

**CHEW VALLEY SCHOOL
SCHOOL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2009**

Mr Hack to Retire

With a mixture of sadness and sympathetic pleasure, the school must announce that Mr John Hack, Senior Deputy Headteacher has decided to step down at the end of the year. After 30 years outstanding service to the school he has decided the time has come to embrace the new opportunities which retirement will afford. Much more will be said about the immense contribution Mr Hack has made to the school at a more appropriate time. For now we wanted to let people know so that it didn't become a matter of rumour. Everyone who has had dealings with Mr Hack will know what an outstanding servant of the school he has been and will want to wish him every enjoyment of this final school year!

School Society News

Wednesday 11th March is the date for this year's quiz which will take place in the school hall. Teams are of four people and tickets (available from School Reception before Friday 6th March) are £7 each, including a ploughman's supper. There will also be a bar. Doors will open at 7pm with the quiz starting at 7.30. Why not get a team together? Bring along some friends or neighbours and take part in what is always a very enjoyable evening.

A Race Night is planned for Thursday 30th April. More details nearer the time.

We have been notified that unfortunately PTA Planet, the website gateway to online stores which raises funds for schools, has had to close down. As we had only recently signed up to the scheme, the small amount of commission due to us has been donated to Great Ormond Street.

Another Success for Chew Valley!

Following the excellent Ofsted report recently, Chew Valley School is able to celebrate a second remarkable achievement. The school has successfully been re-designated as specialist school in the Performing Arts. This latest accolade is a reflection of the whole school focus on creativity which has resulted in high standards of performance across the curriculum.

Chew Valley School is unique and quite exceptional, particularly when it comes to the Performing Arts. But specialist school status is about much more than a recognition of the excellence of drama, dance and music. Any school that has a specialism is required to use its expertise to drive up standards in all subject areas. The school is also required to encourage and support the local community, particularly its partner Primary Schools. Chew Valley School has satisfied the strenuous requirements set by the DCSF and demonstrated the benefit its specialist status has had in the whole school and its community.

Performing Arts is certainly about all aspects of theatrical performance. But it is primarily about confidence and self esteem. It is about ideas, opinions, public speaking, initiative, independence, communication, problem solving, risk taking. It is about resilience, determination and emotional intelligence. It

develops skills for life and in so doing, it promotes those skills and attributes that employers are so desperate for.

It is for these truly altruistic reasons that the school decided that Performing Arts would have the greatest impact on the greatest number. We have been proved right! We can now look forward to the next challenge, building on our success. There is a growing realisation in the community that creativity is the key to our future economic well being. If this country is to recover its position in the world, we need people with ideas, vision and integrity. Our continued focus on the wider aspects of Performing Arts is the key to a successful and fulfilling future

Abigail's Party

We happy few who managed to get to the sole performance of Abigail's Party can report what an outstanding production this was, marred only by the accursed snow which curtailed its run.

The scene is a suburban housing estate where the upwardly mobile aspire to the mock tudor dwellings which declare 'success' to the endlessly competitive middle classes. Hostess Beverley (Rosie Cumberlidge) puts on an excruciating soiree of cheese and pineapple chunks swilled down with Gin and Tonic by the gallon! Her work-stressed, hen-pecked husband, Estate Agent Laurence (Rob Balderstone), hurries between business appointments, phone-calls and errands to the off-licence to keep Beverley in the situation to which she has become accustomed.

The guests are a motley assortment of creatures: Angela (played by Jessie Rosewarne) with her grating small-talk and rictus smile nevertheless exudes kindness. We sympathise with her as she struggles to contain her lothario husband, Tony (played by Ben Dowling with wonderful insouciance). The final guest is the insipid Susan (played by Astrid Hall) who is as ineffectual in managing her daughter Abigail as she is able to hold her drink – spending part of the play wretching noisily off stage in the downstairs lavatory! Into this claustrophobic world intrudes the rowdy debauchery of Abigail's Party – which is heard, visited by the male cast, but never seen by the audience. Mike Leigh's witheringly comic eye has never been so acerbic as in this acid send-up of the social-climbing vices of the English Middle Class.

In a daring design, co-directors Jane Bird and Jenny Ajderian placed the audience virtually inside Rosie's front room. The front row found its feet on Rosie's decorative rug with the cocktail stick buffet, tantalisingly, in hands' reach. The dedication to detail was perfect – 70s suits, maxi dresses and a hideous selection of easy listening of the period which included Demis Roussos!

But the real triumph and power of the production, of course, came down to the extraordinarily nuanced performances of the cast. The actors were happy to draw on aspects of caricature to depict some traits of character; but the depth of their performances touched far more profound levels – these characters were multi-dimensional and, whilst we laughed at their frailties and foibles, it was an uncomfortable laughter. We knew people like these – and sometimes catch a glimpse of them in the mirror!

Abigail's Party was an absolute triumph. How sad that so few were able, in the end, to see it.

