

the avenue

summer 2011

From the Head

Each edition of 'The Avenue' is a wonderful opportunity to look back and remind ourselves of the breadth of activity that has taken place at Friends' over the preceding months. As ever, we have been awash with sporting, dramatic and musical events both at school and further afield and some of these are featured on these pages.

In both the Junior School and the Senior School the good weather has meant that a lot of cricket, tennis and rounders has been played. Our Middle School Band has 'toured' in Oxfordshire and also performed in the Saffron Walden bandstand, as well as having a concert of their own at school. Audiences who saw a wonderful production of 'Romeo and Juliet' enjoyed strong, convincing performances from a young cast; at the time of writing we are looking forward to Year 6 with the help of Year 5 ending the year in style.

The weather held, too, for 'Friends and Families Day', which once again reminded all of us of what a joy it is to be part of the school. During the more formal part of the day Martin Dickinson, our Clerk of Governors, emphasised the school's determination to ensure that during the next year pupils will not be adversely affected by the development of the site that will be taking place.

We have a great deal to look forward to! Having secured planning permission we are excited by the prospect of moving Early Years and Years 1 and 2 into stylish new accommodation in time for September 2012.



We have been working closely with our architects to ensure that we have light, airy classrooms in which our youngest pupils and their teachers can work and play. I am sure all agree that it is high time that we say goodbye to our present buildings (charming though they are in their own ways).

Of course, it isn't only the youngest pupils who will benefit. The Junior School has needed a 'quality' hall of its own for a long time and the new building will provide a super venue for many events. Those in Years 3-6 will also enjoy new art and ICT facilities and teachers will have accommodation for meetings with parents. A 'bespoke' Mini-Club room will continue to provide after-school care – all in a safe, secure environment.

We continue to seek ways in which we can improve our facilities across the school and work is already underway on 'Phase Two' which is likely to focus on the Senior part of the school. Already I very much hope that, thanks to the generosity of the James Reckitt charity, we will have a smart new Multi Games Area in situ by the time we come back in September.

Until then, have a super summer holiday.

Long Service

This term we say a fond farewell to Lynne Robinson who is retiring having worked tirelessly as Staff Secretary and more recently as Database manager since 1989. We thank her for her 22 years of service, she will be greatly missed. Heather Carter also retires as Head of the Study Centre. Heather joined the school in January 2001 and in 10 years has established a flag ship department. We wish her well in her retirement and in her new role as grandmother.

We also record thanks to John Searle-Barnes as he retires from his senior management position. John has worked at Friends for 27 years as Head of History and Head of the Sixth Form. John has had a profound impact on numerous generations of sixth formers and will be missed from this role but we are delighted that he continues to teach part-time in the History and Film Studies departments.

Friends' Forest School

The Junior School began lessons in its very own Forest School this term. Situated in a specially enclosed area at the back of the games fields, the new outdoor classroom allows children to learn and explore within a wooded environment.

The Nursery and Reception classes have had a wonderful time in their special forest schools overalls, making forest people in clay, creating shelters and studying mini-beasts, all while discovering the changing nature of their new outdoor classroom.



Friends and Families Day

On the 14th of May pupils, parents, staff, friends and Old Scholars celebrated another successful year of superb all round achievement among our pupils.

Sir Alan Haselhurst attended as the guest speaker and presented pupils with awards for their achievement throughout the curriculum, contribution to school life and to members of last year's Quartet for demonstrating outstanding leadership.

The Quartet speeches were again a highlight and an insight into life for a student at Friends'. Emma Stanbury, a member of the Quartet spoke for all of them when she said in her speech, "The thing I love most about this school is that it respects the individual for who they are, and teaches them to reach their potential for what they can be".

Friends' Junior School pupils were also presented with awards, including the Westgarth Cup, a new addition to the ceremony this year. This new award, in honour of Sue Westgarth and her passion for running, was presented to Alice Bromell by Sue's sister, Chris Westgarth.

