



Academic Scholarship Success

Many congratulations to Fergus Flanagan for securing both a top academic scholarship and a technology scholarship to Oundle School this September. Not only is this a great personal achievement for him, but it is also a clear endorsement of Ashfold staff's ability to stretch the most able for scholarship.

Young Inventors win National Competition

Alex French, Angus Haines, Cameron Hughes and Thomas Schmidt's design for a Speed Searcher, which uses the latest technology to help find anything people may have lost around their houses, earlier this term won The Ideal Home Exhibition's Innovation Nation competition, a nation-wide competition to find the most ingenious solution to an everyday household frustration.

For a group of 10 & 11 year old school children to have come up with an invention which was short-listed as one of just ten finalists from hundreds of others, the fact that it was the only invention by school children to be on the short-list, and then that it was voted the most exciting new invention by the public, is a tremendous achievement for the children and a huge accolade for the school and for our inspirational DT teacher Mrs Gill Crampton Smith.

The boys meanwhile enjoyed a tremendously exciting day out at the show being in the spot-light and treated as VIPs from the moment they arrived, being interviewed throughout the day by the BBC One Show and by South Today reporters, meeting the TV celebrity scientist and inventor Professor Adam Hart-Davis, and ending up being whisked off by taxi to BBC Centre to appear on the BBC Newsround programme.

SATIPS Artists

The Satips art exhibition this year took place at Feltonfleet School in Surrey. Over 50 schools from around the nation took part in the biggest celebration of Prep School art in the country. The exhibition ran from 11-16 May. Congratulations to the ten Ashfold children who had their work exhibited there.

National Schools' Maths Challenge

Earlier this term two sixth formers, Oliver Jackson and Rebecca Dale, were invited to join a Stowe School team in a nationwide competition to find the best school in the country at mathematics. They acquitted themselves magnificently and the Stowe team ended up coming 9th overall.

House Handwriting Competition

This year's annual House Handwriting competition saw unquestionably the highest standard of entries from all of our Pre-School - Form VI children. Indeed, the new 'continuous cursive' style of writing trialled in PPIII and Transition last year proved so successful that from September we introduced its teaching throughout the school. Mrs Chantler was so impressed with the winning entries that she entered them into the national SATIPS Handwriting Competition.

Astro pays dividends for Ashfold players

After tremendously successful terms of hockey from both boys and girls teams, it was perhaps no surprise to learn that nine of our children have been selected for training with the Bucks Development squads. Congratulations to James Adams, Dominic Whaler, Charlie Shipperley, Jacques Tasker, George Ellison, Purdy Sutcliffe, Elisa Norris, Meg Dowthwaite and Chloe Ranson.

Music Associated Board Examinations Success

We are thrilled with the results of the last set of music exams. Of the eighteen pupils who took exams all passed, three with Distinctions and nine with Merit. Congratulations to all of the pupils, Mr Alan Williams, their music teachers and patient parents!

Unquestionably the best in the Country

After our two teams of five came first and second in the School's Clay Shooting Challenge at Oxford Gun Club on 23rd April we were in confident mood for the National Championships, held at Doveridge Clay Sports Club in Derbyshire on 4th May. Despite some impressive shooting, in particular by Nicholas Paine who proved himself to be the best prep school shot in the country this year scoring an outstanding 30/32 to win the 'High Gun' prize, we narrowly failed to secure the top team position. However, with our three teams coming second and third equal this year and being 'Runners Up' for the last three years proves without question that Ashfold is quite simply the best prep school at clay shooting in the country.

A night at the Oscars

... and what a night we all had - with the Tuckey brothers drumming, 29 Fingers strumming and the atmosphere humming there could be only one outcome - a thumpingly good party. All of us who were there would I am sure want to join me in thanking the Ball Committee and their band of helpers, for the most wonderful evening. Ashfold Balls have always been the talk of the County and this year's will, I am sure, be talked about for some time to come. My thanks too to all of you who supported the evening by packing your tables with friends of Ashfold and for your generosity on the night - building work on the Science Lab refurbishment project has already started.

Teaching Staff News

Since the start of the term we have been recruiting new staff to replace those leaving at the end of this term. I write to let you know what is happening in September.

Leavers:

Terry Wintle (Director of Studies and Head of English) has done tremendously to be appointed as Head of Dair House School (a small independent IAPS Prep School near Beaconsfield).

David Chetham (Science) retires after a long and distinguished career in teaching.

Carl Pincott (Maths) after eleven years at Ashfold is looking for a fresh challenge, so is moving to St Christopher's, Hove where, I understand from Carl, there is plenty to be done in their Maths department.

