



The Schools At Somerhill Newsletter

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Summer Term 2011

The new term is off to a great start with this wonderful weather that we are having—what a tonic it is! The short weeks are something of a tonic, too, though I expect you will all be delighted that this is our final abbreviated week before we get fully underway from next Monday. This newsletter looks back to events right at the end of the Lent Term and forward to a whole host of exciting dates that lie ahead. The pictures alongside this write-up feature some of the many acts that took place on our special Red Nose Revue staged late in March. A princely sum in excess of £3000 was raised and will be shared between our school projects in Kusasa (see Madame Spiers' article for the newsletter overleaf) and Nepal together with a significant contribution to Comic Relief. In the near future we have the first of our Grandparents' Afternoons when those important members of our families are invited in to Somerhill to see a little of us in action. One of these coincides with the celebration of Somerhill's 400th anniversary—the building that is, rather than the school! We are staging this special day on Thursday, 26th May when the children will come 'off timetable' for some different activities. And then we will be in to all the usual Concerts, Sports Days, Camping Nights, Prize-Givings and everything that contributes to another exciting and action-packed term! I hope you enjoy it to the full. Mr C



PARENTAL SWIM TIME: Tuesdays 10.00-11.00am

We are pleased to announce that parents will now be able to enjoy a dip in the school pool any Tuesday morning between 10.00 and 11.00 am. Please park in the lower car park if coming to make use of the facility.

This is with effect from today and will be until half term. There will be a life guard on duty.

Le Café

Aujourd'hui, le 21 mars, on fait la fête à Derwent Lodge! Les professeurs s'amuse en mangeant des pains au chocolat, du fromage et du pain. Les filles leur donnent du café, du thé au lait et de l'Orangina! On écoute de la musique française et on bavarde, c'est génial! Merci à tout le monde!



**To the Yardley Court Family
From Madame at the Kusasa Project**

I can hardly believe that it is almost three months since I last wrote to you and gave you a brief synopsis of what we were up to in the schools in the Franchhoek valley.

Libraries

You will be delighted to hear that the three libraries are up and running in each of the three schools where we are currently working: Dalubuhle, Wes-Eind and Wemmerhoek. You will remember the pictures of the 'bag lady' covered in black plastic bin bags in the previous newsletter! Well the libraries have been painted we have new curtains, new carpets and a selection of new books thanks to the enormous generosity of people such as you.

Every week the children run to change their books and delight in finding another book to read. For the most part they live in sparsely furnished corrugated iron shacks of no more than two rooms. Consequently, they have very few facilities and more often than not there are no books in the home as most of their parents are illiterate.

For many of the children a visit to the library is akin to a visit to a sweet shop – it is a colourful space, and a happy place: so many different types of books, so many beautiful illustrations, so much to see, so much to read and so much to learn. Some of the smaller children literally run up from the dust and the grim of their surroundings to change their books as often as three times in one week. – such is their hunger to learn.

Small group literacy programme

Equally important is the function of these libraries as a venue for the small group reading programme which takes place there every morning. In addition, the Dalubuhle library hosts the children from Bridge House (the local independent co-educational school) who come twice a week to read with the Grade 3 children and this is making a significant difference not only to their reading, but also to their excitement in the acquisition of knowledge through reading.

The Dalubuhle library hums in the afternoons and is slowly taking on the role of a community centre for the children, which is, for me, a dream come true. Children want to be there and they want to read, share a story with a friend or just sit and chat.

Assessment

We have started the process of assessing the progress of the various small reading groups, which will give us a clearer idea of the extent of the impact volunteers and small group learning is making to the reading age of these children. One has to take into account that most classes are oversubscribed – the current grade 3 class, for example, has 60 learners – so small group learning becomes increasingly vital if we are to make a measurable difference in their lives.

More overleaf





Gap Student

We welcomed Jack Harber to The Kusasa Project towards the end of January. He is a past Yardley Courtier and has come to the valley to help with the reading and sports programmes – he can't paint and he can't cover books (he tells me it's harder than his A levels!) but for everything else he is great and the children love him! So thank you Jack! Mrs. Juliet Dammers also spent some time with us over half term and was a great source of encouragement and practical help. Merci encore!

