

Sir Thomas Rich's Newsletter

ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 2010



Iceland 2010

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“We start the new school year in good heart, buoyed by excellent examination results in the summer. We returned to find improvements to the fabric and furnishings, particularly a much improved dining area, for which we thank our Parents’ Association. We didn’t quite manage to achieve our sought-after Academy status but we hope that we shall complete this in the near future.”

I wish all our students and staff an enjoyable and rewarding year ahead.

I Kellie

EXAMINATION RESULTS

We are delighted that our students achieved excellent results this summer. Good GCSE results ensured our Year 11s gained firm foundations for progression to Sixth Form study; GCSEs are increasingly used by over-subscribed universities to help to determine their offers. Our students’ A-level results enabled almost all to progress to their first-choice universities. Well done to our students and their teachers.

GCSE: every Year 11 boy passed at least eight GCSEs at grade C and above (including English and maths). 61% of passes were at grades A* and A, 90% were at grades A*-B. The average number of passes per student was 10.05. The average points score per student (based on A*=58, A=52, B=46, etc.) was 488.3, equivalent to almost ten grade As per student.

AS: the pass rate was 98%, with 64% at grades A and B. The average points score per student (A=60, B=50, etc.) was 226.5. The commonest grade was A, almost three quarters of Year 12 gained at least one grade A, almost half achieved two or more grade As.

A-Level: this was the first year in which the new grade A* was introduced, which requires a grade A to have been achieved at AS and at least 90% in the A2 exam. Year 13 had 100% pass rate, with 40% at grades A* and A, 75% at grades A*-B. The average number of A-levels passed per student was 3.7; their average points score (A*=140, A=120, B=100, etc.) was 433.

ACADEMY STATUS

We have almost completed the preparatory work required by the Department for Education, to allow them to approve our conversion to academy status. We had hoped this would have occurred on 1st September but the change from ‘community school’ involves considerable additional work so we are aiming for approval during this month.

I would reassure parents that the change will not affect our students’ education in any way other than allowing us to provide additional resources. Academy status will bring with it some additional freedoms, primarily the freedom to spend a greater proportion of our funding allocation, of which 14% is currently retained by the Local Authority. We shall continue to be a Grammar School, we shall retain our three specialisms, and we shall continue our work supporting local schools.

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF

We welcome the following new staff who have joined us this year: Mr. Jobson (Head of Maths), Ms. Shaw (Maths), Mrs. Thomas (French), Ms. Law (English), Mrs. Waterson (Biology), Ms. Francey (Geography), Mr. Windsor and Mr. Faux, who will provide our teaching cover, and Mrs. Bain, School Secretary.

Several staff have gained promotions within school and we wish them well with their new responsibilities: Ms. Brake, Head of our Modern Foreign Languages Faculty (in addition to Head of Year 12); Mr. Johnson, Head of ICT; Mrs. Jones, Head of Performing Arts; Mrs. Banks, Head of Sixth Form General Studies; Mr. Barton, Commercial Operations Manager.

NEW PUPILS

We have one hundred and fifteen boys in Year 7 who join us from 55 different primary schools. Our new Year 12 has one hundred and thirty students of whom 42 join us from 19 other secondary schools. Twenty nine of Year 12 are girls, making a total of 62 girls in our Sixth Form. Total student numbers are 816 (compared with 801 in September 2009).

ABSENCES

If a pupil is absent from school and we have not been informed of the reason, we shall use our *Call Parent* facility to text parents to alert them to the absence. We shall wait until about 10.00 a.m. so that we do not trouble parents for pupils who have arrived late or for whom parents telephone to let us know of an absence. It will obviously help if parents can ensure the School is informed of pupil absence as soon as possible.

A reminder to parents that advising us of an absence in advance does not authorise the absence. Only the Headmaster can grant permission for absence, holidays in term time are never authorised.

REFURBISHMENT

The School has been busy throughout the summer holidays with contractors and our own staff effecting improvements. Most notable is our Dining Area which was cramped and gloomy, it is now spacious, brighter and welcoming. We are indebted to our wonderful Parents' Association for all their efforts which have facilitated this long-overdue development.

