

SIR THOMAS RICH'S NEWSLETTER

MAY 2003



Examination season is now well under way. Our Year 9 pupils have completed their SATs, the Lower 6th are in the midst of AS exams, GCSEs have commenced for Year 11 and our Upper 6th are now on Study Leave in preparation for the start of A-levels after half-term. Just in case anyone feels left out our Years 7-10 end-of-Year exams run from 19th to 25th June. We wish all our students well in this testing period.

J. Kell.

GÖTTINGEN 29th March – 8th April

Towards the end of last term a group of 17 pupils from Year 10 set off on an exchange visit to Göttingen. It was 4.30 a.m. and all the party had arrived punctually. This was a promising start and augured well for a successful trip. The early start ensured a quiet journey for the teachers.

The exchange with Göttingen has been in place for 20 years and a deep friendship exists between the two schools. Nobody could fail to be impressed by Göttingen, a very beautiful German university town, boasting many half-timbered houses, elegant buildings and lively bars.

After a weekend with the family pupils experienced the early morning start of German schools – 8.00 a.m. A typical school day consists of six lessons each comprising 45 minutes and ends at approximately 1.00 p.m. German pupils thus enjoy more free time than we experience in England but it was not universally popular amongst the pupils who looked increasingly tired as the week progressed.

Alongside a trip to the zoo in Hanover, we were fortunate to be able to visit Berlin. The high-speed ICE train was a shining example of public transport, being clean, extremely comfortable and punctual. The highlight of the day was the visit to the Reichstag (the German Parliament) and the Brandenburger Tor.

At the farewell party I was pleased to talk to the German parents who were all impressed with our pupils. It was clear that they were given every assistance and encouragement by the German parents in maintaining conversations in German.

It was an excellent exchange. We now look forward to the return visit towards the end of June. (JH)

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

James Broady (7B) who won gold medals in the 100m and 200m breaststroke at the County Championships. James was therefore selected to swim for Gloucestershire at an inter-county gala and, recently, at the Western Counties Championships at Millfield in which he won silver and bronze medals;

Matthew Hopton (7B), **Jonathan Maxted** (8R) and **Nathan Young** (7R) who each won gold medals for recitation at the Cheltenham Festival;

Michael Thomas (STR 1994-2001) on his selection for the full England men's water polo team. He was a member of the team which won the North Sea Cup in Belgium by beating Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and Scotland. Michael was our School Captain in 2000/1;

Nicholas Walkley (U6C) on being awarded the Maud Wright Memorial Shield for his outstanding service to the National Youth Brass Band. Nicholas was also invited to play cornet with the Williams Fairey Brass Band from Stockport, the current national champions, in a CD recording weekend;

Katrina Woolcock (L6S) on successfully gaining a place on a British Council 'German Pupil Course'. Katrina is one of only 12 pupils who will spend two weeks in either Braunschweig or in the Berlin/Brandenburg area.

RAILWAY SOCIETY

The group is planning to visit the West Highlands of Scotland at the end of term. I hope this major trip will more than compensate for the lack of visits in a very busy Spring Term. (SWP)

OLD RICHANS OXBRIDGE DINNER

On Friday 2nd May, in the salubrious setting of Christ Church, Oxford, the lapsed tradition of Oxbridge gatherings was revived. Eleven undergraduates attended, eight of dark blue persuasion and three of light, alongside Mr. Kellie, Mr. Seales, Mr. Carter and Mr. Hook representing the Old Richians.

Danny Bhagawati explained that because his elder brother bore some responsibility (did he?) for the interlude since the last gathering, he should take action to revive the evening. This he did with his unmistakable aplomb.

A fine dinner was enjoyed in the McKenna room, while stories old and new were exchanged. There were even photographs on the "Harry Potter" staircase, a gathering, as far as I am aware, composed entirely of muggles.

We left very grateful to Danny for his organisational efforts and hopeful that we could meet again next year, perhaps in the far fens.

The following Old Richians attended: Dolin Bhagawati, David Leung, Jon Taylor, Matthew Key, Rosemary Stanley, Paul Baker, Simon Poole, James Allison, Simon Clarke, Afzal Junglee, Steven Smith. (MAS)

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Practice expeditions are now done and dusted. Groups completed these on the weekends of 3rd to 4th and 10th to 11th of May camping overnight in Cranham. Most groups were very well prepared for these and should be confident about passing this section of the award but one or two groups will need to learn from their mistakes.