Rosemary Brereton (History & Latin) sadly has not settled in our rural Prep School setting and is now looking for a Classics teaching post in a secondary school in London.

Alistair Ferguson (Form III) is looking for career development as a curriculum co-ordinator in a state primary school.

Mandy Hasluck (PPIII) after four years in her first teaching post, moves to Headington Junior School to broaden her teaching experience there.

Rowena Gulland (SEN) moves with her husband to Kazakhstan.

Appointments:

Adrian Downie (Head of Junior Department & Form I) takes over as Director of Studies and Head of History.

Kathy Chantler (Form III) takes over as Head of English - a long standing ambition of hers.

Claire Bentley (Form I) takes over as Head of the Junior Department.

Paul Forsyth takes over as Head of Science. Paul has a PGCE, almost nine years teaching experience, is a keen sportsman and in August moves into Chilton Lodge with his wife and two young children.

Ruth Taylor takes over as Head of Latin. She is a classicist at heart having a degree and PGCE in the subject and some twenty years teaching experience.

Nigel Anns takes over as Head of Maths. After qualifying with a BEd in Maths and PE, Nigel has taught for over twenty years in independent schools and held various positions as Head of Maths, Head of PE and Deputy Head. He is also an ISI Inspector and an extraordinarily talented sportsman.

Polly McGarry takes over as a Junior Department Form Teacher. After a first career in business, Polly graduated as a teacher in 2005 and has taught as a Form Teacher ever since. She moves to Brill with her husband and two boys.

Jo Pink takes over as a Junior Department Form Teacher. After graduating from Cambridge University with both a degree in Education and a PGCE in 2005, Jo has taught as a Form Teacher in Southampton and Spain. She is fluent in Spanish and a keen sportswoman

Isabel Tomkins takes over as a PPIII Form Teacher. After graduating in 2004 from Roehampton University with a degree in Primary teaching, Isabel has taught as a PPIII & II Form Teacher for four years at an independent prep school in Rickmansworth.

Valerie Fletcher takes over as our second part time 1:1 SEN teacher. She is a qualified teacher, has an SEN diploma and over twenty years experience teaching children with SEN.

I have just one Junior Department Form Teacher (part time) to appoint. We are interviewing next week.

I am tremendously excited about the high quality of staff we have been able to appoint this year. I am equally proud that we have such a strong existing team of teaching staff that we have been able to appoint staff from within to such key posts.

Form Teachers 2008/09

I know how keenly you will all wish to know who your child's Form Teacher will be next year. Once we have finalised staff appointments, the draft timetable for next year, allocated staff to this based upon their experience and subject strengths, allocated new pupils to forms and decided upon the new PPIIs, I will publish the list of Form Teachers for all to see.

Silver Footprints

Thanks to the generosity of children and their parents, by the end of break on 6th May the Shippon Hard was covered in three giant silver footprints worth collectively some £303.75. Children had risen magnificently to Mr Chetham's charitable appeal to collect silver coins to send to Shelter - our chosen charity of the year.

Sponsored Spelling raises over £1,900

Throughout the school children have risen to the challenge and together this term raised a magnificent £1,914 (so far) for Shelter. Not only has Shelter benefitted, but this event has also encouraged children to think about raising money for those in need and helped them improve their learning at the same time - winners all round.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS, VISITS & OUTINGS

Wycombe Swan Theatre Trip

Pre School and PPI children and their accompanying adults, some 43 in all, enjoyed a wonderful day out at the theatre where they saw 'Elmer' and joined in enthusiastically with the songs, using their arms as elephant trunks. After a picnic lunch at the theatre, it was back to school on the coach - equally as exciting for many of the children. My thanks to all of the parents who joined us on the day which enabled us to take all of the children.

BA Pilot flies in

Pre Prep II had a fantastic time when British Airways Pilot Mark Shepherd visited to talk to the children about his life as a pilot. After showing them pictures of many different aeroplanes taking off and landing, including some which had only just made it onto the runway, he showed them the contents of his pilot's bag - a log book, a pilot's licence and the all important packet of polos! Two lucky children dressed up as pilots and wore special hats, but all the children loved asking him questions and talking about all the different places you can visit in the world

thanks to air travel. A fantastic time was had by all, so a big thank you again to Pilot Mark.

"Hello, hello, hello"

A big thank you too to Inspector Henry Parsons (Ben and Kit's father) for his visit to Form I children. The Thames Valley Inspector came to talk to them about his job as a police officer, after which he was given almost an hour's interrogation by them as they asked endless questions about police dogs! The highlight of their day was undoubtedly trying on his riot gear, handcuffs and bullet-proof vest.