Several new interactive whiteboards have been installed, most classrooms now have this invaluable teaching aid. Classrooms and corridors have been cleaned and painted, and tired tables and chairs have been replaced. Our first floor (home to History, Business/ Economics and R.E.) has been refurbished, with new flooring and the removal of old, wooden lockers. The outside has been given a deep-clean and we intend to have hanging baskets to brighten our 1960s building. Our new Food Technology room is progressing, it is due to be completed by the end of term.



END OF TERM

Our final assembly, on the last day of term, was too late to feature in our July Newsletter. We were delighted to welcome Will Porterfield, Chris Dent and Steve Snell, Gloucestershire County Cricket 1st XI players, who helped to present Colours, certificates and cups.

The Cock House Trophy was retained by Westgate, who won 14 of the 23 inter-House competitions through the year, hence were convincing winners from Southgate, Eastgate and Northgate.

SUMMER SHIRT

The school is introducing an optional short sleeved shirt or blouse embroidered with the school crest next year. They can be worn all year, as any other shirt, but during the Summer Term pupils will be allowed to wear them without a tie and blazer. The intention is that it will allow pupils to dress appropriately for the weather throughout the Summer Term, whilst remaining smart and identifiable as Sir Thomas Rich's students. They will be available to all years, including the Sixth Form. There will be an order form which you can be downloaded from the school website. As this is a new item of made-to-order uniform we must have your orders by 17th September to guarantee delivery in time for the Summer Term.

SPEECH DAY

Our annual Speech Day will be on Friday 17th September, in the School Hall, starting at 7.30 p.m.. This is probably the biggest event in the School year, it is a celebration of our students' achievements. Prizes are awarded for academic success as well as notable contributions to wider school life. We look forward to welcoming our Guest of Honour, Ian Simmons, who was a pupil at Sir Thomas Rich's from 1967 to 1974. He gained a first class Honours degree in Geography at Oxford University, worked in marketing, then joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, working as a diplomat in Dhaka, Nairobi, Bangkok, Hanoi and New Delhi before his current posting to the British Embassy in Rabat, Morocco.

All parents are warmly invited to join us for the evening: please ask your son/daughter to collect tickets (there is no charge) from Reception.



SENIOR PREFECTS

Congratulations to the following members of Year 13 who have been appointed to senior leadership roles:

School Captains: Henry House and Leo Kirby
Observers: Alexander Alder, Anwen Carter, Benedict Conway, Claire Hawksworth, Jordan Heard, William Lee, William McKemey, Alexander Petersen, Amelia Wheatstone.



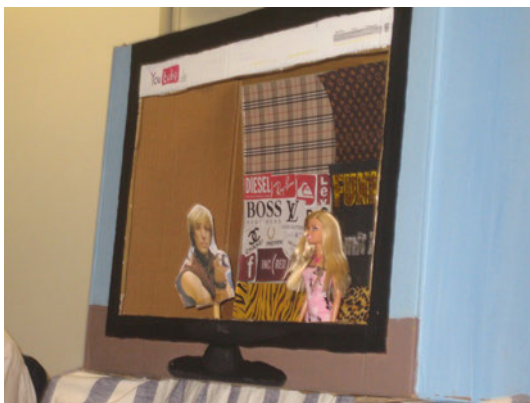
Y12 German Pupils perform their modern version of Rumpelstilzchen.



In the last week of the summer term the lower school German classes thoroughly enjoyed a theatre performance presented by the year 12 German group. The production was a modern version of the very famous Grimm fairy tale, Rumpelstilzchen. Taking the main threads of the original version and incorporating other key elements from the fairytale tradition, the script of this new version of the traditional story was born within the record time of one week. The performance included many moments of hilarious entertainment, ranging from song and dance to a puppet show, with audience participation.

I am really proud of what the year 12 achieved and how enthusiastically they approached the presentation, up to and including the eighth performance! All the credit goes to them. Well done and "Danke"!

B Testoni– Ranken



The Bandwagon

At the end of the summer term, 10 sixth form students from throughout the county were given the chance to join The Bandwagon. The Bandwagon was a 10 piece "pop up" ensemble that visited six primary schools throughout Gloucestershire, over a period of three days, in order to provide young children with a vibrant and exciting experience of music...by bringing it to them.

The ensemble was led by Will Carslake (a professional conductor) and also Hannah Kendall (composer). After a full day of rehearsals sometime in late July we were ready! We visited two schools each day (in our Bandwagon Bus) and played a few pieces to them from memory. There was a surprise element to this as none of the primary school children had any idea we were coming: seeing the shock and surprise on their faces was one of the best parts of the experience.