The rest of the day saw the entire school community come together to enjoy a picnic lunch, be entertained by roving drama students, watch the Infants and Juniors maypole dance in the Junior School, not forgetting the parents impromptu skip around the maypole, support the school cricket team who took on the Old Scholars and enjoy a wonderful array of cakes in the international café. The evening saw a number of Old Scholars stay on at school to enjoy a superb meal in the dining room and a night of catching up with old friends.



Science Outside the Classroom

Year 3 visited the Cambridge Botanical Gardens this term to see how plants adapt to their environment. The children have been studying climatic regions of the world in Geography and plants in Science so were able to reinforce what they had learnt in both subjects by visiting the glass houses within the gardens to see plants of various climates including oceanic, tropical, mountainous and a dry desert climate. As well as discovering the seven things required to sustain life they were lucky enough to see the Queen and Prince Philip on their pre-royal wedding visit to Cambridge!

Year 6 spent a day at the Epping Forest FSC Centre in May exploring different habitats and ecosystems. They learnt about the interdependence of species and how they are adapted to suit their environment. It was perfect weather for pond dipping, a little windy for tree shaking and unseasonably dry for woodland minibeast hunts. However, lots of creatures were found in each habitat and camouflage and pollution games reinforced learning and were also a great opportunity for some physical activity.

With their newfound identification skills Year 6 pupils have had the opportunity to survey our new Forest Schools area and have compiled an extensive species list including wasp beetles, a speckled wood butterfly, a click beetle and a variety of trees including spindle, hazel and oak.

Both the trip and our own outdoor facilities provide a wonderful hands-on experience for our pupils.



Romeo and Juliet

In May, Richard Smith, head of Drama, and Sarah Bartley, our talented and extremely hardworking graduate drama assistant, along with a brave and brilliant cast took on the genius that is Shakespeare.

They did not disappoint. Superb performances, moving speeches, sharp wit delivered with perfect comedic timing and authentic costumes all contributed to three nights of wonderful entertainment.

The play mixed elements of both classical and contemporary theatre with an addition of a Greek chorus. The Chorus, while acknowledging the influence of classical tragedies, reflected the action on stage through movement and mime.

The cast worked tirelessly, giving up lunchtimes, afternoons and weekends. The rehearsal process began last June as for every minute of the final performance it takes approximately one hour of rehearsal and with Romeo and Juliet lasting over two hours, the maths, and time spent working on the play, speaks for itself.

Thanks to all those involved in making Romeo and Juliet such a successful and enjoyable experience.



Year 7 Go To The Tower

As part of a History unit on medieval siege weapons and warfare, Year 7 visited the Tower of London to see examples of these weapons in situ. They were able to see life size reconstructions of a number of weapons including the trebuchet and cross bow, and learn how they were used to attack or defend a castle. Pictured are a number of the group hearing about the cross bow from a 'medieval' knight.



Middle School Band trip to Stratford

With their motto, "where's the next gig?" firmly in mind the Middle School Band, along with the red van packed to the brim with music stands, banners, drum kit, instruments, sheet music and luggage, made their way to Stratford.

The Band performed a selection of pieces, including their wonderful rendition of Pirates of the Caribbean, to Sibford School and were then entertained by Sibford's Junior Choir and their Year 7 and 8 Jazz Band.

They enjoyed a whistle stop tour of the birthplace of William Shakespeare, participated in an energetic game of football along the bank of the River Avon, and even had the opportunity to learn about the canal system of Stratford thanks to the extensive general knowledge of Andrew Holmes.

The Band enjoyed entertaining shoppers as they played their second concert of the tour at Banbury Bandstand.

Back at home the Bband played to an attentive local audience at the Saffron Walden bandstand. Shoppers were treated to an exciting programme of music with a delightful interlude of Year 3 pupils dancing around the maypole.