Toad 'Steals the Show'

All of us fortunate enough to have watched one of the Junior Musical performances of Wind in the Willows would I am sure agree that this was the most spectacularly successful and lavish of productions. Elocution lessons had evidently paid dividends as messers Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger (nee. Wood, Reynolds, Taylor and Dutton) would not have sounded out of place at 'Whites' a hundred years ago. Fine

performances by them and from all the Forms II & III children, together with some fabulous costumes and impressive 'hair', resulted in what must be one of our best Junior productions ever. I am sure you would all wish to join me in congratulating Miss Victoria de Trensé, her band of staff and parent helpers, and above all the cast.

King Richard drops in
King Richard 'The Lionheart' (a.k.a. Mr Adrian Downie) returned from exile to face a battery of questions from Form III historians. The famous monarch answered queries about his family and the crusades, which went some way to explaining why he only spent six months out of his ten-year reign in this country.

Easter Holidays

School Easter Ski Trip

Over the Easter holidays, the Bentleys took 35 children, 23 parents and 4 other staff to Les Crosets in Switzerland for a week's skiing. They took over the Hotel de la Telecabine which was a snowballs throw away from the slopes (quite literally, to which some of the children can testify!). Fortunately, there was plenty of snow, great weather and fantastic food. The charity goat bingo tradition continued, a number of them braved the coach trip to the thermal springs whilst the parents had a special fondue night on the other side of the mountain. The children were fantastic, with all the children's skiing improving tremendously, from our pre-preppers to the Sixth Form. They were happy, polite and a real credit to the school; indeed, two of the instructors made a point of commenting to Mr Bentley that their groups were the best group of children that they had taught all season.

Prizes awarded during the week went to Andrew White for the 'best wipe out' of the week, Phoebe Masters and Laurie Macfarlane for the 'best dancer' competition at the disco, Noah Bentley the pool and table football competition with a little help from his randomly selected partner (his dad!) and Jack Ellis who went from first time skier to 'best skier of the week' in his group.

My thanks go to Mr & Mrs Bentley, Mr & Mrs Strong, Miss Hasluck and Miss Davies for all their help in making it such a successful trip.

Mrs Kelly Umpires Superleague Finals

Whilst we were all enjoying our Easter break, Jo Kelly spent a few weekends umpiring in the Netball Superleague. Not only was she asked to umpire the semi-finals, but also was given the honour of umpiring the finals. Clearly, Jo is as highly regarded nationally as she is by us all here at Ashfold.

Holiday Works

Over the holidays we were busy. In addition to numerous minor project, our Maintenance Team redecorated the girls and boys dormitory wings, we had the North Terrace steps re-laid and handrails added, the Exit Drive was (as promised) repaired and the Swimming Pool prepared so that it was ready for swimming lessons for the first day of term.

Forthcoming Events

June

Thu 5th **Forms I & II Informal Concert.** Parents are most welcome to attend.

Fri 6th **Forms I Viking Day.** Bjarni, the Viking, is back 'on games' and fortunately we have been able to re-schedule his visit for Friday 6th June. Please can all Form I children come dressed in costume for what has always proved to be a great historical experience with Bjarni.

- Mon 9th **Main School Examinations begin.** Children in the Senior and Junior Departments begin three days of end of year examinations. These are important examinations for them all, so although they will be revising 'in-class' and during preps, we hope that you might like to encourage them to spend time revising at home in the evenings. To assist children we will be publishing revision guidelines for them. Boarders will also be revising each night under the guidance of boarding staff in the run-up to these exams.
- Fri 13th **Parents/Staff Rounders and Cricket.** These are always great events. If you would like to play, or just to come along to watch, put this date in your diaries, keep an eye out for the notices going up shortly and sign up. If you would like to play cricket for the parents team contact Chris Heslop (chrisjheslop@yahoo.com)
- Tue 17th **Pre Prep Parents' Coffee Morning - POSTPONED until 30th June**
- Fri 20th **Pre Prep Sports Days.** All Pre-Prep children are involved. Pre-School and Pre-Prep I will be having their events in the morning from 11.00 – 12 noon. Pre-School and Pre-Prep I children who do not normally come to school on Fridays should arrive in their classroom no later than 10.45 a.m. dressed in their P.E. kit. Pre-Prep II, III and Transition's events will be in the afternoon from 1.30 – 3.30 p.m. Parents who will be attending both the morning and afternoon events may, if they wish, picnic around the edges of the playing fields. Start training now for the parents' races!
- Sat 21st **Summer Choral Concert at St Mary's, Haddenham.** If you have not heard the Senior Choir singing, then you really should not miss this opportunity. They, together with members of the Parents Choir have been rehearsing since last term and it promises to be a magnificent evening.
- Tue 24th **Academic Scholars' Half Day.** All children are free to be collected from 12 noon.
- Fri 27th **Main School Athletics Finals.** Another must for parents of Forms I to VI, but no Fathers' or Mothers' races.
- Sat 28th **10.00 a.m. Staff/Parents Tennis Tournament.** This is always a jolly event and you don't have to be a Wimbledon qualifier to join in..... honest! This year in an attempt to get more mothers to play, we have created separate events for Men and Women, so that fathers can be all macho and mothers can have a rather gentler morning's tennis. If you would like to play just sign up on one of the notices around the school, or see Mr Pincott.
- Mon 30th **Pre Prep Parents' Coffee Morning.** Your chance to 'collar' the Headmaster!
2.00 p.m. **Athletics Match at Stowe**

