



SIR THOMAS RICH'S NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2002

My congratulations to the whole school community which rounded off term with *The Book of the Banshee*, the Christmas Fayre, Christmas by Candlelight and two Carol Services. Each brought great credit to all who organised and participated and I am grateful to the many parents who supported these events. They complete a term of hard work which has laid solid foundations for the duration of the academic year.

Our best wishes to all for a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

CHARITY

As well as funds raised for Crack Cancer and for Children in Need, mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, the main charity collections this term have been for "Action for Children in El Salvador". This is a local charity and we were pleased to welcome Bron Soan into our assembly to tell us of their work. We presented her with a cheque for almost £600, the sum of this term's small change and Free Dress Day collections. Next term's nominated charity is St. Rose's Special School in Stroud, a school for physically disabled children aged 2 to 19.

FACILITIES

Our new Design & Technology room was completed two weeks ago; it has been fitted out and will come into operation next term. The D&T extension includes additional storage space and an office. The new room will be used for 'clean' design work including computer-controlled technology. This completed a significant project which involved converting a D&T room and a Computing room to a new Art Room and the conversion of two Language Rooms to a new ICT Suite – this work was finished during the summer holidays.

Our computer facilities have been improved with the installation of broadband connection thus much faster internet access. We are also indebted to our Parents' Association which approved a grant of over £13,000 to enable us to purchase a new suite of computers for the new ICT Suite.

CANON PETER NUNN

Canon Nunn is well known to Sir Thomas Rich's and he has been a loyal supporter of the school for over twenty years, latterly as Vice Chairman of Governors. He has just retired as our local parish vicar and he and Mrs. Nunn have moved to Worthing. His final visit to the school was to take our Remembrance Assembly on 11th November, at the end of which we presented him with a claret jug engraved with a picture of the Bluecoat Boy and a message of thanks from Sir Thomas Rich's. Canon Nunn was appointed vicar of Holy Trinity Church in 1979 and became a Governor here the following year. His two sons, Philip and Julian, were both students here. We shall miss his jollity and wit, his sharp intellect and his warm hospitality.



QUIZ NIGHT

Well done to the School's Venture Scout Unit for taking on the organisation of the first of this year's Quiz Evenings. Particular thanks to Chris Gallant and Matthew Bick and to Mr. Peffers whose enthusiasm as Quizmaster helped to raise funds for the 'Crack Cancer Campaign' as well as for the VSU. The winner of the main trophy was an adult team, the Junior Shield was won by a team from 9S.

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS

Enclosed with this Newsletter is information regarding forthcoming School Governor elections. The School has twenty Governors of whom six are Parent Governors. There are currently four vacancies for Parent Governors, resulting from the expiry of Terms of Office and children moving through the School. The Governing Body is seeking to fill these vacancies, any parent who wishes to become a Governor should complete the form which requires nomination and secondment by parents of children attending this school. Nominations must be received in School by Friday, 10th January, 2003.



LEAGUE TABLES

The Sunday Times produced its annual "Parent Power" supplement on 17th November. We were ranked 56th school in the country (from 79th last year), based primarily upon the percentage of A and B grades in the 2002 A-level examinations. 65% of our students' results were at these top grades this summer. *The Sunday Times* also made its first attempt to calculate the 'value added' by schools, by making allowance for pupils' prior attainment: in this table we were ranked 48th in the country. They also produced a list of "The Top 20 Schools for Languages" in which Sir Thomas Rich's was ranked 8th.

The relentless analysis of schools' examination data continues – the Government's Performance Tables of schools' 2002 examination results would normally have been published last month. They are promised in January for Key Stage 3, GCSE and Value-Added information, and in April for A-level data, this delayed following the re-grading exercise undertaken by exam. boards in autumn.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who donated items and attended the Christmas Fayre which has made approximately £3,200. This will give a good boost to our funds so we can plan what to buy next for the benefit of everyone in the School. Can I also thank everyone who helped throughout the day. I hope it was an enjoyable experience and one which you will be prepared to repeat next year!

(L. Dalton, Chairperson)

PAID EMPLOYMENT

Every year we analyse our students' examination results and, although the grades achieved are consistently high, if someone has underachieved a significant factor is invariably their previous commitments to paid employment outside school. It is then, of course, too late to change.