Eco Schools

The Eco Schools initiative was launched in January and significant progress has been made over the last six months. A dedicated Eco Schools Action Group meets regularly to discuss, plan and implement ways that the school can become more sustainable in all that it does. Through the use of assemblies, a dedicated notice board and regular updates the group is aiming to raise awareness of sustainability issues and invite the school community to take part in particular campaigns and projects. In recognition of the school's early efforts on the path to sustainability, the school has been awarded the Eco Schools bronze award. Current focuses include finding ways to recycle even more of the waste generated by the school and finding ways to reduce energy consumption on site.

The group have begun a vegetable gardening project this term. Three enthusiastic teachers and a handful of green-fingered pupils are developing a small container vegetable garden. Currently our runner beans are flowering, strawberries are ripening, chard leaves are getting bigger by the day, and the tomatoes, courgettes, mint, rosemary, chillies and salad leaves are all in various stages of growth. In the true spirit of sustainability almost all of the seed, seedlings, tools and compost have been donated by willing parents and staff. A big thank you to them all.

It is important that the drive to sustainability is something that the whole school community participates in, with everyone - pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff all playing a part and all sharing in our successes. There are already many initiatives that contribute to aspects of sustainability and sustainability issues are taught in most subjects' curricula. Two new cross-curricular initiatives this term have had an eco schools focus. Year 9 German students did an extended research project investigating the wealth of bird life we have on site. Pupils presented their research, in German, in the form of extremely professional PowerPoint presentations. Year 9 Geography students are using a collaborative learning model to research the current sources and use of energy by the school, ways in which we can improve energy efficiency and the practicalities, costings and constraints of using alternative and renewable energy sources. This project will culminate in each group presenting their findings to the Bursar, David Wood and Assistant Bursar, Stephen Welch.

These projects and others in the pipeline will help us succeed in our next goal, the Eco Schools silver award.

Next Stop - Bremerhaven

Our Year 9 and 10 German language students made it safely to Germany after an unexpected ash-cloud delay. After playing host to students from Bremerhaven in September last year our students were reunited with their partners and welcomed into their family homes.

The trip provided invaluable exposure to German family life and provided our students with excellent opportunities to practise their spoken German. They also spent a day in school experiencing a day in the life of a student in Germany.

Highlights of the visit included a trip to Heidepark in Soltau, a theme park near Hannover, and a visit to the Zoo am Meer, where our students enjoyed watching various sealife and three entertaining and very active polar bears.

The German department is currently planning next year's exchange trip and look forward to hosting students from the Lloydgymnasium, Bremerhaven again in September.

From the Junior School Head

We are coming towards the end of another very busy year and it hardly seems five minutes ago since September. The sun shone on Friends and Families Day earlier this term and the Junior School contributed much to a very successful occasion, beginning with the Middle School Band and the Choir. The Infants were impeccably behaved and wonderfully patient during the more formal morning of speeches and presentation of awards. In the afternoon any visitor to the Junior School could not fail to be impressed by the range of activities on offer. Some wonderful Maypole dancing and the mighty Year 5 ukulele orchestra rounded off the afternoon.

The rest of the term has been just as active with trips by the Middle School Band to Sibford School and Banbury, residential visits to St Mark's College by Year 3 and Flatford by Year 4, the Year 6 play "Treasure Island", cricket and rounders fixtures, a Nursery's Fun Day, Sports Day and, of course, the Year 2 sleepover in their classroom. The Forest School has begun and Wednesday afternoon is enriched with the sight of Nursery and Reception heading for the trees in their green dungarees.

Next Year promises to be just as exciting as the new Early Years and Infant building takes shape. I hope and trust that everyone has a pleasant and enjoyable summer holiday.

Andrew Holmes



Sports Highlights

Cricket

U9

- The first Kwik Cricket League match was against RAB and saw a close and exciting finish – a draw with each team making 271 runs.
- A strong finish by Friends' against Katherine Semar to win the match by 75 runs.
- A lively game against Great Chesterford saw Friends' bowl accurately and Nathan Gibbs take his first hat-trick. With the help of Josh Batcheler's and Barnaby Deller's sixes, Friends' won by 76 runs.

