



SIR THOMAS RICH'S NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2001

The inevitable extra pressure caused by our Ofsted inspection has given way to satisfaction that the Report is extremely positive. Indeed the areas where any school would hope to do well are all highlighted as particular strengths. Examination standards, quality of teaching, leadership, extra-curricular activities, committed staff, personal development of pupils, attitudes to learning – these are phrases taken from the section "What the school does well" where they are highly commended. I congratulate staff and pupils together with Governors and parents for contributing towards, not so much the excellent report, but the 'very positive ethos for learning' which led up to it and which lies at the heart of our success.

STAFF CHANGE

We bade farewell today to Mr. S.A. Smith, our Head of Design and Technology. Mr. Smith joined the staff of Sir Thomas Rich's in September 1994, becoming Head of Department a year later. He has worked hard to develop Design & Technology, during his time the examination results have improved steadily and he successfully introduced 'A' Level Design. Outside the classroom Mr. Smith never seemed to relax, typically helping pupils in the workshops, as well as working on hovercraft and kit-car projects in the Young Engineers Club. His construction of props for School plays and his organisation of ski trips were also much appreciated. We wish him well in his new appointment in Evesham.

Mr. S. Hancock will join us, from Tewkesbury School, as our new Head of D & T in January.

CHARITY

Our School charity this term has been Action Aid, to whom we presented a cheque for £750. Next term all the 'change collections' and Free Dress money will go to the Spring Centre Trust, a charity which helps children with special needs.

Collections during the Carol Services this week have been donated to the St. John's Northgate restoration appeal and to Holy Trinity Church's charity which is the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal for Children (administered by UNICEF).

ATTENDANCE

The Ofsted inspectors described pupils' attendance as "excellent", the highest rating they can award and one they use sparingly. We are grateful for parental support in this matter: our view is quite simply that if pupils are not in school, they are not learning. Well done to the pupils who received "100% attendance" certificates today – almost 300 were awarded. To have attended school without a day's absence since 5th September is a commendable achievement.



UNIFORM

We rely upon, and are very appreciative of, parental support in maintaining high standards of pupils' appearance. At this time of year some pupils occasionally like to sport their preferred fashions in jumpers and sweatshirts. The uniform rules allow V-necked plain grey pullovers, with V-necked navy pullovers as an acceptable alternative in the Sixth Form. Patterned and round-necked jumpers and sweatshirts are not permitted.



NESTLÉ TOKENS

We are still collecting "Box Tops for Education" tokens from Nestlé cereal boxes. A collection box is in the entrance foyer. The scheme runs until March.

SWIMMING

Two School teams entered the regional round of the Bazuka national relay championships at Millfield School. Neither made it to the finals despite competing well. The junior team consisted of boys from Years 7 and 8, they can be pleased to have finished 10th out of 21 teams which were mostly composed of Year 9 boys. In the intermediate team David MacArthur and Oliver Howley deserve special mention for their efforts.

(IJG)

NHS DIRECT

We have been asked by Gloucestershire Health Authority to contribute to their public information campaign. They are trying to raise the profile of *NHS Direct* which is a 24 hour nurse advice service. It will provide confidential information on what to do if you or anyone in your family is ill, as well as providing information on pharmacies, dentists, doctors and health organisations. Telephone 0845 4647.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

A big "Thank You" to the parents who worked so hard on 8th December at the Xmas fête, which raised £3,600. Also thanks to all who supported in a variety of ways, including everyone who sold/purchased raffle tickets and those who sent in items for sale, making the event a tremendous success.

100 Club winners for November – Mr. & Mrs. C. Bell.

(L. Dalton)



GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK

The Lower Sixth Geography groups spent four days of mid-November in the Derbyshire Peak District, staying at the tourist village of Castleton. Woodland ecology, the famous landslide on Marn Tor and the limestone landforms of Dovedale were all studied. (SWP)

BASKETBALL CLUB

The Sixth Form Basketball Club, captained by Christopher Jonah (U6S) played their first competitive fixture this term beating Gloucester Blazers by 43 – 42. The term concluded with an enthusiastic 2v2 tournament which generated a great deal of interest. (DS)

L'AVARE

The versatile and talented actors of The European Theatre Company visited Rich's in early November to stage a performance of one of Molière's best known comedies, *L'Avare*. The high quality of the acting, in particular the portrayal of the central figure Harpagon ("ce maudit vieillard") around whose obsession most of the play revolves, impressed the small but appreciative audience. We were especially pleased to welcome a contingent of French students from Denmark Road High School. The performance certainly helped to improve students' knowledge and understanding of the play which is one of the 'A' Level examination set texts. In addition such entertainment will surely have heightened their appreciation of the visual as well as linguistic qualities of Molière's drama. In this respect special mention must be made of Craig Stevens' unexpected role as one of Harpagon's servants. It was an evening that he and all those present will remember for a long time. (AJG)