It was the first time The Bandwagon had been created and it drew attention; we appeared on Points West and were also interviewed by BBC Radio Gloucestershire. It was a great experience and something we hope to do again next year!

Abi Ackerman and Ed Watson



Geography Trip

Iceland

(20th July – 23rd July, 2010)



Staff and pupils relaxing in the geothermal waters of the Blue Lagoon within a few hours of landing in Iceland. From left: Felix Yates, Oliver King, Mr Gowler (background), Mr Morgan (foreground), Joshua Clegg and Adam Thrall.

At the end of the summer term, the Geography department took 34 pupils from Years 10, 11 and 12 to Iceland for four days. The itinerary included a wide range of activities and diverse experiences to make the most of our time in this fascinating country. As a geographer, Iceland has always been somewhere I was keen to visit and it did not disappoint. My personal highlights included swimming in the 'Blue Lagoon', a tour around a geothermal power station and the steam vents, geysers and boiling mud pools that we saw as we travelled around South West Iceland.

Mrs Brown

Here are some of the highlights from the boys in 11R:

"My favourite part of the trip was the Gullfoss waterfall. The power and ferocity of the water was outstanding, and the sound, deafening, as we were stood on an outcrop of rock close by. It was easy to see why it is the largest waterfall in Europe in terms of volume"

William Richardson 11R

"The day I enjoyed most was trekking on Icelandic ponies, although my horse was rather disobedient. He also looked a little overweight and kept lowering his head to chomp on the grass. On one occasion, my horse stopped suddenly and I nearly fell off. The trip was still fun and I enjoyed seeing the Icelandic scenery on horseback".

Sebastian Harker 11R

"For me the highlight of our Icelandic trip was going whale watching. We caught a boat from Reykjavik and travelled out to sea for a couple of hours. We were lucky because we saw a group, or pod, of Minke Whales. We also saw puffins on some of the islands in the bay. The tour guide was very informative, although she was a bit over enthusiastic at times"

Oliver Roper 11R



One of the most memorable Icelandic experiences was visiting the magnificent Eyjafjallajökul Glacier. It was covered in ash from the volcano but it was still beautiful. The glacier was huge, bigger than I expected, and covered in crevasses. We were able to stand on the snout of the glacier and see the meltwater streams flowing out from under the ice. Mr Gowler explained to us about the deposition that was taking place and we now know that the geographical term for the piles of stones we saw is 'Moraine'.

Jack Lyes 11R



Time is running out to buy a brick and be part of the
'Wall of Richians'

Download the order form from the PA pages of the website
and give your son / daughter a permanent reminder of their time at STRS.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Short sleeved shirts and blouses with school crest – change of supplier and prices

The school is introducing white short sleeved shirts and blouses embroidered with the school crest as an optional uniform item. These are to be delivered in March 2011 ready for the start of the Summer Term. Order forms were sent home in July to be returned by 17th September 2010.

Due to circumstances beyond our control we had to source a new supplier over the summer. Despite our best efforts we have no alternative but to increase prices by between £1 and £2 per shirt.

Boys' shirts up to 14" collar are now £8.00, larger sizes £10.00. Girls' blouses up to 36" bust are £8.00, larger sizes £10.00. A revised order form/price list has been posted on the school website. If you have already sent in your order and payment using the old order-form please do not send in any extra money yet – this may be paid when the shirts are collected in March. If you would prefer to cancel your order this is not a problem. Please send a note to the school secretary advising you wish to cancel your order by Tuesday 21st September 2010.

Any new orders should be returned to the School Secretary by 17th September using the revised order-form downloadable from the school website.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this causes. We need to have confirmed orders for as many shirts as possible to make this viable, and hope that you are still happy to support this initiative.

Denise Sheldon
Uniform Co-ordinator
Sir Thomas Rich's Parents' Association

Quiz & Pudding Night

**School Hall
Friday 15th October 2010
7pm – 10pm**

Don't forget to buy your tickets

The STRS Parents' Association's first fundraising event of the new academic year and we want it to be a humdinger!

We hope you will support us by coming along. Why not get a few friends together and come as a ready formed team (teams will be a maximum of 6 people).