U13

- Captained by Sam Winfield, the squad of 15 players all showed a good interest in the game.
- Two close losses to SWCHS played in excellent spirit. Andrew Chong bowled very well to take 3 wickets.
- A loss to St Mary's but with good batting performances from Felix Hannam and Ed Candler.
- Richard Hall has fielded well this season and also improved with the bat. Sam Winfield has made good contributions both as captain and with the bat.

U15

- Captained very ably by Tom Taylor, the team had a convincing win over St Mary's but fell short in their run chases against SWCHS and Newport.
- Tom Taylor and Ben Winfield have made strong contributions with the bat and the accurate bowling of Stephen Douglas and Will Eve has helped put the team in strong positions.
- They finished the season with a good win against HRS.

Rounders

U9

- The first match of the season saw Friends' win 13-6 against Fairstead House.
- Friends' batted well against RAB to win the match, 11-8½. Jack Taylor was player of the match.

U11

- A closely fought match against RAB. Despite good performances on both the field and with the bat, Friends lost narrowly, 10½ -8½.

Year 7

- Two convincing wins against Gosfield and HRS.
- Only one loss this season – a brilliant result.
- The girls have played well this term. A special mention to Megan Evers and Becky Ford.

Sports Day 2011

After having to postpone sports day from a very wet Friday we were blessed with a beautiful Monday afternoon. The field events were completed the week before which saw many close competitions in both the boys and girls events but only one 'new' record. This was set by Libby Whitfield in the Year 10 Shot Put.



On the track, there were a number of outstanding performances which came close to breaking the 'old' records with some only missing by a fraction. However, a number of 'new' records were set. Hannah Irwin dominated the Year 8 races recording superb records in the 100m, 800m and the 1500m. It was from the determined efforts of our very talented Year 10 group that most records fell. Annie Scholfield flew in the sprints for the girls breaking the 100 and 200m records. This was matched by Sean Busari in the same boys events. Sean also set a 400m record as did Alex Spooner in the girls 400m. Kate Rawlings showed her talent in the middle distance events breaking the 800m record after being pushed hard by Cordelia Kiddy, and then also took the 1500m record.

Even when no records were set, there were many races which were extremely close and exciting to watch. Every student was aware that every point/placing counted towards the final scores and fought hard for their final positions.

The final results saw Mennell in 3rd with 1146 and Lister 2nd with 1250. Congratulations to Tuke who won for the first time in at least 15 years with a score of 1300. Well done to everyone who contributed in making it such a successful day.

Junior Sports Day 2011



The Infants and Junior's sports day, held on different days due to the rain, were again, a great success. The group events allowed everyone to work together as a team and to bring in the points for their house during the individual challenges. Personal bests were in abundance as the track events brought out a more competitive spirit. The Junior's event ended with a hilarious Dress The House Captain Race – the memory of

Clementine Addison-Atkinson shuffling to the end with trousers around her ankles will live long in the memory. Well done to everybody who took part and congratulations to Fry, who emerged the victorious house at the end of the event.

Year 8

- The team have had some superb performances this term, including a 20-5 win against Gosfield and a 12 ½- 6 ½ win against HRS.
- A close game against Herts and Essex resulting in a 9-9 draw.
- The girls played well at the District Tournament to reach the semi final but narrowly lost to SWCH 6-4. Libby Taylor played particularly well this season.

Year 9

- The Year 9 team have performed brilliantly and remain undefeated this season
- Impressive wins against Freman College, Leventhorpe and St Mary's.
- Stand out players during the season were Lissy Ford, Charlotte White, Lottie Ovenden and Thailah Joseph.

Year 10

- Three good wins against Freman College, Leventhorpe and St Mary's.
- A solid 10-2½ win v Stoke College.
- The team played well at the District Tournament, coming away with a win, loss and a draw.
- This season saw excellent performances from Imogen Candler and Libby Whitfield

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