Luncheon club

The sponsored scholars, who attend Franchhoek High School, enjoyed their first luncheon club outing during February at the internationally acclaimed restaurant at "La Petite Ferme" These luncheons, the brainchild of Dave Riordan, have a dual purpose: they give the students the opportunity of experiencing the conviviality of conversation and good food around a table (on this occasion they experienced the delights of 'haute cuisine' in a magnificent setting) and they expose them to the life stories of amazingly talented, motivated and hard working individuals who serve as role models.

On this occasion Purdon Rhode the Maitre D' at "La Petite Ferme" addressed the group and explained how he had moved from his impoverished background to his current position through hard work and single-minded dedication. It was an unforgettable experience for the scholars who were in awe of Purdon and Tammy, the chef, who talked them through each dish, created with superb attention to detail. Tammy described her experiences as a chef in Jamie Oliver's kitchen in London – awesome stuff!

No two days at The Kusasa Project are ever the same – my days are spent careering backwards and forwards between three different schools and this time it is not in the 'green machine' but in a cerulean blue Honda which flashes by at great speed - well you know me!

I miss you all greatly and wish the scholars and the Grade 8 boys every thing of the best as they prepare to write their scholarship and CE exams in May and June – not long now! Don't forget The Kusasa Project and the children of the valley as you move on, as they are part of the Yardley Court extended family and proud to be so.

Affectueusement et salakakuhle
Madame

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National Children's Choir Easter Course

This Easter the National Children's Choir of Great Britain held a six day course in Shrewsbury, near Wales. This is always a residential course where much singing is to be done, as well as making new friendships and having loads of fun!

Imogen Venes and Octavia Bathurst, two of our Year Six girls, who are members of this choir, were lucky enough to be able to attend. This year it was split into three choirs according to age. Many different songs were sung, including Latin American, African and Venezuelan ones. During the week there were many different musical activities taking place, including a cabaret. Children volunteered to sing or play an instrument which they had been practising and they were given the opportunity to perform them to the choir. Imogen and Octavia had a great week and are looking forward to the next course in the summer.

by Imogen Venes



In beautiful sunshine the Pre Prep children enjoyed their annual Easter Egg Hunt just over a week ago. A good time was had by all!



Year Three Play - Perseus and Medusa: The boys of Year Three put on two wonderful performances. It is great to see how well they learnt their lines and how much they enjoyed acting out their roles with flair and confidence.

Diary Dates

A few dates to note for this term:

Friday 6 May—Golf Day

Wednesday 11 May—Yr 3 and 4 Grandparents' Afternoon 2.00—3.45 pm

Monday 23—Friday 27 May
Summer Fair Collection Week

Thursday 26 May
Happy 400th Birthday Somerhill!
SPP Grandparents' Afternoon 2.00—3.30 pm

Saturday 11 June—Summer Fair 10am—2pm

Tuesday 14 June—Yrs 5, 6 7 and 8 Grandparents' Afternoon 2.00—3.45 pm

Thursday 16 June—Summer Concert 6pm

LOST PROPERTY

Mrs Wilkes has two Yale keys, an Audi car key and a Breitling watch - more details from Reception

Recently DL trialled a '**Wider World Week**' where each year group investigated a different continent. The girls then presented their findings to the rest of the school in an extended end of the week assembly. They learnt about Arts and Crafts, Costume, Food and Religion as well as Geographical facts. There was a lot of interesting trivia too....only three countries (Russia, China and Canada) are larger in size than the Sahara desert!



Ensuring Safety for all when on The Schools at Somerhill's Premises.

The safety of the children whilst at The Schools at Somerhill is of paramount importance to us all. To ensure that your child's safety is not compromised, the school has in place a number of measures. I would ask for parents' co-operation to ensure the continued safety of your child whilst on the premises. There are two areas of concern, traffic on site and the use of play areas. Please could parents remember these basic points:

Driving on site:

The use of mobile phones whilst driving is illegal and, in certain well publicised cases, has led to punishment by a prison sentence.

Please do not park on yellow lines unless directed to do so by a member of staff. Parking on yellow lines restricts the flow of traffic and, most importantly, the ability to see children crossing during busy times.

Do not turn right at the bottom of the drive. The "no right turn" is enforceable by law as the bottom of the drive is owned by the Highways Authority.