TALKING RUBBISH

Ten members of Year 11 received an enthusiastic response to the play which they presented at the Global Action Plan Annual Conference in London on 21st November. The play dealt with issues of waste, recycling and sustainability. We received several letters of thanks from delegates and we hope to produce a video in due course. (ERS)





RAILWAY SOCIETY

Railtrack engineering works have prevented any weekend trips being run this half term. Assuming their work runs to plan a full day trip to the Settle and Carlisle line across the Pennines is in preparation for a Saturday early in the New Year. Details next term.

The Model Section has resumed meetings on selected Thursdays and attended the Parents' Association Christmas Fayre. There is scope for more Year 7 pupils to join at present – please see Mr. Pack if you are interested. (SWP)

MUSIC

The annual autumnal rehearsal schedule in the Music Department has been as heavy as ever preparing for 'Oklahoma!', 'Christmas by Candlelight' and two carol services. This year however time had to be created for an extra concert – as it turned out, a most successful venture featuring the Churchdown Male Voice Choir with the School Choir providing a contrasting 'slot'. Apart from giving the School Choir a rare chance to sing a largely secular programme, including two barbershop arrangements and Karl Jenkins' "Adiemus", the event raised much needed funds for Gloucestershire Lifestyles.

Following the outstanding success of 'Oklahoma!', we looked forward to some equally enjoyable music in the last two weeks of term but of a more seasonal nature: 'Christmas by Candlelight' this year reflected the School's new status as a language college by featuring both carols and readings performed in the original French, German, Italian and Spanish as well as some old English favourites. The Carol Services, as usual, followed the traditional and well-loved nine lessons and carols format.

Next term's music programme features the House Music Competition on the afternoon of 6th February and the Spring Instrumental Concert on the evening of 21st March. All parents are warmly invited to both these events. (JWT)

CROSS COUNTRY

The highlight of the season to date has been Peter Kellie regaining his West Mercia League Crown in very convincing style. This notches up five successive individual championship wins for Peter and, previously, his brother Simon in the last five years.

The team did not quite match Peter's performances, finishing fourth overall out of the six teams racing in the League. However the commitment of the team was very pleasing.

Other highlights have included some excellent performances in the District and County Championship Trials. Once again Peter Kellie eased to victory in the County Championships held at Plock Court. Up and coming runners are Philip Hanson and Kevin Ellis, who each finished fifth in their respective Inter and Junior County Championship races. Both have the potential to proceed further in the New Year at the Regional County stage.

Overall, Cross Country at Rich's continues but with more commitment there are students who could be running successfully for the School.

Colours have been awarded to Richard Parker and Ben Rodford for commitment, motivation and loyalty to Cross Country. (PDL)

EXCHANGE VISITS

Göttingen A party of Year 10 age pupils from our exchange school in Göttingen spent an enjoyable ten day period with their STRS partners earlier this term. Apart from trips organised by host families, our German guests visited Oxford and Bristol, but sadly this year not London (because of the terrorist threats following 11th September). Our pupils are already looking forward to their return visit in March.

Trier We are glad to report that it will be possible for a group of Lower Sixth pupils to take part in an exchange trip to Trier, Gloucester's twin town in Germany, also in March. This trip will have the added advantage of "tuning up" their oral skills in advance of the AS examinations. (DJS)





DEBATING SOCIETY

Under the active but impartial management team of David Leung, Luke Sibieta and Mr. Slinger, the Society has arranged a number of meetings this term. The most thought-provoking was the open-forum discussion following the terrorist outrages of 11th September. A formal debate held a few weeks later about the advantages and dangers of "faith" provided a platform for a quietly persuasive Mr. Gladwell to win the argument for his definition of faith. A Junior Debate on school uniforms managed to entice in some younger debaters on another occasion. The last event of the term provided a platform for Mr. Lewis and Mr. Hearn, together with Sixth Form panel members, to mix humour and serious responses in an "Any Questions?" event. (DJS)

HOUSE EVENTS

The three opening House competitions this term have all been keenly contested as each House tried to gain the initial advantage. In House Art, Mr. Lockey was impressed by the amount of effort that many pupils put into their work, particularly some Year 10 and 11 students who had obviously spent a great deal of time on their entries despite other GCSE pressures. Northgate won from Eastgate, Southgate and Westgate.

