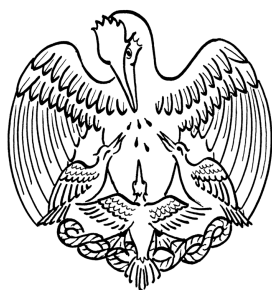


SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE



NEWSLETTER

11 November 2008

Dates for your diary

Yr 10 Maths Modular Examinations	13 November	Yr 11 GCSE Mock Examinations	25 November - 4 December
Children in Need: non-uniform day	14 November	Yr 10 Coursework Tapes	1 – 5 December
Cyber-bullying Parents' Evening	20 November	Yrs 9 & 10 Chinese Away Day	10 December
Yr 8 Girls' HPV Vaccination	20 November	Presentation Evening	10 December
PSHE Day	21 November	<i>(Yr 12 Prize Giving at West Road Concert Hall)</i>	
Yrs 7, 8 & 9 Annual Review Day	24 November	Great St Mary's Carol Service	18 December
<i>(Pupils attend school at interview time only.)</i>		Autumn Term ends	19 December
Year 10 Science Day	24 November	Spring Term begins	6 January
Yr 11 Revision Day <i>(at home)</i>	24 November		

Dear Parent

What a start to the new half term! You will know by now that Ofsted decided to join us three months early. We received the telephone call announcing their imminent arrival at 9.10 am on Monday morning; they joined us at 7.30 am on Wednesday.

So here we are following two days with four inspectors, 30 lesson observations, 4 'sweeps' of school to check on specific aspects of the schools' work, innumerable interviews with staff, the senior leadership team, Chair of Governors and Subject Leaders and with literally hundreds of our pupils formally and informally. They even ate in the school dining hall. Two of the inspectors also met with representatives of the School Forum for lunch in the Walnut Gallery.

By the end of a gruelling two days, the inspectors knew the school pretty well.

We are sworn to silence about the outcome of the inspection until the official report is published. Suffice it to say that I think you will share our pleasure in the result.

However, I would not want to miss an early opportunity to let you know that the inspectors were absolutely bowled over by our pupils. They told us that, if there were a grade above 'outstanding' for behaviour, they would have awarded it to SVC. Our young people showed huge loyalty to the school, to their teachers and to each other through a very intensive two days. The final report will reflect their contribution in its every line.

We couldn't be more grateful to them.

We were also heartened by the many letters of support received from parents, the text of some of which the inspectors read to us. We were touched that so many of you returned the official forms too, reflecting 'parents' overwhelming support' for the school.

Thank you so much for all that you do to support our work and for endorsing us so warmly to Ofsted.

Normal life resumes ...

I hope you had the opportunity to enjoy some time with your family over the half term break, even if the weather wasn't all that we might have hoped.

Goodbye to SATs

It was with faint bewilderment that we heard – at roughly the same time as viewers of the 10 o'clock news broadcast – that SATs were no more. It was interesting that the principal reason given was that 'teachers have been teaching to the test'. Nothing to do with the debacle of last summer's marking chaos then ...

No tears have been shed about the removal of the tests, particularly by the English Department who have actually always believed that the tests were a distraction from the teaching of English. In fact, their removal offers us the opportunity to re-think the curriculum, looking closely at the interface between the two key stages and the possibilities of starting some GCSE subjects earlier for those who are ready to do so. We will keep you informed as our thinking progresses.

In the interim, please be assured that no forward momentum will be lost in Year 9; we will still expect them to focus on achieving their potential; it is simply that we will use different methods of assessing whether they have done that by the end of the Key Stage.

SVC abroad

My thanks go to our History and Languages Departments who offered our young people two excellent opportunities to learn beyond the College.

Forty-four of our pupils joined Mr Mastin, Mrs Bucklow, Mr Wallace and Mrs Simpson on the annual trip to the Battlefields of France. Every

year, this trip, almost of all of the trips organised by our staff, makes a profound impact on those who participate, offering them as it does the opportunity to begin to understand the sacrifices made by the soldiers of World War 1, particularly relevant at this period of national remembrance.

Rather lighter in mood, but just as educational was the trip for thirty of our pupils to Andalucia in company with Mrs Konig, Mr Konig, and Miss Perkins. As part of their trip to this stunning area, our pupils were able to visit the World Heritage sites of Seville, the Mezquita in Córdoba and the Alhambra in Granada. The pupils were fantastic and a real credit to the school.

Year 9 Charity project

As you know, each year, our Year 9 pupils participate in a fund-raising event focusing on the developing world and linking to their work in Geography.

This year, their chosen charity is Pump Aid, a charity that aims to 'relieve hardship and suffering in developing countries by improving the availability and quality of water for domestic consumption'.

Our pupils are going to 'pedal for pumps' to provide 'elephant pumps' and 'elephant toilets' for isolated rural communities in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Each water pump, which is operated by a bicycle, costs £500 to purchase the materials required and to install it and will provide 250 people with 40 litres a day of clean water. Elephant Toilets cost just £20

to buy and to install. For further information on Pump Aid and their work please visit their website at www.pumpaaid.org

On Thursday 20 November, pupils in Year 9 will take part in a sponsored cycling challenge in the school gym to help to raise the funds to provide a number of blocks of toilets for school children living in the area covered by the charity.

We are always heartened by our young people's commitment to helping others who experience such disadvantage and learn a great deal about global poverty in the process. If any generation succeeds in addressing such deprivation globally, it will be this one.

Sawston Cinema Project Update

You may already know that our Arts Development Manager, Lesley Morgan, supported by Youth Worker, Sharon Punchard, has been working hard to bring cinema back to Sawston. The existence of this project also owes a great deal to the vision and support of Tony Jones and other members of the Cambridge Film Trust, who have given tirelessly of their time and energy.