New School Website & Texting Service

Have you visited the new-look Web-site? If not please visit www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk and have a look around. While you are there, register your details to enable us to stay in touch even more effectively! Go to the Parents tab and select 'update your details'

Many parents have given us mobile phone contact details which has proved a real boon for speedy communication of importance news or events. Our texting service enabled us to send out information about the school closures instantaneously to all parents whose details we had...provided that service providers were operating properly!! It has also been very useful for informing parents about cancelled after-school activities or late returns from school visits. So why not register your mobile details with us on the web-site today?!

Music Department News



Youth Choir Spring Concert - Wed 1st April 7:30pm

After a fantastic start to the year with performances at both the Autumn Extravaganza and the Carols by Candlelight, the Chew Valley School Youth Choir will be performing their very first concert at St. Andrew's Church in Chew Magna. The choir is made up of singers from years 7-10. The concert will feature some African part songs, music from Grease, and some contemporary pop songs. There will also be featured solos and duets from the peripatetic singing pupils of Mr Parker and Mrs Green. Tickets will be available at the door and we hope that you will be able to come and join them.

Boys Rock!

Anyone who heard the year 8 boys sing the Kaiser Chiefs 'I Predict a Riot' at a recent assembly would have been very impressed by the power of their voices. After the February break the music department is launching an exciting new group called the Boys Rock Project. The project is for boys in Year 7 and 8. The boys will learn how to command an audience like some of the top male singers and could lead on to becoming a lead singer for a rock band. If you are interested in joining the project, pick up a slip from Mrs Morgan at the Music Office.

Dance News

On Wednesday 21 January the New English Contemporary Ballet Company came to our school to host a day of Dance. Twenty four boys and girls from Years 7 – 9 were lucky enough to work with the two artists one of whom is a dancer in the company and the other is a choreographer and a teacher at the New English Contemporary Ballet Company School which is based in Nottingham. The day consisted of a contemporary dance technique class, repertoire and a creative session which ended in students presenting a mixture of rep and their own choreography. The day also provided the students with an insight into the training and working life of a professional choreographer and dancer. We are hoping to take students to watch a live performance of the New English Contemporary Ballet Company in May when they will be touring a mixed bill.

Year 7 News

We are now almost at the mid-way point of the school year. The year 7's continue to get involved in the many activities and opportunities on offer both at lunchtime and after school.

Chess club is thriving and it is good to see pupils not only playing against each other but also teaching each other how to play the game. Beginners are most welcome!

Many of our students have joined the various teams that make up our school council – these include the "fund raising team", the "gardening team" and the "healthy eating team". It is good to see these young people wanting to get involved!

The boys in our year group have been organising their 7-a-side teams for the year 7 & 8 football tournament which, unfortunately, has had to be postponed because of the snow.

On Thursday 22 January, twenty eight extremely excited (and rather nervous) year 7 pupils stepped up to the microphone in order to compete in the final "spell-off" to decide the team that would be representing our school in the Times Spelling Bee. The standard was very high and the atmosphere was tense. The audience found it difficult to contain their excitement as, one by one, competitors were eliminated. After over an hour the final team of three (plus one reserve) was decided. The proud finalists, Ed Stowell (7W), Shannon Jones (7L), George McGeowan (7L) and James Conway (7C) will now go on to represent Chew Valley at the regional heats in March. We wish them every success!

Year 8 News

Three boys in Year 8 have been nominated for the B&NES District Football Trials. They are Joe Martin, Aaron Greatbanks, and Lewis Cook. Aaron and Lewis have progressed to the 2nd stage of the trials so we will be watching their progress with interest over the next few weeks and we wish them every success.

The whole of Year 8 had an excellent presentation by the Avon Fire Service in PHSE recently. The theme was Arson Awareness. Mr Ian Strand, who is a serving Fire Fighter, gave a top quality talk about this troublesome and frightening issue. The students were impressed with the whole presentation as there was an excellent balance of information, video clips, and advice. I am sure that messages regarding smoke alarms were reinforced at home following the lesson!

It is hoped that the follow up for this session will be fundraising activities in aid of the Benevolent Fund attached to the Fire Service. Year 8 tutor groups will be working on ideas for this later this term in order to put things in place for Term 4.

A number of Year 8 girls took part in the very successful Cheerleading competition in Cardiff recently. Wonderful trophies now adorn Reception as a reminder of their achievement.

Plans are underway for Enrichment Week in June for Year 8. We have a number of exciting activities already lined up and are planning further sessions to fill the week.

Commendations are building up nicely and more students will be visiting Mr Mallett for a Head Teachers Commendation's next term.

Year 9 News

Yasmin Adams 9H organised a cake sale to raise money for injured servicemen and she talked about the cause in assembly. Although not very many cakes were brought in we raised £35 on the day. My thanks to Yasmin, the people who baked cakes and Lauren Holland and Amy Gough, who helped with the sale. Well done!

The Options Evening in January was very well attended and, as ever, we are grateful for the interest and cooperation shown by parents at such an important time in the students' career. All year 9 students have completed their Option Forms and should be looking forward to studying their chosen subjects at KS4. Thank you for getting the forms in on time! We will confirm choices after half-term.