Then the Junior Rugby competition took place. In Year 8 Northgate, Southgate and Westgate tied in first place, each with two victories and one defeat. In Year 9 Northgate were undefeated, Eastgate won two of their three matches, Westgate won one. Eastgate were the Year 10 champions, Westgate won twice, Northgate narrowly won one game. Overall Northgate finished ahead of Westgate and Eastgate who shared second place.

The Senior Rugby event was closely contested, most matches finishing as draws or narrow victories. Southgate emerged as best overall, with two wins and a draw, ahead of Westgate (one win and two draws) followed by Northgate and Eastgate.

There remain another sixteen inter-House events but Northgate have an early lead, with the other three Houses separated by only two points.

LOWER SIXTH ART WORKSHOP

On Tuesday, 11th December the Lower Sixth Art students began their second AS level coursework unit with a day at Prema Arts Centre in Uley. They were there to take part in a sculpture workshop run by Charles Farina, a sculptor currently based at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol.

The morning session began with a gentle introduction to working with 3-D construction techniques using card and wire, but this soon progressed on to the more demanding task of producing structures from sheet zinc.

The workshop proved to be an excellent start to the coursework unit providing the pupils with an opportunity to practice their problem-solving skills by working with unfamiliar materials. It was certainly the first time that a Sixth Form Art activity required the use of tin snips, pliers and metal files, as well as the wearing of protective gloves. (RJL)

RHINELAND TRIP

We departed from school at 1.30 a.m., 34 lively pupils, four tired teachers and one harassed PGL representative who had trouble locating the School. Approximately seventeen hours later, our enthusiasm tarred somewhat by the journey, we arrived at our destination, the Rheinblick Hotel in Filsen. As the name suggests it did indeed have a wonderful view of the Rhine and the charming town of Boppard. This town left us with very pleasant memories. The ferry across the Rhine and the visit to a German ice cream café were both memorable. A town-trail gave pupils further opportunities to explore this lovely town and to practise their German. One of the highlights of the trip was a ride on the Boppard chairlift. This provided us with magnificent views of the Rhine. The Marksburg castle, the only castle along the Rhine which has remained intact, survived even our visit. Evening excursions to the swimming pool and bowling centre in Koblenz ensured our pupils were never bored. My many thanks to the pupils and the parents who supported this trip and to Mr. Parris, Mr. Stone and Mrs. Coe (parent) who gave generously of their free time. (JH)





RUGBY

1st XV: P11, W5, L6, F143, A230

The 1st XV have had a difficult season this year, struggling to find any consistency in their performance. Unfortunately they have been unable to transfer their positive approach and commitment to a pattern of play from practice into the game situation and hence have often lacked direction.

They did, however, finish with their two best performances, a 22-5 loss to Crypt and a 10-0 defeat of Bournside in which they finally did themselves justice with both forwards and backs playing their full part in the game.

I would like to thank Alex Allen (Captain) and the rest of the squad for their work and attitude throughout this frustrating season. (IJG)

2nd XV: P12, W4, L8, F178, A237

Although the results suggest a disappointing season, this has been a very good 2nd XV with competition for all places and a high standard of rugby, particularly in defence. The side has played 1st XVs from Beaufort, Churchdown, Rendcomb, St. Katherines and mixed teams from Dean Close and Bournside where the extra pace has proved decisive. 2nd XVs from Marling, Kings and Wycliffe were easily defeated whilst the games against Chosen Hill and Crypt were finely balanced with the final score going against Rich's. Thank you to all who played and trained and well done! (MRS)

U15 XV: P12, W5, L7, F248, A419

The team displayed a lack of consistency this season, producing rugby that was at times scintillating, at times poor. This was not due to lack of commitment or effort in training but rather some indifferent decision-making on the field of play. However the squad remains upbeat and is looking forward to senior rugby next season. Special thanks to Oliver Howley for his leadership and example as Captain. (RS)

U14 XV: P15, W8, D1, L6, F322, A202

The squad has been a pleasure to coach: in training and matches they have been positive, committed and a credit to the School. Lee Warren and Kevin Ellis have always led from the front, numerous players have made progress and I feel confident that the team has the potential to get better. My personal thanks to the squad for making this year a positive and enjoyable experience. (PDL)

U13 XV: A Team P9, W4, L5, F153, A166 B Team P5, W1, L4, F66, A130

The U13 squad took a considerable amount of time developing the style and commitment their coaches, Mr. Carter and Mr. Brown, desired. It was well into the second half of the season before the squad started playing together with genuine team spirit and effort that allowed individuals to really display their considerable skills.