The money for the Sponsored Orienteering event is now almost all in. So far it has raised a total of £526 towards equipment for the unit. Congratulations go to Andrew Sagar of 9T who wins a £10 voucher for raising the highest individual total at £62.95. Honourable mentions also go to Ian Fabbro of 10S, James Wilson of 9R, Jonathan Morley of 9S and Matthew Locke of 9T who all raised at least £30 each.

Assessed expeditions take place on the weekends of the 5th to 6th, 12th to 13th and 19th to 20th July. Thanks go to Mr. Gowler, Mr. Crewe, Miss Adamson, Miss Lucas, Mr. Birkett and Mr. Buttle for again giving up their weekends to supervise these events. (DD)

NEARLY NEW UNIFORM

The sale planned for Monday 9th June has been moved to the morning of Saturday 28th June, from 10.30 a.m. to noon. A reminder – blue blazers are required together with any other outgrown uniform.

GEOLOGY FIELD TRIPS 2002-3

Western Pyrenees Oct-Nov 2002

All the Upper Sixth Geologists braved the 36 hours of ferry from Portsmouth to Bilbao and were rewarded with fine, warm weather (apart from some rain on the first and last day) and superb geology – collapsed salt domes, fold and thrust mountain belts, modern alluvial fans, underwater volcanoes and much more. The main advantage is of seeing geological features which are much younger and therefore much fresher and less deeply eroded than we have in Britain. Plus the cultural experience of Spain (and France), both from a rural and urban perspective.

West Wales November 2002

All the Lower Sixth Geologists came on this their first trip. A rather wet afternoon was spent mapping a hilly area near Llandeilo but the rest of the weekend was fine for looking at lavas, ashes, folds, fossils, faults and turbidites, as well as collecting sand for experiments.

Cader Idris March 2003

Both Lower and Upper Sixth attended this trip which was part led by local "celebrity" geologist, Graham Hall, who knows the area intimately. We saw excellent examples of ancient volcanic ash falls, lava flows, deep sea turbidity current deposits and the Tan y Grisiau granite. We also saw a copper mine that the Ministry discovered was still supplying copper to Germany in 1915! We also were shown the amazing way in which slate was quarried underground.

Antrim and Donegal April 2003

Again, most geology students took part in this ten day trip, together with some adult students and a 15 year old trumpet player, who stole the show at a performance by a local jazz/show band group. Weather was absolutely superb for that part of Ireland at that time of year. We visited famous conglomerate caves, the Giants Causeway, Errigal "the Shivering Mountain" and many other places, looking mainly at igneous geology – Donegal is famous for granites and metamorphic rocks – part of the old Caledonian Mountain belt, but we found lots of fossils at Dundoran. Excellent accommodation and lots of Irish hospitality. (DFG)

UGANDA

Mr. Seales and Mr. Crewe visited Uganda just prior to Easter. They spent 6th-16th April in Jinja, as guests of Parvatiben Muljibhai Madhvani (PMM) Girls' School. This was our first direct contact with the school and started the process of exploring the best ways of developing a mutually beneficial link. Messrs Seales and Crewe also had the opportunity to see something of the area. On their return they led a fascinating whole-school assembly, using pictures and video-clips to give us an idea of what life is like at the School and in Uganda. Pictures of their trip can be seen on the school web site at www.strs.org.uk or on www.geocities.com/strs_lang. We are planning to host a return visit in July, from PMM School's Headmistress and their link school co-ordinator.

Uganda straddles the equator but is blessed with ample fertile land, regular rainfall and mineral deposits. Following the murderous regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote the country is one of the poorest on Earth. However its economy has great potential, under President Museveni its politics are now stable and it is seen by the IMF and World Bank as a rôle model of successful economic recovery. Jinja is the country's second city, located on the shores of Lake Victoria by the source of the River Nile. PMM School is the only State funded girls' day school in Uganda, but the girls have to pay (about £1 a day) towards their education – if they don't pay they are turned away. The School has ten modern computers and the language of instruction is English so it promises be an ideal partner with a wealth of opportunities to enrich our pupils' education and experience.

ICT PGL TRIPS

On 9th May and 16th May groups of Year 8 pupils travelled to Shropshire accompanied by various members of staff for an ICT adventure weekend. The idea was to increase their ICT abilities in a fun environment. Activities such as raft building and archery were thus included alongside video editing and website building. Judging by the smiles, all had a great time and found it very useful.