We are concerned that some older students yield too readily to the temptation or pressure to undertake long hours of paid employment as well as socialising which inevitably impinge upon the time spent on school work. The short-term gain of money in the pocket is soon outweighed by the costs of poorer performance in exams and the consequences for higher education and long-term career.

Not only may supermarket and shop employment leave insufficient time for proper study, it can leave students tired in what free time remains. We would urge parents to ensure that, during these important years, education is given top priority.

SIX TERM YEAR CONSULTATION

Our thanks to parents who returned the slips regarding the proposed change in the school year. I have passed on the result to the County Council, together with any comments made by parents. 147 parents expressed a preference for change to a six term year, 49 were for retention of the present system and 8 didn't mind either way.



RETURNING TO TEACHING?

If any parents are considering returning to secondary school teaching as a career, we have received information from the Gloucestershire Initial Education Partnership about fifteen places which they are funding on a *Return to Teaching* course which will run full-time for six weeks, from 17th February to 1st April 2003. It is aimed at people who have taken a career break, it will take place in local schools and at the University of Gloucestershire. To be eligible applicants must have Qualified Teacher Status. The course is free and bursaries of £150 per week are payable plus child care costs. Please ask the School Secretary for further details or contact Rosemary Moxon (01242 532749 or rmoxon@glos.ac.uk).

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Richard Farrow (7B) on setting a new U.K. Under 13 record for 1,500 metres, indoors. Richard ran 4 minutes 59.7 seconds at Cardiff's indoor athletics facility;

Shaun Hopkins (U6T) on his selection for the Gloucestershire Under 18 rugby team;

Samantha Lyons (L6T) on her selection for the All England Netball Association 'talent squad', a major achievement along the route to full international honours;

Jonathan Maxted (8R) on gaining two gold and three silver medals at the Bristol Festival where he also won the trophy for the best Under 15 solo acting;

William Russell (11B) on his selection for the Gloucestershire Under 16 rugby team;

Alexander Thomas (9S) for organising a 'Football in Drag' event in school, collecting the fees and sponsorship, and thereby raising over £340 for BBC's "Children in Need" appeal.



CROSS COUNTRY

Our Senior team completed the West Mercia Cross Country League, finishing third overall out of six teams, behind RGS Worcester and the winners Marling. Thanks to all those students who ran for the school. Of note were Philip Hanson (11R) and Alistair Stanley (L6H) who were both very impressive over a series of tough courses.

In the recently-held County Championships at Cheltenham Rich's had a number of students who qualified to represent the County. These included Richard Farrow, who came an impressive third overall in the Minors, while Philip Hanson qualified by finishing in ninth position in the Inters race. Tim Dalton qualified for the reserve squad by finishing 11th overall. Their next race will be in February in Cardiff where they will represent the County.

PDL

BUSINESS STUDIES/ECONOMICS

It has been a busy start to 2002. Year 11 Business Studies have visited Cadbury World, Year 13 Business Studies Lanes Pharmaceuticals and a group of Year 12 Economists and Business Studies students recently attended the Institute of Directors lively and controversial Dinner and Debate. The subject was road congestion and the introduction of road tolls – a topic that, perhaps surprisingly, generated much interest and some heated discussion. It was a great success.

Next term, amongst other things, we look forward to a new initiative. In conjunction with Dowty Propellers, the Year 13 Business Studies students will take part in a Lean Management Day. Watch this space!

MJB



CAREERS

In late November 51 Year 11 students successfully completed the COA Preview Careers Selection Programme. The reports have been distributed and the feedback from the students has been positive with many careers' options confirming the pupils' initial ideas, plus their potential post 16+ options.

A large number of Year 11 students have been seen by our Connexions P.A., Mrs. Pauline Quinn. More interviews for Year 11 and the Sixth Form will take place after Christmas.

All Year 11 have received special presentations from the Connexions Service regarding Sixth Form options and the choice of AS/A2 subjects. The students should now be in a strong position to select their post 16+ options. If they still have reservations then they should see Mr. Lloyd or Mrs. Quinn.

All Year 9 have received the Connexions booklet 'A guide to parents and carers of young people – aged 13-14'. The booklet raises many important issues that students and parents should be considering as they approach KS4 and their GCSE options.