The match against Marling was the obvious turning point as the 'A' team dominated a game in which the final 15-7 score was far closer than it should have been. The season culminated in two thumping victories against the "arch rivals" Crypt, the 'A' team cruising to a polished 48-5 win and the 'B' team playing some exquisite handling rugby in atrociously wet and muddy conditions to win 34-17.

Let us hope that by the time next year's rugby season comes round, this squad will be ready to take their game a stage further; as their later matches showed they have a great potential for playing an expansive, quick and exciting style of rugby. (PB)

LETTERS SENT HOME

- 5/11 Year 10 Parents' Consultation Evening
- 7/11 Parents' Association Quiz Night
- 9/11 Year 7 Caving
- 20/11 Year 7 Theatre Trip to Bristol Hippodrome
- 20/11 Year 7 Trip to Paris and Disneyland
- 28/11 Summary of Ofsted Inspection Report
- 29/11 Consultation on Transfer to Foundation Status
- 30/11 Upper 6th Parents' Consultation Evening
- 6/12 Carol Services
- 6/12 Christmas by Candlelight





NORWEGIAN LESSONS

As part of their preparations for next August's expedition to Norway, the School's Venture Scout Unit has arranged (with the help of Mrs. Hewett our Language College Co-ordinator) a series of introductory sessions to Norwegian. These will take place most Tuesday afternoons next term between 3.30 p.m. and 5 p.m.

We would welcome anyone who wishes to join us and take advantage of this rare opportunity to learn some of the basics in Norwegian. Contact Mrs. J. Hewett at the School if interested. (PB)

OKLAHOMA!

Everyone involved in this production is to be congratulated on three fine performances. A strong lead was given by the principals and the chorus rose to the occasion. The School production is a team event with sterling work being done by sound and lighting technicians, stage managers and make-up team as well as the cast and orchestra. A notable feature of the year's production was the beautiful costumes produced by three very talented mums. We are always grateful to the parents who support our productions in so many ways. (ERS)

44th GLOUCESTER VENTURE SCOUT UNIT

The new cohort of Year 10 students who joined in July have settled in well and are already making a valuable contribution to unit life. We have enjoyed (!) several meetings wandering around the School field in the dark (and on occasions blind-folded) equipped with compasses, ropes, knives and forks, barrels and balloons filled with flour/water (don't ask!).

Over Christmas a small group of volunteers will start their 'Service' section of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award by carrying out work on local gardens.

Edition 89 of the Unit's magazine 'Venture 44' detailing our summer trip to Eire was published earlier in the term. (PB)

SIXTH FORM TRIP TO SPAIN

Half term for eleven Sixth Formers was spent in Spain on the joint Geology/Spanish trip. Eight of the Sixth Formers were geologists, the other three are studying Spanish. They were accompanied by Mr. Green and Mr. Hearn. Travel was by school minibus and the Plymouth-Santander ferry. We got off to an excellent start with a perfectly smooth crossing in brilliant sunshine. Some of us were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of whales and dolphins.

The geologists spent many a happy hour on the coast and in the mountains, hammering and scrutinising rock samples and formations. The Spanish students quizzed the locals about their views on Europe and other matters, and were given the task of purchasing provisions for our al fresco lunches. They also performed a valuable service in the evenings by interpreting menus and ordering food.

Special thanks must go to Mr. Green, not only for organising the trip, but for doing all the driving. Several hundred miles were clocked up, including among them some interesting off-road experiences - "I'm sure we can get to the beach down this track"!

This was a truly memorable trip, not just for the stunning scenery of the coastline and mountains of northern Spain, but for the excellent spirit among all the participants and the healthy balance between work and fun. (APH)

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

The School has decided to work with Global Action to reduce the amount of waste in school. We have an action team consisting of pupils from Years 7-13, teachers and ancillary staff, who will be finding out where the waste is produced and setting up action plans to recycle or reduce waste.

To start off the project we will recycle inkjet printer cartridges, toner cartridges, mobile phones and chargers (all makes except Epsom). The proceeds will go to the local charity, Winston's Wish. We will also continue to collect used stamps and Christmas cards. Recycling boxes will be available near the Technology Rooms. (JMA)





YEAR 7 CAVING

This half term several groups of intrepid Year 7 pupils accompanied by equally brave (or foolish!) staff went on expeditions to Clearwell Caves in the Forest of Dean. These trips were deep level caving and not the normal gentle wander around the show caves. The trips involved some very tight squeezes and gave the boys an idea of what life was like for the miners in this area 100 years ago. Some of these miners would have been roughly the same age as the boys.