Photo diaries of both weekends can be seen on the pilot school website at www.geocities.com/strs_glos. Many thanks to all the staff who gave up their weekends. (GEC)

FRENCH PLAY

The European Theatre Company visited school on the final day of our Spring term – Friday, 11th April. The small group of young French actors performed two short plays which were dramatised versions of stories from Alphonse Daudet's "Lettres de Mon Moulin". The Year 8 and 9 boys in the audience enjoyed these lively and engaging performances. They responded positively to the opportunities for audience participation through singing and chorus lines. Some were even invited to act and dance on stage. We were also pleased to welcome to Sir Thomas Rich's a group of twenty pupils from Oxtalls Community School. (AJG)

HOUSE EVENTS

The House **Cross Country** races were completed at the end of last term. The Junior Cup was won by Northgate (S, W second equal); the Senior Cup was shared by Northgate and Eastgate, from W, S.

The House **Chess** competition ran throughout last term, culminating in victory for Eastgate with 32 points, from S and N (28 points) and W (23 points). After 15 events Eastgate have edged ahead of Westgate by just one point with Northgate and Southgate trying to keep in touch.

The next event will be House **Athletics** which will be decided at Sports Evening on Wednesday 11th June, 6.30-8.30 p.m. All parents are warmly invited to join us and help to cheer on the athletes. We are grateful to our Parents' Association who will be providing a barbeque plus other refreshments including warm drinks.

SPORTSMARK

The School has received a "Sportmark Award" from Sport England. This recognises our well-balanced physical education curriculum and our extra-curricular programme which offers all students access to a wide range of opportunities, together with sporting links with the local community.

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to be active and involved in sport and to have an enjoyable and satisfying experience in doing so, whatever their level of ability. In this way we hope to foster a positive attitude towards sport so that students continue to participate in, and reap the benefits of, a physically active lifestyle.

We are grateful to the many staff who contribute towards providing these opportunities, giving much of their free time at lunchtimes, after school and at weekends in the process. (AJB)

GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK

Year 8 recently travelled to the Shropshire town of Bridgnorth by road and rail. They studied the land use and development of this attractive market town and learnt something about the formation of the Severn Valley millions of years ago. Year 7 are next in line for some fieldwork with a visit soon after half term to the Forest of Dean to learn about river erosion. (SWP)

SIXTH FORM

There is still some way to go before our Upper Sixth have their university places confirmed but, to date, 84 students have received 421 offers, equivalent to five offers per student which is remarkable and testimony to the support they have received from the school, in particular subject teachers and Form Tutors. Being able to declare the excellent AS results they achieved last summer has been another contributory factor.

As part of the process of preparation for university application we were delighted to welcome Anthony McClaran to speak to our Lower Sixth and parents in the first week of term. Mr. McClaran is the Acting Chief Executive of UCAS, the university applications organisation.

Honours are awarded to students for outstanding service to the school. This term Laurence Haigh (U6H) and Toby Dalton (U6R) have been awarded Honours for their dedication, commitment and help to the school's Railway Society over the past seven years.

MUSIC

The Music Department would like to record its recent and forthcoming activities:

20th March: Spring Concert in which there was the usual variety of musical style, performed by a range of solos, duets and groups.

9th April: The Choir sang its way through all 176 verses plus the Gloria of Psalm 119 raising hundreds of pounds for the School's Uganda appeal. The final amount has yet to be announced as sponsored money is still being collected!

7th May: The Choir presented its annual choral concert at Holy Trinity Church, Longlevens which, this year, was Britten's 'St Nicolas' – a challenging but ultimately rewarding piece for all concerned. The choir also performed Parry's coronation anthem 'I was glad'.

10th July: Summer concert will be held in the school hall starting at 7.30 p.m. Please come and support and enjoy a good evening's entertainment.

Scott Yearsley (10B) performed in the recent *Showstoppers* concert to much acclaim. (JWT)

CUP VICTORIES

Congratulations to our Year 7 and Year 8 teams who, just last week, each won their Gloucester City Schools Cup finals.

The Year 7 team won at Brockworth 1-0. The match was intense, tight and competitively fought. Few chances were created from either side due to strong defensive work. However, with the clock running down Rich's won a corner with 'big guns' Andrew Clegg and Aaron Beard going up for the set piece. The result was a spectacular header into goal from Aaron Beard. Rich's then mopped up the inevitable pressure for the last five minutes. A well deserved win for an excellent Year 7 side.

At Plock Court the Year 8 team made up for last season's disappointment in the final by beating a determined and physical Crypt side 2-0. After their semi-final victory over Severn Vale Rich's were favourites going into the final. However Crypt had not read the script and placed Rich's under extreme pressure throughout the match. Yet our defence stood firm and Rich's took their chances with goals from Richard de-Camps and Joseph Noel. An excellent win from a very positive group. (PDL)

FOUNDER'S TRAIL

Year 7 pupils spent a Wednesday morning in Gloucester exploring the school's history. They started in St. John's Northgate, site of Thomas Rich's baptism, visited the Guildhall where The Blue Coat Hospital opened in 1668 and The Old School House (all that remains of the Barton Street school) as well as the Cathedral, the Docks and locations around Gloucester. The morning enabled pupils to see how the school developed in the context of discovering something of Gloucester's history.