Drop-off lanes for YC and DL should not be used to park in.

Use of play areas:

Please ensure that you supervise your child at all times so that they do not come to any harm.

Please only allow your child to use the designated play equipment under your supervision. It has been designed for children to play on, which walls etc have not.

Please remember the points that we request you follow are for the safety of your children, yourself, visitors and the members of staff that work at The Schools at Somerhill. Thank you for your cooperation.

Michael Scragg
The Bursar



Sports News

House Rugby: The final matches of the House Rugby were played in the last week of the Lent Term with the Junior boys working hard to secure a win for their House!



Dynamic Music!

The Dynamic Music Course, annually held at Holmewood House School and run by David Clack, Head of Brass at Tonbridge School, provided Somerhill music pupils with a week of intensive training and enjoyment!

The pupils attended the course for four long days experiencing the fun and camaraderie of being in a huge Orchestra. As well as rehearsing with their particular instrumental group, they were given the opportunity to come together in strings, wind, brass and percussion workshops. This weekly course will have given them as much experience and learning as a whole year of orchestral practice. The course culminated in a tremendous concert consisting of Harry Potter, Mambo No.5 and extracts from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. A week not to forget! Be sure to book it in your diaries for next Easter!

DERWENT LODGE HOUSE WINNERS

Coniston were winners of the House treat for the Lent Term, having earned the most merits and commendations. The girls had a super time creating Mothering Sunday cards and, under the expert supervision and instruction of our own Master Chef Phillip, made scones and Easter logs. Delicious!



NEW SWIM HATS FOR PRE-PREP available now

The school shop are now stocking swimming hats which are more "child friendly" and easier to put on. We would be most grateful if you would buy one of the new variety for your child.

May I remind parents that if they wish to wait in the courtyard with their children in the mornings they should stand round the perimeter so that the Assistants on duty can see to supervise the pupils effectively. Thank you.
Mrs Sorensen



London Olympics 2012

Yr 7 pupils recently visited the 2012 Olympic site in Stratford, East London. They were impressed with not only the size of the development but also the amount of work that is entailed in making the site look attractive. The main focus of the day was the sustainability of both the Olympic site and The Three Mills lock which will generate electricity using tidal power.

A special treat was the talk by a parent, Mr Dickinson, who is project manager of the Olympic Village. He gave the boys an insight into the development and procedures that are in place to make the site viable after the Games have finished.

Richard Green

SSPA SUMMER FAIR

Just to remind you that the Somerhill Summer Fair will be taking place on Saturday 11 June from 10 am—2pm.

There will be lots of lovely stalls, activities for the children (and some for adults) and various entertainments throughout the day.

Collection week starts Monday 23 May, and more details will be available shortly.

Bermuda Tour, April 2011

25 Year Eight boys together with Messrs Coakley, Close and Shute enjoyed an excellent 10 days in Bermuda during these last holidays. Though going down in the football matches, we recorded wins in rugby and cricket. Port's Island proved a great base and afforded plenty of opportunities for swimming and fishing. Our trips to the beach were probably the highlight of the tour, however, and there are lots of pictures and a couple of videos on the SAS website that help capture the fun that was had by all.



DL House Music

Held on Wednesday 27th April, all the girls from Derwent Lodge assembled in their Houses in the Grand Salon to compete for the six categories in this annual competition organised by the Music Department and House Teachers.

Each House performed five pieces in the Woodwind, Strings, Brass, Piano and Voice categories as well as a House song. This year, the adjudicator was Mr Kent-Davies, Director of Music at Kent College, Pembury.

The trophy winners of the five categories were:

Strings: Jasmine Poole on cello

Woodwind: Phoebe Mantovani on Flute

Piano: Emily Pitts-Tucker and Elizabeth Tong

Voice: Eliza Lewis

Brass: Juliet Hodgson, Alice Wilson and Emily Pratt

The winners of the House song were singing the "Nobody Does it Better" one of the Bond Movie themes.

The overall winners on the day were Windermere

The girls and staff all had a fabulous afternoon and clearly enjoyed listening to their friends and supporting their Houses. Our thanks goes to all the music teachers in helping to prepare their pupils with such confidence