Forthcoming Year 7 events include a theatre trip to see *Beauty and the Beast* in Bristol and the annual Year 7 five-a-side football tournament. The draw for the Paris trip has also taken place at the end of this term.

Mr. Parris would like to thank staff for all their help and commend the boys for their good behaviour on the various different excursions. (MJP)

SIXTH FORM LECTURES

Sixth Form language pupils from Sir Thomas Rich's and other Gloucestershire schools were recently privileged to hear two excellent lectures on racism in France and Austria. Annie Taylor from the Open University spoke with great authority in French on the origins of racism in France and the current situation. Her thorough treatment of the topic left no room for questions. Michaela Gigerl from Bristol University gave a more informal lecture on the present day image of Austria highlighting the positive and negative extremes and moving from the sporting and cultural wonders to the problems of racism. Her presentation which was illustrated with political cartoons and video clips ended on a positive note, the peaceful opposition to racism in Austria. (JH)



SCHOOL TELEPHONE

The School telephone is 'manned' until 4.15 p.m. when our Receptionist finishes for the day. The telephone then switches to Voicemail so that messages may be left. These messages are listened to, as staff are able, in case any require urgent action, typically up to around 6.00 p.m.

HISTORY TRIP

In December Year 11 pupils visited the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. The experience proved very valuable and was heightened by personal recollections of a Holocaust survivor. (GB)

BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

Once again the Library will be participating in the Walkers Crisps 'Free Books for Schools' promotion. Tokens will be printed in the Sun and the News of the World and on packs of Walkers Crisps, Quavers, Monster Munch and French Fries. Collection boxes will be available in the Library and the Dining Room after Christmas.

Thank you to all who sent in tokens for previous collections. Over the last three years we have collected 20,000 tokens and received 71 free books. (LGR)

ORIENTEERING

Congratulations to Joseph Taunton (9R) who won a silver medal in the British Schools Orienteering Championships which were held in Sherwood Forest last month. In fact a team of four boys represented Sir Thomas Rich's in this event. They are all members of the North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club which is very active in this area. If anyone would like to know more they are invited to contact Alan Brown (01242 580096) or Frances Alexander (01249 657129) or visit the website www.rain-end.demon.co.uk.



IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2002

SPRING TERM

Monday, 7th January
7th – 18th January
Monday, 14th January
Monday, 21st January
Wednesday, 30th January
Wednesday, 6th February
Wednesday, 6th February
11th – 15th February
18th February – 1st March
Monday, 25th February
Tuesday, 26th February
Monday, 11th March
Wednesday, 20th March
Thursday, 21st March
Friday, 22nd March
22nd March – 5th April

Term begins, 8.40 a.m.
Trial GCSE examinations (Year 11)
Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
STAFF TRAINING DAY (no school for pupils)
Year 11 Parents' Consultation Evening, 6 p.m.
House Music Competition, Hall, 2.00 p.m.
Sixth Form Open Evening, 7 p.m.
HALF TERM
Trial A2 examinations (Upper Sixth)
Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening, 6 p.m.
Lower Sixth Parents' Consultation Evening, 6 p.m.
Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening, 6 p.m.
Spring Instrumental Concert, Hall, 7.30 p.m.
END OF TERM 12.45 p.m.
Easter Holidays

SUMMER TERM

Monday, 8th April
8th – 18th April
Tuesday, 9th April
Monday, 15th April
Friday, 19th April
Thursday, 25th April
Monday, 6th May
7th – 10th May
14th – 31st May
Friday, 17th May
3rd – 7th June
10th – 28th June
Wednesday, 12th June
Monday, 17th June
Thur 20th – Wed 26th June
Thursday, 27th June
1st – 5th July
Friday, 5th July
8th – 12th July
Friday, 19th July

Term begins, 8.40 a.m.
Trial AS examinations
Year 8 Parents' Consultation Evening, 6.00 p.m.
Nearly New Uniform, 6.00-7.30 p.m.
STAFF TRAINING DAY (no school for pupils)
House Drama Competition, Hall, 9.05 a.m.
BANK HOLIDAY
Year 9 National Curriculum tests (SATs)
AS examinations (Lower Sixth)
Founder's Day Service, Holy Trinity, 2.30 p.m.
HALF TERM
A2 examinations (Upper Sixth)
Sports Evening
Nearly New Uniform, 6.00-7.30 p.m.
School examinations
STAFF TRAINING DAY (no school for pupils)
Sixth Form Induction Week
New Year 7 Induction Day
Year 11 Work Experience Week
END OF TERM, 12.45 p.m.

Seasons
Greetings 