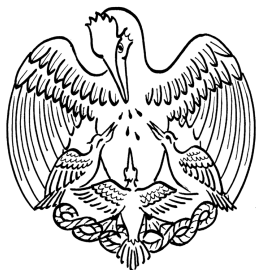


# SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE



## NEWSLETTER

15 December 2008

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### **Dates for your diary**

Great St. Mary's Carol Service	18 December	GCSE Science Modules	19 January
Autumn Term ends	19 December	GCSE Science Modules	21 January
Spring Term begins	6 January	Yr 11 Parents' Evening	22 January
GCSE Science Modules	12 January	GCSE Science Modules	23 January
GCSE H & S Care Module	12 January	GCSE Science Modules	27 January
Yr 9 SAT Mock Examinations	13 - 15 January	GCSE H & S Care Module	27 January
GCSE Science Modules	15 January	Yrs 9 & 10 Chinese Away Day	28 January

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Dear Parent

Being a well-organised crew, you will no doubt be unsurprised that term ends on Friday and that Christmas follows the week after ... The pace of school life is such that it often takes us aback to realise that so little time remains to organise the end of term festivities or, indeed, to buy Christmas presents for colleagues, friends and family.

Last week saw Christmas lunch for our pupils on Wednesday and Thursday – a fun occasion that sees our pupils being waited on by their teachers.

This is a busy week. Normal lessons will be taught until Friday morning, although we have our final assembly for Year 7 on Thursday afternoon. In the evening, we have our wonderful carol service at Great St Mary's, this year's officiating vicar being Canon Roger Royle. If you haven't heard of him that doesn't necessarily make you a

bad person. If you *have* heard of him then it will be because you listen to Radio 2, most particularly the Terry Wogan show ... I intend to maintain a discreet silence on this issue. Friday sees the annual staff revue at which staff and pupils perform to the delight of Years 10 and 11, not always because of the quality of the performance. Years 7 and 8 enjoy Christmas celebrations in their forms, while Year 9 has the chance to watch a film in our 'cinema'.

True it is, of course, that on Friday, we break for the holiday. There will be no afternoon school on Friday 19 December. This supports a purposeful end to term for all of us – and allows our staff to enjoy Christmas lunch together, before going our separate ways for the festive season.

We are, of course, restricted very much by the availability of

buses in any adjustments we make to timings on the last day. For that reason we will look to finish our morning activities around midday to allow our pupils to depart either on service buses or school buses as soon after that as possible. Please note that all buses will depart from school around noon and arrive at their destination in their usual time-frame.

School starts again on Tuesday 6 January. We look forward to welcoming back our refreshed and rested school community on that day.

### **The Arts**

As you will know, our Arts staff do a great deal to support our young people to have an outstanding experience of the arts in and beyond the curriculum. Rather less publicly, the work of our Arts Development Manager, Lesley

Morgan, has made a very significant impact this year. Lesley's post is made possible through a partnership agreement with South Cambridgeshire District Council. She works across our family of schools and also across the Linton schools. Although her brief is largely to network and help to develop community arts, our schools benefit greatly from her excellent work. Some examples follow.

### *The Arts Award*

Seven pupils from the school are celebrating after achieving the bronze Arts Award certificate. They are Emma O'Bryan, Rebecca Bartram, William Ingram, Bethany Bailey, Ben Chamberlain, Luke Heavens and Emmeline Carr. Some of the students took the award through Dramawise, where they focused on masked performances as their participation part of the award, while others worked independently to achieve the award. Luke Heavens concentrated on technical equipment, using his growing expertise in cinema projection to complete the apprenticeship part of the award.

Year 11 pupil, Natasha Hill, became the first pupil in the school to achieve the silver Arts Award, a very worthy achievement. As part of this, she undertook to paint a large outdoor mural at a primary school, researching this thoroughly before doing so and completing the mural to a very high standard.

The moderator praised the work submitted by the school, commenting on the wide range

of creativity on display and the high standard pupils had set themselves.

### *Sawston cinema*

After a year of hard work fundraising, the project to re-establish cinema in the Youth and Community Centre is finally coming to fruition.

High quality cinema equipment is now installed, and on 9 November a 'dry-run' screening, involving clips from a selection of films ranging from ET and Dirty Dancing to a black and white Humphrey Jennings and a film shot in Dufaycolor, was met with approval from a full house. Since then, the Cinema Project has hosted the Vital Communities Film Festival. For this, the young people from the school involved in the project, showed they are establishing themselves in their different roles and working well together as a team.

Mamma Mia! will be the first full length film to be screened in the cinema. Young people from the school working in the projection booth will be supported by the chief projectionist from the Arts Picturehouse in Cambridge for this screening and so will also have a further opportunity to improve their skills.

**Mamma Mia! will be screened on Tuesday, 16 December at 6.00pm. Tickets cost £3.00 (£2.00 concessions). Tickets for the screening are now available from the school reception or can be obtained on the door tonight.**

## **The opening of the College**

You may already know that our school was the first community college in the country – indeed in the world – giving it a very special place in history. It was opened in 1930 by Edward VIII when he was Prince of Wales. As the story goes, he came expecting to open a Cambridge University College only to find that he was, in effect, opening a secondary modern, as SVC was at that time.

We are very proud of our history and heritage and took the opportunity recently to have the original film reel of the occasion transferred to DVD. If you wish to view the very short film, please visit our website where you will find a link to it.

