.

Robert McFall, who heads the ensemble, once lived at Great Easton and went to primary school in Saffron Walden.

Leo's in business

Sixth Former Leo Capella has made the shortlist of the UK Young Business Writer of the Year Awards, run by ProShare, an independent, not-for-profit organisation which supports the teaching of personal finance, business and the economy.

Leo had to write an article in the style of a business magazine, exploring the issues surrounding changes in saving and borrowing habits in Britain. The six short-listed essays have been passed to the Financial Times' Personal Finance Editor for judging.

"I'm delighted to be one of the finalists," says Leo. "This has really encouraged me and definitely helped with my studies. I was forced to think and research on how the topics tied together and on the process of analysis."

New Sixth Form social spaces

More leisure and community spaces have been created for Friends' Sixth Formers during the term. Walls have come down in Croydon East to transform the old TV room into a large, light and airy Sixth Form Common Room, complete with DVD player and – shortly – a tropical fish tank to soothe and amuse.

The large galleried dormitory in Girls' House, known as "The Barn", has been refurbished to create a new Sixth Form Day and Boarder Centre, with desks for working, sofas for relaxing and plenty of Ikea-inspired décor. Internet links are also due to be installed. And the former Girls' House TV room has been refurbished to create a new Sixth Form Day and Boarding Common Room, where pupils can meet and make snacks such as toast and hot drinks.

Cockereel Celebrations

Chinese students at Friends' celebrated the Chinese New Year when they went out for a meal at Saffron Walden's Jade Garden restaurant.

"We decided to have a meal just for our Chinese students, as they rarely get the chance to celebrate the New Year in this country," says Head of ESOL Michelle Gillmore. "It was a great opportunity for the older and younger pupils to get to know each other."

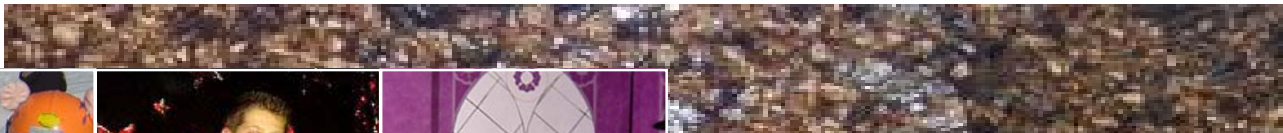
The Chinese students then presented an Assembly about their New Year, explaining their culture and their horoscope and giving every pupil a chocolate egg to mark the Year of the Rooster.

More Tea Vicar?

More Tea Vicar?, billed as "A Material Musical with a Magnetic Attraction" was performed to rapt Junior School pupils by Kinetic Theatre. The show explored aspects of the Science Curriculum, with particular emphasis on metals and magnetism.

Kinetic Theatre is a two-person performing group whose shows are targeted at Infants and Juniors but also include some humorous touches for teachers. "Very educational, very funny and lots of audience participation," was the verdict.





The Avenue Spring 2005



Boys' sports highlights

The First XI football team has had mixed fortunes this term, but Eric Ho has been great in goal and there have been strong performances from Elbert Kim and Kevin Philemon.

The Under 15s have had a steady term with some good wins. James Hutton and Adam King have produced some notable play and Andy Hall has gone from strength to strength.

The Under 13s are starting to perform very solidly as a team, with a particularly strong performance against Stoke College. Our Year 9 basketball team remains unbeaten.

James on form

Assistant Head James Askew was undeterred by snow and a biting wind when he joined 400 other runners for a sponsored 20-mile run at Bury St Edmunds in February.

Having hoped to finish in under three hours, he was delighted with his time of two hours, 51 minutes and has raised around £350 for the Adopt Sri Lanka appeal, part of the School's tsunami fund-raising efforts.

"It was very, very cold and we hit a blizzard at about 17 miles," says James, "But the harder it gets, the more I enjoy it!"

Junior sports highlights

Laxton Six-a-side Football Tournament

The Junior School team acquitted themselves very well at the Laxton Six-a-side Football Tournament which is held at Oundle every year. The conditions were far from perfect as the snow and rain had left the pitches in a very muddy state but this did not stop the team from putting in a series of good performances based on team work, a willingness to pass the ball and a great deal of determination. The team were runners up in their group and beat the winners of the second group to reach the final. The final was a very competitive affair and the team only lost during extra time to a golden goal.



Ready for the off! The whole Junior School took part in the house cross-country event last December, with everyone contributing to their house score. Penn was 1st, Fry 2nd and Cadbury 3rd.

Girls' sports highlights

Another excellent hockey season has seen the Under 13s undefeated all year. They have improved considerably both individually and as a team. Bethan Waters and Gabby Biland excel in midfield and Jess Dickinson has made some outstanding saves in goal.

The Under 12s have won or drawn 90% of their matches, helped by great goals from Amber Jane Manser, Polly Johnson, Emma Taylor and Eliza Walter.

The Under 15s have also had a good number of wins, but the highlight of their year has been qualifying for the Bishop's Stortford and District semi-finals, only losing to the eventual winners.

The 1st XI continues to improve, with some brilliant hockey that bodes well for their tour of Barbados this summer.

Dates for your diary

Boarders return: 19th April
Teaching begins: 20th April
May Bank Holiday: 2nd May
The Wizard of Oz: 17/18th May
Friends and Families: 21st May
Open Morning: 25th May
Half-term starts: 27th May
Half-term finishes: 5th June
End of term: 8th July

Ski Trip to Italy

by Years 5 to 8



Thirty pupils in Years 5 to 8 recently returned from a week of skiing in Claviere in Italy. "Great weather and a fabulous ski school" said Jenny Allwood who organised the trip.