The visit took place 39 years to the day after the school moved to our present buildings. I am grateful to Mr. Pilbeam for all his work in planning the Trail and also for starting the morning by giving pupils an insight into the school's foundations.

HOCKEY

At an assembly in the first week of term full hockey colours were awarded to Simon Trevenna; half-colours to Kirsty Bevan, Emma Cox, Tom Dixon, Kevin Lenton, Samantha Lyons, Nick Shipley and Adam Woodcock. (JMG)

CHEMISTRY AT ASTON

The Lower Sixth chemists visited Aston University with Mr. Stone, attending an "AS Revision Day".

Two days ago a team of four Year 8 boys represented the school, again at Aston University, in the Salters' Festival of Chemistry. This entailed the team taking part in two 'challenges' as well as watching a *Chemical Magic* demonstration. At the time of going to press the extent of their success is not known.

SOCCER

1st XI

The 1st XI have enjoyed an outstanding season, reaching the U19s County Cup Final and winning nine of the other ten games against strong opposition with 24 goals for and only six against.

The County Cup Final was played immediately after the Easter break at The Lawn, home ground of Forest Green Rovers and some five players from Sir William Romney School, our opposition on the evening. Despite our disappointing performance and a 3-1 defeat, the squad should be very pleased with their achievements over the season and the fact that this is the first occasion that the school, at this senior level, has reached the County Cup Final.

1st XI colours have been re-awarded to R. Herrick, M. Mohamed. Full colours were awarded to J. Boyd, N. Day, D. Edwards, M. McBride, J. Riemer; half-colours to M. Anderson, J. Boyle, C. Brignall, S. Broughton, P. Knight, R. Knight, C. Mooney, S. Walker.

We look forward to next season and continued success. (AJB)

2nd XI

The 2nd XI enjoyed a successful season with a record of won 4, drawn 1, lost 1. Twenty goals were scored in the six matches and only three conceded. This team was a nice mixture of youth and experience, always looking to play open, attacking football in the right spirit.

2nd XI colours were awarded to O. Ajadi, D. Bradley, T. Burdett, J. Kenny, L. Materacki, G. Mohamed, A. Payne, D. Rice; half-colours to D. Dales, J. Latimer, J. Martin, B. Marquis, D. Weir. (MAS)

LEGAL HELP SOUGHT

The National Grammar Schools Association is an organisation which exists to facilitate co-operation between the country's 164 Grammar Schools. More recently it has actively defended Grammar Schools against potential threats to their existence. To be effective it requires access to legal guidance. They have asked Grammar Schools to enquire if, within their ranks, there might be anyone with suitable legal expertise who would be willing to join or assist their Legal and Public Affairs/Parliamentary Sub Committee to undertake reviews of legislation and proposed changes thereto with regard to their effects upon Grammar Schools.

If you are interested, or would like to know more, please contact Mr. Kellie or Nigel Briers at NGSA, tel/fax 01829 720157 or e-mail nigel@nbriers.fsnet.co.uk.

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT 50th Anniversary of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA

On 29th April the Department, both teaching staff and 62 Sixth Form students studying Biology at AS and 'A' level, along with the Headmaster and Mr. Seales as Head of Sixth Form, and not forgetting our Science Technicians, all assembled (standing room only) in L2 to commemorate "50 years of DNA".

We remembered those heady days of DNA archaeology in the 1950s when Watson, Crick, Wilkins, Franklin et al entered the DNA tomb and discovered the structure of the molecule of life. We also recalled the developments of the following five decades including genetic engineering, greater understanding of hereditary diseases, genetic fingerprinting, cloning and, appropriately, the publishing of the human gene map almost fifty years to the day since Watson and Crick officially announced their initial discovery to the scientific community in 'NATURE' in April 1953. Naturally we considered where our DNA technology might/should take us in the next fifty years.