Tickets for the evening need to be purchased in advance and by Monday 11th October at the latest. Please don't leave it until the last minute, act now, get the date into your diary, ring your friends and buy your tickets ASAP!

Tickets are available from the school reception and cost £5 per person. This includes quiz entry and the delicious puddings.



STRS PA Quiz & Pudding Night

I would like Tickets at £5 each (Quiz entry and pudding) and enclose the total of £.....
(Cheques made payable to STRS PA).

Your Name:

Son / Daughter's name Form

Contact details (email or telephone number)

Tickets must be purchased in advance and by Monday 11th Oct 2010.



Ribadesella Trip

In July a group of 40 Year 9 boys spent a week in Ribadesella improving their Spanish skills. Here is what Ed Brooking (10R) thought of it.

Food

There was a wide range of cultural food. There was a good choice of food at the hotel, which was served with sauces and a glass of water or juice. There was also some interesting food available in shops and on market day. There were sweets, fruit, veg, etc. all available for purchase at a fair price.

Culture

There were many chances to meet the local kids and genuinely learn how to speak Spanish properly. There was also a market day, which meant we could see what a traditional Spanish town was like. Also due to the fact we went to Ribadesella over the world cup final, we also learnt how the Spanish celebrate victories.

Activities

On most days, we had activities to do, such as visiting the caves in the town, canoeing, sand sculpting and visiting the town of Oviedo. Each of these activities was fun and interesting. We learnt a little about the history and culture of Spain.

Free Time

Between activities and meal times there was a lot of free time where we could go into the town, hang with friends or write the trip diaries. Trip diaries were easy and fun to write, and if done well enough, you could get a prize for it. Free time was a good chance to practise Spanish with the locals, go to the shops and to generally have fun.

Ed Brooking 10R

44th Gloucester (STRS) Explorer Scouts

Come & Join Us!



Ever wondered what happens in & around the Scout Hut Friday evenings??

Ever wanted to travel to unusual places, meet extraordinary people, do exhilarating and exciting things??

Ever wanted to share in the fine company of a good bunch of friends, who you can rely on to make the best out of each situation??

Ever wanted to better yourself??

If the answer to any or all of these is "YES" then why not join up with the school's Explorer Scout Unit - a unique band of folk who do Scouting in their own unique way!

To find out more just speak to one of the members pictured here and then come along to our meeting nights on a Friday.

Forthcoming Events/Activities include:



Chris Sullivan
11S



Hugo Chapple
11T



Jack Jeffree
11S

10th Sept 2010

Open Evening & BBQ

17th –19th Sept 2010

County Explorer Activities Camp

26th Sept 2010

5 Valleys Walk

3rd October

Dragon Boat Races



Top Cricket Performances from season 2010

Top Bowling by William Byrd for the U13 team on their Jersey against De La Salle - 6 wickets for 18 runs, including a hat trick.

Top Batting by Oliver Goldsmith for the U15 team against Kings - 102 not out in a century partnership of 170 with Michael Horwood.

P Brown



Sat 11th September

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School

STRS U16A v BHBS U16A
Lost 34 – 17

STRS U16B v BHBS U16B
Won 21 – 0

STRS U15A v BHBS U15 A
Won 11 – 10

STRS U15A v Cleeve U15A
34 – 0

STRS U15B v BHBS U15B
Won 35 – 5

STRS U15B v Cleeve U15B
Won 42 – 0

STRS U14A v BHBS U14A
Won 25 – 5

STRS U14B v BHBA U14B
Won 52 – 0

STRS U13A v BHBS U13A
Lost 27 – 17

STRS U13B v BHBS U13B
Won 20 – 0

STRS U13C v BHBS U13C
Won 35 - 17

1st XV

Warwick School Tournament Saturday 4th September

STRS 1st XV v Warwickshire County U18's
Won 14 – 5

STRS 1st XV v Nottingham High School
Lost 10 – 7

STRS 1st XV v Warwick School
Lost 14 – 5

Wednesday 8th September

STRS 1st XV v Bishop Vesey's Grammar
School, Sutton Coldfield
Won 20 – 19

Scott Anderson kicked a penalty in the last few minutes to win the game! Tries from Ben Conway, Lewis Norfield-Jones and Karl Turner.