PDL

RUGBY

1st XV: P9, W3, D1, L5, F111, A162

This was a frustrating season for the 1st XV. In all matches the team showed the ability to pressure the opposition and to cause real problems. Unfortunately the team was unable to maintain this level of performance and so several games slipped away when perhaps they could have been won. The squad showed a good commitment both on and off the pitch but lacked the focus to move the level of performance on and this coupled with several injuries at the end of the season meant that the squad often underachieved which was disappointing for all concerned. On a positive note victories v Newent (36-0), Castle (15-5) and Wycliffe (31-8) showed what could be achieved at the level of performance the squad should be aiming for. IJG

2nd XV: P8, W1, L7, F115, A179

The 2nd XV have only played two games this half term with three opponents unable to raise teams. They beat Wycliffe 2nd XV 31-14 and lost to Rendcomb 1st XV 33-12. MRS

3rd XV: P1, W1, F12, A8

The 3rd XV played their first fixture for many years beating Rendcomb 2nd XV 12-8. MRS

U16 XV: P1, W1, F18, A15

The U16 XV opened their City Cup campaign beating Brockworth 18-15, a result which flattered the opposition. MRS



U15 XV: P13, W6, L7, F278, A324

The U15's had a mixed season of highs and lows. There is an abundance of talent in the squad, with good competition for places. The team worked hard in training and developed an attractive, attacking brand of rugby. However it was frustrating that we struggled in terms of consistency; at times outstanding, others mediocre. Too often games were lost by a narrow margin, when we should have been home and dry. This should not detract from the excellent effort shown by all squad members. Particular thanks go to Captain Lee Warren for the exemplary way he led the side. Senior rugby awaits. RS

U14 XV: P12, W4, D2, L6, F231, A296

This has been a season of mixed performance. At times the team has performed really well, such as against St. Katherine's. Unfortunately in other matches the team has failed to do themselves justice, leading to some disappointing results. However a number of players have been stalwarts in the side, performing well in training and matches. Many thanks to those core players who have displayed lots of commitment towards the School and the Team. PDL

U13 XV: 'A' Team P9, W9, L0, F257, A46 'B' Team P4, W3, L1, F99, A19

The U13 'A' XV have continued their excellent form during the second half of term to finish the season undefeated. The basis of their success has been the way all fifteen players have worked well together as a team. The highlights of the second half of the season were the hard fought games against Crypt away (5-17) and a powerful Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat XV (14-12) at home. The Hereford result was particularly pleasing as the side was without five regular squad members.

The U13 'B' XV have played two games since half term. They lost narrowly to Crypt (12-5) and beat a well-organised Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat XV by 15-0, scoring three tries in the process. Both the 'A' and 'B' squads should be congratulated not only on their performances this season, but also on their attitude in training which has been first class. CDC

PARKING ON OAKLEAZE

We have received complaints from local residents that some parents are parking on the zigzag lines outside school and obstructing driveways. Our neighbours find that they cannot get their own cars out because of children being dropped off in the morning, with the same problem recurring every afternoon. I would ask parents to be considerate when parking near school.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Groups from last year's cohort of Bronze Award participants have now mostly completed their activities and are at various stages of having their activities assessed. Congratulations to Amar Shah, Peter Hards, Adam Woodcock, Mark Donaldson and Sam Taunton who recently had their badges and certificates presented in school assembly. I hope that there will be some more presentations early in the new year. There are 38 participants in the new cohort for Bronze - in fact the demand so exceeded our expectations that we have doubled the number of training sessions which start in January and will run on Tuesday evenings from 3.30-5.00. There is a smaller group who will be starting the Silver award this year having successfully completed their Bronze either at STRS or elsewhere. Thank you to Miss Lucas who has agreed to join the team of staff supervisors for next year. DD



FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

For the fifth year running, Walkers Crisps, together with the Sun and the News of the World Newspapers are running their 'Free Books for Schools' promotion. Tokens will be in these newspapers and on various Walkers snack packs from January and March. We will, again, be collecting these tokens for books for the Library and collection boxes will be sited in the Library and in the Dining area. LGR