Year 10 News

Christmas seems a long time ago, but Year 10 were involved in a variety of festive jollity. On successive Saturdays before the 25th, a dozen or so students helped to pack bags in Broadmead's Marks and Spencer. Supported by older colleagues they raised over £700 towards a school in rural Zambia where they will spend four weeks in the summer of 2010. Meanwhile Jay Willis read one of the lessons with due confidence during the Carol Service at St Andrew's Church, Chew Magna. The last day of term was a non-uniform event to raise money for charity. Lorna Inglis and George Powlesland raised many a titter in their full Batman and Robin outfits. Christmas also saw the conclusion of the 'buddying' system. About 40 students have been helping the new intake to settle in and Mrs O'Callaghan was kind enough to publicly acknowledge their efforts in assembly (as well as providing chocolate gifts!) The Year 7s know they still have an older friend looking out for them at all times.

It has been the coldest winter in the lives of any student at Chew Valley, so sport fixtures have obviously suffered. However, before Christmas the house matches were keenly contested in netball and rugby, with Rodney coming out on top in both sports. Congratulations to the Year 10 girls who were part of the school's cheerleading team which came first in all of the school divisions in the first competition of the season.

Early in the New Year Ms Powell and Ms Kenzie ran a trip to the Tobacco Factory Theatre in Southville for 34 students to see Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. Even better, our Drama students met the director, Andy Burden, and members of the cast after the performance. They are now putting their new-found knowledge into design and development of their own productions in GCSE Drama classes.

A highlight of January was the election of Fred Cotterill as BANES Member of the UK Youth Parliament. A young man of strong opinions, Fred has been politically active for over a year now. He was one of 20 candidates from across the whole region and ran a textbook campaign. Fred organised professional posters to be printed, spent many an hour putting them up around the school, had hundreds of stickers produced, and even wrote to the Heads of other schools to ask for publicity. He spoke

in assemblies to every single student at Chew Valley in the week leading up to the election. On the day there were several 'Vote Fred' t-shirts in evidence as his team campaigned tirelessly to encourage students to use their vote. He even offered free biscuits in the library at lunchtime! The polling booths were busy all day as the school showed support for Fred and for democracy. This coordinated campaign brought deserved success – Fred and his campaign team were in the Guild Hall in Bath to hear the results. A staggering 1,282 votes accounted for 18% of the electorate and the second placed candidate (a sixth former from Wellsway) received 717 to become Fred's deputy. Fred will now spend a year as a member of the UK Youth Parliament and will campaign tirelessly for this region. All students are encouraged to speak to him with their views. It may well be the start of a long political career. Fred wishes to thank Mr Lewis for his tireless support throughout the campaign.

There are two important dates coming up for Year 10 – Parents' Evening on February 26th will be an important gauge of progress at GCSE, while the next set of Modular Science exams are on March 4th. Students should be revising for 30 minutes a day over the half term break. Finally, the snow forced the jabs for tetanus, diphtheria and polio to be postponed. The day of reckoning is now April 23rd.

Year 11 News

Year 11 are busy looking forward towards their future. Many have had careers interviews and are now busily applying for places in our 6th Form, colleges or apprenticeships.

Please note that the Y11 Parents' Evening which was cancelled with the snow has been re-scheduled for Thursday March 12th!!

Students Visit RAF Brize Norton

6th form students interested in uniformed public service had the opportunity to visit Brize Norton, the Oxfordshire RAF base, last month. The students who are studying for a BTEC Certificate in Public Service were there at the invitation of the RAF following a talk given by Corporal Jim Hawkins in School last November.

"We wanted to find out what life was like, what different careers could be followed and what RAF personnel did on a daily basis. As part of our assignment work we were particularly interested to find out how they worked in effective teams."

The visit began with 216 Squadron who fly Tristar aircraft. They are currently the main carrier of British troops to Afghanistan. "Wearing our high visibility jackets we walked out to an aircraft being checked ready for its next flight. We were shown the mechanisms for air to air refuelling and the equipment that allows them to fly into Kandahar Airfield without being shot down. Inside the aircraft we saw how they could adapt the plane to carry freight, passengers and medical cases."

Students were given a conducted tour of the cockpit and Cpl Flo Tansey from 216 Squadron and SAC Paula Baker from 101 Squadron explained something of the life of RAF personnel. "They gave us an idea of the career development opportunities, the huge variety of jobs that can be done and the social and sporting opportunities that are available."

Lunch was enjoyed in the 'mess' in the company of some of the 'Paras' who were there. The tour of the base revealed lots of welfare facilities including a sports centre, ten pin bowling and entertainment areas.

Returning to the school minibus the party was escorted across the actual runway over to 101 Squadron. "Their aircraft are slightly smaller VC 10 planes which mainly do troop carrying and air to air refuelling. We talked to an aircraft engineer about the jobs he does in the cockpit whilst the plane is flying and learnt that although their planes are over 40 years old they have so many built-in safety features that they are probably safer than more modern planes!"

The visit was the experience of a lifetime. "We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Brize Norton and learnt a great deal about daily life on an airbase. We are very grateful to Cpl Hawkins for arranging the day and to CPL Tansey and SAC Baker for being so informative." A number of Chew Valley students are considering futures in the Services.

Contacts for the School Society

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