It was thought fitting that we should commemorate the 50th anniversary rather than wait for the centenary celebrations as several of those attending might not be able to attend in 2053? As a memento of the occasion all students and staff were presented with a bound colour "Commemorative DNA Edition" of the departments' "STRS Biology News Update" magazine. (IRB)

FRENCH EXCHANGE

The very successful French Exchange trip to Annecy has left memories distilled into images of the beautiful lake, mountains beneath blue skies, cycling lycra, "tartiflette" (cheese and potato pie), roller blades, street markets, "raclette" (torture instrument for melting huge quantities of cheese).... The boys from Rich's proved excellent ambassadors and were without exception complimented on their politeness, sociability and communication skills in French. Will Rees impressed airport queues with such phrases in French as "I so enjoy browsing in bookshops", Andy Downes talked many Savoyards into submission, and Dexter Bradley was invaluable as group leader. The only moment of regret was Stefan Farahani losing his Physics book on the plane (a pitfall of SATs revision) but a little more physics knowledge has been spread worldwide.

Well done to all students who took part in this very demanding linguistic experience. (SEE)

SIX TERM YEAR

I wish I could report a decision by the County Council but I have heard nothing definite. A recent article in the local press suggested that the Council intends to change to a six-term school year with effect from September 2004. However the proposed dates indicate little difference from the current six-half-terms year. Parents will be informed as soon as we know.

VOUCHERS

Our thanks to all parents who contributed vouchers to our collections. We amassed 9,300 Tesco vouchers which we shall put towards the purchase of a new computer and a video in the Design & Technology Department. We also received 300 Nestlé 'box tops for education' for which we claimed £30 for our School Fund.

HISTORY TRIP

In recent weeks Year 9 pupils visited the Imperial War Museum. Exhibits in the World War One and Two galleries were studied and a teaching session on The Blitz Experience was held. However the most striking impact on some boys was made by the sheer scale of the V2 Rocket which Hitler deployed against Britain in the final stages of World War Two. (GB)

BUSINESS STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

The last half term has, as usual, been both hectic yet also very productive. In amongst fulfilling the demands of syllabi and preparing for exams we have also enjoyed a number of notable occasions.

In April we hosted a "Kaizen" day. Kaizen is the Japanese management practice of ensuring *continuous improvement* in the production process and an idea which underpins the Japanese management philosophy.



Masaaki Imai - Founder
Kaizen Institute

A team of trainers from Dowty Propellers put our Upper 6th through their paces during a taxing yet enjoyable morning, wherein bits of cardboard, plastic and sticky tape had never been put to such good use! Many thanks to Dowty for giving up their time in order to give our students this valuable experience.

We were also given the opportunity to send two students to the prestigious Institute of Directors' Centenary Convention at the Royal Albert Hall.

The theme for this year's conference was *Business Leadership* and Nicholas Shipley (L6R) and Sarah-Ann Smith (L6T) were



Mrs Thatcher Prime
Minister 1979 - 1990

fortunate enough to hear addresses from Baroness Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister 1979 - 1990), Buzz Aldrin (space pioneer) and Sir Steven Redgrave (winner of five Olympic gold medals).

As ever, we would like to express our gratitude to the Three Counties branch of the IOD who afford us this opportunity on an annual basis. MJB

TERMLY REPORTS

Termly Reports are issued on the final day of each half-term, showing pupils' Order grades. However because this half-term has been so short, barely four weeks, it hardly justifies meaningful Order grades. The Fifth Order Reports will therefore be issued a week later than usual - on the first Friday after half-term, 6th June.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

9th - 27th June
Wednesday, 11th June
19th - 25th June
Thursday, 26th June
Saturday, 28th June
30th June - 4th July
Friday, 4th July
7th - 11th July
Friday, 18th July

A2 examinations (Upper Sixth)
Sports Evening 6.30 p.m.
School Examinations
STAFF TRAINING DAY (non-attendance for pupils)
Nearly New Uniform 10.30 - 12.00 a.m.
Sixth Form Induction Week
New Year 7 Induction Day
Year 11 Work Experience
END OF TERM 12.45 p.m.

2nd and 3rd September
Thursday, 4th September

STAFF TRAINING DAYS (non-attendance for pupils)
Term starts, 8.40 a.m.

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS

Academic Year 2003/2004

Staff Training Days	Tuesday/Wednesday, 2 nd /3 rd September, 2003
Term Begins	Thursday, 4 th September, 2003
Half Term	Monday – Friday, 27 th – 31 st October, 2003
End of Term	Friday, 19 th December, 2003
Spring Term Begins	Monday, 5 th January, 2004
Half Term	Monday – Friday, 16 th – 20 th February, 2004
End of Term	Friday, 2 nd April, 2004
Summer Term Begins	Monday, 19 th April, 2004
Bank Holiday	Monday, 3 rd May, 2004
Half Term	Monday – Friday, 31 st May – 4 th June, 2004
End of Term	Wednesday, 21 st July, 2004