Supported by funding from South Cambridgeshire District Council, the UK Film Council, Lottery Fund Awards for All, the Community Safety Partnership, Sawston Parish Plan Committee and most recently Shelford Feast, work on the project began in earnest in February this year when the existing lighting box

was extended to accommodate projection equipment. Then, over the summer, Roger Smith from the Cambridge Film Trust, worked hard to install a screen, sound system and projection equipment, including 35mm.

Since the start of the autumn term, Bill Thompson, a Sawston parent, has been working with the young people who have joined the project to help train them in the skills required to run a cinema for the community. We should like to offer our warmest thanks to Bill, who has been a wonderful supporter of the project both in terms of his enthusiasm and his practical assistance. He has given generously of his time and considerable expertise.

Bill is a technology journalist and also a member of the Cambridge Film Trust, where he produces the Cambridge Film Festival podcast.

Over half-term, as part of their training, some young people from the school visited the Arts Picturehouse in Cambridge to spend time behind the scenes with the chief projectionist there. They were joined by students from Long Road Sixth Form College, who have also recently become involved in this project.

Skills learned to date were then on show at the Taster Screening on 9 November at the 'new' Sawston Cinema. This Taster Screening, open to the local community, offered the young people an opportunity to operate the cinema equipment, change film formats, control the lighting

and make announcements. They were supported in this by the projectionist from the Arts Picturehouse and members of the Cambridge Film Trust. With free entrance and free popcorn it proved to be a memorable occasion.

The new skills gained in running a cinema will serve the young people well when they come to stage the official launch of Sawston Cinema, a much-anticipated event which should take place early in the New Year.

This launch will allow for the showcasing of a parallel project, the Sawston Cinema Archive Project. As part of this, young people have been working with film-maker Peter Harmer and members of the local community. The aim is to make a film documenting people's memories of the original cinema. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, this project is running in partnership with Sawston Village History Society, the Sawston Archive Group of the Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network and the Cambridge Film Trust. Young people have already undergone oral history training to equip them with interview skills, and there have been many happy meetings with young people and older members of the community where stories of first dates and working in the cinema have been fondly remembered and enjoyed.

The commitment and interest of members of the local community have also ensured a very strong start to this project; we are very

appreciative of their participation.

We are also very grateful to our young people for their interest and enthusiasm in these projects. They have been a real credit to the school and have formed wonderful relationships with the older people who have been sharing their stories of the original cinema.

Filming is now under way, and the film, once completed, will be premiered at the official launch of the cinema. That will most definitely be a date to look out for.

Cyber-bullying: an evening for parents

We have been able to book an evening with Vanessa Rogers, an expert in this field, to present to parents on how to encourage their young people to use the Internet safely and how to deal with cyber-bullying. We hope you will want to join us for what promises to be a stimulating and interesting event.

Those of my colleagues from the Locality Team (a group of professionals who support families across the Sawston / Linton Locality) who have already heard the presentation found it of inestimable value in monitoring their own children's use of the Internet. The evening starts at 7.00 pm on Thursday 20 November in the Henry Morris Hall.

Annual Review Day

We are holding our annual review day on Monday 24 November.

This year, we are making some changes to the system. Our established parents will know that each year, form tutors and senior staff meet with our pupils and their parents for a 15-minute interview. This is to discuss our pupils' progress and to set them targets to support them to achieve their potential. These targets are then monitored throughout the year by tutors and teachers to encourage our young people consistently to do their best.

This year, however, we are focusing the event on pupils in Years 7 – 9, the year groups we believe benefit most from the system. These year groups will not attend school but will instead work at home attending only for the interview with their parents.

Year 11 pupils have Mock Examinations from Tuesday 25 November; on 24 November, they will have a day to support revision for these very important exams.

Year 10 will attend school as normal. They will be involved in careers-specific activity: for part of the day they will participate in workshops and seminars run by Addenbrooke's staff on health-related careers; for the remainder of the day they will work with their tutors preparing for work experience and learning about careers and the qualifications required to pursue them.

We hope that all of our pupils, whatever their focus, will have a purposeful day.

Congratulations to ...

Andrew Wilkinson who has been selected for the East Anglia Regional Water Polo Training Centre after trials last week; the training centre is part of the British water polo player development programme and is a route to GB selection. Andrew is an excellent swimmer and already competes at national level. We are all very proud of his achievement in being selected for this prestigious opportunity.

... and to *Amy Rouse* who came 5th out of 30 competitors in her first ever sheepdog trials, the Four Counties Trails held at Heveningham Hall in Suffolk last half-term. It is to Amy's credit that she did so well against a field of very experienced competitors. She was the youngest by far in the event, but has no doubt benefited significantly from her father's expertise; Mr Rouse competes very successfully at national level.

Children in Need

You will no doubt already know that this national fund-raising event takes place this coming Friday 14 November. As is our practice, we are holding a non-uniform day to raise funds for this excellent cause. It is worth stressing, I think, that a non-uniform day for our pupils is simply a day spent in their own – decent! – clothes, not an opportunity for dressing up.

However, some young people will want to dress up and raise money for the charity in so doing. They may do that in the

lunch hour, if they wish. This allows the spirit of the event to be observed and learning to continue without interruption.

Please ensure that your child brings £1 to school on the day. This will be collected in form time; all funds raised will go to Children in Need.

Rumour has it that some of our staff have volunteered to have wet sponges thrown at them. I was so disappointed that this event clashes with a meeting at SVC with Cambridgeshire Heads. Another time perhaps

June Cannie
Principal