

21st October, 2011

Dear Parents,

Here we are already at Half-Term and returning home to have a well-deserved rest after several weeks of hard work in the class room and on the playing fields.

Last week I had a very interesting visit to Summer Fields Prep School where, amongst many fellow Heads of Prep and Public Schools, we were addressed by the Minister for Schools: Nick Gibb. It was an extremely informative talk focusing on how Independent Education in this country is one of the best in the world, whilst our state education standing is being overtaken by other countries. He continued to say how he would like to take the 'dna' from the independent sector and inject it into the maintained system. We pointed out that it was not simply the strong academic results happening in isolation, but the combination of sport, drama, music, art; the wearing of uniforms, children respecting their school; all of this playing a major part in achieving good academic results.

On Monday, 10th October, the children came to school wearing red, white and blue for the Ten for Ten Appeal which is a charity supporting our armed forces on the front line in Afghanistan. A commendable £235.47 was raised for which we give many thanks. This was followed for me by an inspiring visit to Cheltenham Literary Festival as a guest of Malvern College, to hear from Guy Disney, one of the members of the Walking with the Wounded North Pole Expedition Team. He and his team skied into the record books, as they became the first group of unsupported war-wounded amputees to reach the Geographical North Pole. It took the expedition team a remarkably quick thirteen days to reach The North Pole, and they completed this unsupported expedition far quicker than many able-bodied teams. They have now announced their next challenge: to climb Mount Everest.

This is especially significant as one of our school parents, Len Browne, has now embarked on The Last Great Race on Earth. This race first took place exactly a hundred years ago. In 1911, Captain Scott was beaten to the South Pole by the Norwegian, Roald Amundsen. Now, a century later, two teams from the British Army will mark this epic contest by running the same race, by the same routes. This unique expedition will be used to spotlight the centenary of a historic event celebrating a gallant yet tragic hero and as a nationally publicised project to raise money for The Royal British Legion - in particular for their Personnel Recovery Centres in the four

garrison towns across the United Kingdom. Len Browne will be carrying our school flag with him and we wish him and the team well. To follow their progress, please go to the link on the school website. All these events show how the spirit of adventure in the 21st Century is still very much alive and will illustrate to our children a greater understanding of life's challenges.

I would like to draw your attention to the following school events and hope they will help you keep pace with a very busy term. Please do be careful driving through the school now the evenings are darker; we politely request you collect your child from the Winter Gardens, not outside in the courtyard or car park.

Wednesday, 2nd November – Bonfire Night – Party at 5pm.

Andrew Wood and his team have been building the bonfire for many months and we are all looking forward to this fun-filled annual event. The staff and matrons will be present but we do request that parents join their children. It will be dark and the more adults the better to ensure the safety of the children. Sparklers will be handed out on the night to boarders; and parents are welcome to supplement these. We do not have other fireworks. Sue and Liz in the kitchen will provide delicious hotdogs, home-made soup, toffee apples and other 'bonfire' goodies for everyone. The event will finish at approximately 6pm.

Christmas Fayre – Wednesday, 23rd November 10.00am-4.00pm

The Committee are working hard behind the scenes to bring some new and interesting stalls to the Fayre. Provisions for home-made and, preferably, Christmas-themed goodies (such as jams, preserves, pickles, cordials, hedgerow spirits eg. sloe/damson gin), for the St Richard's stall and the Christmas Bottle Tombola would be greatly appreciated. Collecting for donations for both the St Richard's stall and bottle tombola will start two weeks before the Fayre. As last year, there will be boxes/crates for your donations left in the Pre-Prep outside PP1 and PP2 and also in the Winter Gardens in the Main School which we will remove and store daily at pick-up and drop-off times. We really do appreciate the efforts that parents make to donate their time and energy to these stalls thereby making the day such a great success. The Fayre organisers, Lucy Clarke and Alice Crichard, would much appreciate any offers of help on the day.

School Pantomime

This year we look forward to the school's production of 'Aladdin' at the Conquest Theatre on Friday, 2nd December at 7.00pm, Saturday, 3rd December at 2.30pm and 7.00pm. Tickets are on sale now, from the Conquest. £7 for children and £8 for adults. Ring 01885 488575 or book online at www.conquest-theatre.co.uk. Form 3, 4, 5 and 6 parents should have received a letter via email from Mrs Cheesman, please let the office know if you have not.

'Bags to School'

The next pick-up for this excellent school fundraiser will be Friday, 25th November. Please do keep any clothes you would like to donate; we will send out the blue bags after Half-Term. It would be helpful to bring the full bags into school from Monday, 21st November, not before; we do not have the storage space. My thanks to Jane Lewis for co-ordinating this valuable fundraiser.

Music Events

I enclose a letter from Mrs Bull updating you on music and forthcoming events at school. Together with this is an order-form for those of you who would like to order commemorative souvenirs from 'The Stonemason's Tale', the educational project our Forms 5 and 6 took part in last year.

I also enclose a copy of an article on Mrs Bull's family pub, the Butchers Arms at Woolhope, which featured in last Saturday's Telegraph Newspaper.

Children's Photographer

I am delighted to let you know that DSP Photography from Cheltenham will be coming in to the school on TUESDAY, 8th NOVEMBER to take portraits of the children. I hope the proofs will be with you by the 14th November and you will then have two weeks to place an order should you be interested. They offer a variety of 'Packs' with varying prices and these will be ready for collection before the end of term.

The photographer will begin the morning at 8.30am if you are interested in bringing along any siblings who are not at St. Richard's. After that they will take sibling shots if they have been requested (please let Millie know in advance) and then will progress through the school during the morning.

Matrons and Boarding House

We politely request that together with your child's/children's games bags you send in their swimming bags every week and a towel for after games. When we have bad weather, the children occasionally need to shower after games. After Half-Term should there be a need to lend towels, swimming, or riding clothes, there will be a cleaning charge of £1/item.

Sport & Dance

Please find enclosed the order details for our school base-layer; there is an order deadline of 4th November, with delivery on 21st November for this term.

I am pleased to update you on the Dance Class, It is proposed to start the class after Half-Term, during activities at 5.15pm on Thursday; the introductory price is £30/child. Please could you let the office know if you are happy for your child to take part in this fun activity. The first class will be held on Thursday, 3rd November.

As usual, St. Richard's will be dressing the school for Christmas later this term. We would like to continue the tradition that every family in the school contributes a Christmas ornament for the tree, something non-breakable preferably, with your name on. If you are happy to donate, please be kind enough to pass your decoration to the school office by the end of November. Many thanks in advance.

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Half-Term and I look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday, 31st October, when the Winter Timetable will commence.

Yours sincerely,

Nathan S Cheesman
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