Aegon Team Tennis



Following their success in winning the Gloucestershire Leagues, the Yr 8 and 10 teams from last year are to meet Chase School in the 1st round of the Regional Knockout Competition. The fixture is to be played by 23rd September. The actual date is to be confirmed.

I J Gallagher

2nd XV

Warwick Tournament Saturday 4th September

STRS v Nottingham High School
Lost 10 – 7

STRS v Warwick School
Lost 14 – 0

Wednesday 8th September

STRS 2nd XV v Beaufort 1st XV
Lost 32 – 0

STRS 3rd XV v Beaufort 2nd XV
Lost 31 – 24

Australia Tour Jul-Aug 2011

The first of our fund-raising events, a Golf Day, is on Thursday 16th September. It is being held at Gloucester Golf Club on Matson Lane. We are also raising money for Winston's Wish, a local childrens' charity on the day. The first four- ball tees off at 11 am. Later on in the year we will be holding a black-tie dinner and auction. If you think you could help with providing a lot for the auction please let me know. We are also looking for sponsors for the Tour. Again, if you think you can help with sponsorship, please do get in touch.

C D A Carter

CALENDAR

TERM DATES FOR 2010/11

Friday 17 September
 Monday 27 & Tuesday 28 September
 Tuesday 28 September
 Thursday 14 October
 Friday 15 October
 Monday 25 – Friday 29 October
 Monday 1 – Friday 5 November
 Monday 22 Nov – Thursday 2 Dec
 Friday 3 December
 Saturday 4 December
 Monday 6 December
 Weds 8, Thurs 9 & Fri 10 December
 Monday 13 December
 Weds 15 December
 Thurs 16 December
 Friday 17 December

Speech Day, 7.30 p.m.
 Open Days
 Open Evening, 6.00/7.30 p.m.
 Informal Year 7 Parents' Evening
 P.A. Quiz & Pudding Night, 7.00 p.m.
 Half-term holidays
 Year 12 examinations
 Trial GCSE examinations
INSET Day
 Christmas Fayre, 1.00-3.00 p.m.
 Christmas by Candlelight, 7.30 p.m.
A Play on Words, school drama, 7.30 pm
 Year 13 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Carol Service, St. Catharine's, 7.30 p.m.
 Carol Service, St. John's, 7.30 p.m.
 Term ends, 12.45 p.m.

2011

Tuesday 3 January
 Thursday 13 January
 Tuesday 18 January
 Thursday 27 January
 Monday 7 – Friday 11 February
 Tuesday 8 February
 Saturday 12 February
 Wednesday 16 February
 Monday 21 – Friday 25 February
 Mon 28 Feb – Friday 4 March
 Monday 7 March
 Monday 14 – Friday 18 March
 Monday 14 March
 Monday 21 – Friday 25 March
 Wednesday 6 April
 Friday 8 April
 Tuesday 26 April
 Tuesday 26 – Friday 29 April
 Monday 2 May
 Wednesday 11 May
 Monday 30 May – Friday 3 June
 Friday 24 – Thursday 30 June
 Friday 1 July
 Monday 4 – Friday 8 July
 Thursday 7 July
 Tuesday 12 July
 Friday 22 July

Term starts, 8.40 a.m.
 Year 11 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Year 9 Options Evening, 7.00 p.m.
 Sixth Form Open Evening, 7.15 p.m.
 Year 11 work experience week
 Year 8 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 P.A. Valentine's Ball, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.
 Year 9 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Half-term holidays
 Year 10 examinations
INSET Day
 Founder's Week
 Year 7 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Trial AS examinations
 Year 12 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Term ends, 12.45 p.m.
 Term starts, 8.40 a.m.
 Trial A2 examinations
 Bank Holiday
 Choral Concert, St. John's Church, 8.00 p.m.
 Half-term holidays
 School examinations (Years 7–9)
INSET Day
 Sixth Form induction week
 Sports Evening, 6.30 p.m.
 Year 10 Parents' Evening, 5.00 p.m.
 Term ends, 12.45 p.m.

New Uniform Sales

Members of the PA will be in school selling new uniform between 1pm and 2pm on Monday 27th September and Tuesday 19th October. Please remind your son or daughter to attend one of these sessions should you require any items of uniform in the near future.

Please email Denise Sheldon with any uniform enquiries:

sheldons@gloucester39.freemove.co.uk