RAILWAY SOCIETY

To celebrate the introduction of Virgin's much-heralded new Voyager trains a group of 21 took a day trip to York recently. Our outward journey was fast, punctual and comfortable, possibly because one of Virgin's old trains turned up. The return was more eventful. Our brand new Voyager train's high-tech sanitation system failed completely; a suicidal cow unsuccessfully tried train-spotting on the line ahead; we were put onto a bus at Birmingham and arrived home rather late. Our visit to the National Railway Museum at York in the afternoon was both interesting and enjoyable but probably not newsworthy. Further trips are planned for the New Year but we might avoid Virgin Trains next time! SWP



HISTORY

Year 11 students recently visited the Imperial War Museum to see the Holocaust Exhibition. This provided an excellent opportunity for reflection as well as support for their GCSE study. GB



LETTERS SENT HOME

- 4/11 Year 10 Parents' Consultation Evening
- 5/11 Year 7 Caving
- 8/11 Parents' Association Christmas Fayre
- 11/11 Year 7 Caving
- 14/11 Christmas Fayre Basket Stall
- 14/11 "The Book of the Banshee" production
- 22/11 Parents' Association Christmas Fayre
- 26/11 Christmas Fayre Silent Auction
- 28/11 Christmas by Candlelight
- 28/11 Buses from Hardwicke/Quedgeley area
- 29/11 German Evening classes
- 5/12 Carol Services
- 6/12 U6 Parents' Consultation Evening

PUBLIC SPEAKING

On Wednesday, 20th November Sir Thomas Rich's hosted the local round of this year's English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition. Schools taking part were Sir Thomas Rich's, Thomas Keble, Winchcombe and Tewkesbury. Our speaker was Hector Molloy, questioner was Andrew Erskine and Chairman was Christopher Cooper. Hector sustained a vigorous presentation, without notes, for five minutes. Chris gave a clear introduction and summary and thanked the various participants. Andrew Erskine asked a series of very pertinent questions in a direct manner.

The judges had a difficult task. Only four marks separated the schools on one judge's mark sheet. Sadly, we do not go forward to the next round but we congratulate the team on their efforts and also thank Michael Price for acting as timekeeper. SP


ORIENTEERING

Five Rich's students took part in the British Schools Orienteering Championships in the Forest of Dean last month. All performed creditably and completed the course, most notably Joseph Taunton who finished third in the Year 10 class.



IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2003

Monday 6 th January	Term begins 8.40 a.m.
Tuesday 7 th – Friday 17 th January	Year 11 Trial GCSE examinations
Monday 13 th January	Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
Monday 20 th January	STAFF TRAINING DAY (non-attendance for pupils)
Wednesday 29 th January	Careers Convention (Years 11-13)
Thursday 30 th January	Year 11 Parents' Consultation Evening 6.00 p.m.
Wednesday 5 th February	Sixth Form Open Evening
24 th – 28 th February	HALF TERM
3 rd – 14 th March	Upper Sixth Trial A2 examinations
Thursday 6 th March	Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening 6.00 p.m.
Monday 10 th March	Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
Monday 31 st March	Lower Sixth Parents' Consultation Evening 6.00 p.m.
Wednesday 9 th April	Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening 6.00 p.m.
Friday 11 th April	END OF TERM 12.45 p.m.
14 th – 25 th April	Easter holidays
Monday 28 th April	Term begins 8.40 a.m.
Tuesday 29 th April	Year 8 Parents' Consultation Evening 6.00 p.m.
Monday 5 th May	BANK HOLIDAY
6 th – 9 th May	Year 9 National Curriculum tests (SATs)
6 th May – 13 th June (inclusive)	L6 Exam. Study Leave
Monday 12 th May	Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
12 th May – 6 th June	AS examinations (Lower Sixth)
Weds 14 th May	Year 11 Exam. Study Leave from Period 5 (11.55 a.m.)
19 th May onwards	GCSE examinations
26 th – 30 th May	HALF TERM
Monday 2 nd June	U6 Exam. Study Leave commences
Monday 9 th June	Nearly New Uniform 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.
9 th – 27 th June	A2 examinations (Upper Sixth)
Wednesday 11 th June	Sports Evening 6.30 p.m.
19 th – 25 th June	School Examinations
Thursday 26 th June	STAFF TRAINING DAY (non-attendance for pupils)
30 th June – 4 th July	Sixth Form Induction Week
Friday 4 th July	New Year 7 Induction Day
7 th – 11 th July	Year 11 Work Experience
Friday 18 th July	END OF TERM 12.45 p.m.

Seasons 
Greetings