## **The new Science building**

I am sure you will share my pleasure the first phase of the building project which includes 6 laboratories is almost complete; some of our Science staff will be moving into the new wing in January. I am particularly pleased that most of our Year 11 pupils will experience teaching in these wonderful new labs before they finish their time at SVC.

The next phase which will see Mr Saunders' and Mrs Banu's laboratories demolished and three new labs built in their place starts immediately. At the same time, we will be finalising plans for the following phase which is scheduled to start next term also; this will bring with it new Food Technology rooms, including facilities for Hospitality and Catering to

allow us to offer our pupils the new diploma from 2010. This requires much more hi-tech equipment and a professional standard setting, including a café where our pupils can sell food commercially. The Edinburgh Wing will be extensively refurbished to become the centre for Maths, IT and Business – work on that will be taking place next term. Beyond that we will be designing our new Geography block. We count ourselves very fortunate to have been given the funding by the Local Authority to upgrade our campus so extensively in advance of the Building Schools for the Future initiative which will bring central government funding eventually, although not until 2019 to South Cambridgeshire. Our pupils deserve excellent facilities now!

### **The post-SATs world**

As you know, the Government made a hasty decision to abolish the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) for Year 9 pupils earlier this term. Whilst we remain sceptical that their principal reason for such speedily-implemented change was that 'schools have been teaching to the test', we do believe that schools have had little choice but to teach to the test in all three subject areas, something that has distorted the curriculum we might have chosen to offer our pupils instead.

Now that we have the freedom to design the KS3 curriculum ourselves, we have been considering how this might change our approach to the Year 9 curriculum this year in the core subjects, English,

Maths and Science. An outline of our plan follows.

#### *Changes to Year 9 curriculum in Science and Maths*

Maths and Science will commence the GCSE study in their subjects after an end of key stage assessment in January. This will be beneficial to pupils as it will give them 5 additional months to focus on the GCSE curriculum, enabling greater flexibility in the way the content of the courses can be delivered. It will also allow the first module of the pupils' GCSE to be taken before the start of year 10 which will avoid re-setting, and changing the teacher, of any teaching group half way through a module of work which can be disruptive to pupils' progress. It will also support pupils' motivation which has occasionally been seen to diminish post SATs when the examination pressure is over.

#### *Changes to the curriculum in English*

It has always been the case that English teachers have believed that the SAT examination has impacted very negatively on the curriculum. Of all of the core subjects, they have welcomed the abolition of SATs most enthusiastically.

However, whereas Maths and Science can with confidence enter pupils for an early GCSE examination, knowing they can achieve their potential, English staff know that pupils will do very much better in Years 10 and 11 – and increasingly so as they mature – in all aspects of the GCSE English and English Literature examinations. The

only exception to this is the Speaking and Listening component of the examination, in which pupils may perform equally well in Year 9. Consequently, the English Department proposes to focus on the Speaking and Listening components of the coursework, some 20% of the examination, before the end of Year 9, thus relieving pressure on the GCSE years.

Despite the end of the SAT tests, all pupils will continue to study a Shakespeare play during the Spring term, but we hope that, instead of merely concentrating on a couple of prescribed scenes set for a rather limited test of comprehension, (although our teachers have always taught the 'whole' text), pupils will benefit from more imaginative teaching and begin to enjoy the whole text as a play. We will also ensure that all Year 9 pupils are given the opportunity to see a Shakespeare play in performance. This will help prepare pupils for the Shakespeare play studied for GCSE. Pupils will continue to develop the skills needed in reading, writing and speaking and listening that will prepare them for GCSE in English and English Literature and for later in life.

### **Prize giving 2008**

We held our annual prize-giving for Year 12 last week at West Road Concert Hall in Cambridge. It was a very real pleasure to see our former pupils again and to find out about their continuing success in their post-SVC destinations.

Our guest speaker was Dr Alison Mowbray, a PhD in Genetic Engineering from the University of Cambridge and an Olympic silver medallist from the Athens Olympics; she is also an ambassador for London 2012. She gave an inspirational address about her Olympic success.

We will publish a list of our prize-winners in the next newsletter.

### **Christmas presents**

Many more of our pupils are now wearing cycle helmets we have been pleased to note. Can we suggest, please, that if your son or daughter cycles regularly to school that you find room in the stocking for one ... OK, in a very big stocking. We accept that this will not generate the excitement of, for example, the latest play station or a wii, but we are very conscious that Chloe and Sarah are both still with us – Chloe now largely recovered – because they were very sensibly wearing helmets when they had their accident on the Sawston Bypass.

### **Christmas wishes**

I would like to reassure those of you who contacted us following Mr Culpin's Christmas assembly to Year 10 last week that he has not been suspended from duty because he revealed to Year 10 that Father Christmas does not exist. Yes, it was ill-considered and yes, several of the year group were distressed, but he did it only in the interests of honesty – he is an historian after all ... I have not made it a formal disciplinary matter. He has simply been denied mince

pies for the remainder of term. Some say he is deeply grateful for that (largely because he prefers Christmas cake).

You have my very best wishes for a wonderful Christmas that brings you the opportunity to relax and catch up with family and friends. The last word goes to a member of our creative writing group who have recently been writing poems based on Adrian Mitchell's poem 'I like that stuff'.

*Half the world bleeds for it  
The other won't sow the seeds  
for it*

*PEACE*

*I love that stuff.*

... worth praying for should you find yourself in Church this Christmas.

Happy Christmas!

June Cannie

Principal