July

- Tue 1st **Senior Play: 'A Haunting We Will Go' by Tim Kelly.**
- Wed 2nd **2.00 p.m. Pre Prep Summer Concert.** A must for all Pre Prep parents. Mrs Venn will send out a letter for you to book tickets - it can get tight in the Saloon!

Fri 4th **5.00 p.m. Leavers v OAs Hockey.** Come and see if this year's leavers can beat last year's leavers.
6.00 p.m. Parents' Barbecue. This is very much part of the end of term and year celebrations. It is an informal evening when parents and children get together to enjoy both a sumptuous barbecue cooked by our very own experts (press-ganged parents!) and each other's picnic hampers. The Speech Day marquee provides ample chairs and cover in the event of rain; otherwise a children's entertainer keeps them busy in it for much of the evening. Experienced parents bring rugs!

Speech Day - Saturday 5th July. This day is particularly for parents and children in the Senior and Junior Departments of the school. Others are of course welcome to attend, but the focus will be on the older children. Children should arrive no later than 10.30 a.m. The day starts with formal speeches and prize giving in the Marquee at 11.00 a.m., followed by drinks with the Governors for parents of children in Forms II, IV & VI on the North Terrace. Parents then go into the grounds for family picnics before returning to watch their children swim in the Inter-House Swimming Competition at 2.00 p.m. After this we all meet in the Marquee for a cup of tea and to say farewell to each other. The day ends at around 4.00 p.m. In our experience, younger children find the formal speeches in the morning too much, so Crèche is available for any Pre-Prep child who is attending the day with their families from 10.35 a.m. until immediately after formal speeches and prize giving are over - please book a place soon with Mrs Hignell.

NOTICEBOARD

School Photo

I hope that just before Half Term you all received through Blazer Post (your child's book bag) a proof and order form for this year's School Photo. If you have not, spares are available from the School Reception Office. A full sized photo is on display in the main entrance hall of the Mansion. In order to ensure that those who place an order receive it before the end of term, we need all orders to be returned to the Reception Office no later than **Wednesday 11th June 2008**.

Additional School Receptionist

At Half Term a new School Reception, Mrs Caroline Badger, joined us. She takes over each afternoon at 3.00 p.m. from Lisa and mans the office until 6.00 p.m. each day.

Family Swimming

The pool is available to Swimming Club Members for use at set times during the Summer term and throughout most of the Summer holidays. If you are interested in joining this club, please ask the School Reception Office for further details.

Parents' Tennis Club

The tennis courts are also available to Tennis Club Members for use during the holidays and at set times during term time. If you are interested in joining this club, please ask the School Reception Office, or contact Mr Carl Pincott for further details.

Tokens for Schools

As you will probably be aware, we have again collected Tesco's 'Computers for Schools' tokens. So far we have a wonderful total of just over 6000 so thank you for all your efforts. As the date to hand them in is fast approaching please can you send any in that you may still have?

HEADMASTERLY NAGS

Traffic Speeds though local villages.

Every now and then I am prompted to write to remind parents of the dangers of driving at speed through our local villages at both the start and the end of the school day. I understand that two school buses now pick up children from Ludgershall each day, so this is obviously a new hazard. Clearly, Ashfold parents are by no means the only road users at these times and no one is suggesting that it is only Ashfold parents who drive at speed, but I am sure that we would all want to do our bit to help make our local villages, and our own drives, as safe as possible for children.



Headmaster