



## PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - MAY 2006

Welcome back to you all. I hope that your Easter was as successful as the School Ski Trip to Torgon clearly was. I thought I'd write early, not only because there is already lots to celebrate, but also because we have had to make a few changes to the Fasti and the earlier you know the better.

First however, I'd like to apologise unreservedly for my spectacular failure to communicate with you about ....

### ***Swimming Costumes***

I fear my eye was most definitely not on the ball when we made the decision last term to introduce them and their introduction this term has caught us all on the hop!

The reasons we would like children to wear school swimming costumes are because they wear uniform throughout the rest of the school day and for all other games sessions and lessons. Second, by putting them into a swimming uniform, peer-pressure issues disappear. Thirdly, this avoids parents having to endure the pressure from their children to be bought the coolest 'board' shorts/swim-suits. Finally, it helps parents avoid potentially making the mistake of buying unsuitable swimwear, either because it is too immodest for girls, or because the board shorts bought are so voluminous that it makes it impossibly hard for their children to swim.

Alan Johnson Blazer Posted parents last week explaining things, but having listened to the concerns many of you have expressed, I have decided that:

- Parents of children leaving Ashfold for new schools at the end of this term will not have to purchase uniform swimwear. If you have already done so and your child has not worn them and you have not name-taped them, please feel free to hand them back and we will refund you.
- Parents of all other children in Transition - Form V are required to purchase the new uniform swimwear by half term. Up until then, children may wear their own costumes if they have not been able to obtain the uniform.

### ***Music Associated Board Examinations Success.***

We are thrilled with the results of the last set of music exams. Of the twenty-six pupils who took exams all passed, eight with Distinctions and ten with Merit. My congratulations to all of the pupils, Mr Alan Williams, their music teachers and patient parents!

## *School Easter Ski Trip*

On the first Saturday morning of the Easter holidays, 38 parents, 46 children and 9 brave, olive clad staff boarded two coaches bound for Gatwick. No-one was late, the bus drivers didn't shout and we left on time! Check-in was a remarkably stress free affair and the short flight to Geneva even managed to serve up a reasonably palatable hot lunch. Coach Bentley lucked out (ask Mr Bentley if like me, you have no idea what this means!) on the way to Torgon and after a scenic journey everyone arrived safely at the Gold Test Centre. Bearing in mind that we had lost an hour by coming to Switzerland and we were going to lose another hour because of the clocks changing, most people went to bed early after they had had their boots and skis fitted.

The next morning brought a continental breakfast (the boarders amongst us weren't happy) and blazing sunshine. The ski groups set off with their instructors (most named Pascal!) and the parents set off for the slope side restaurants. Skiing was excellent, if a little too warm for jackets, and by the end of the day everyone had that after skiing glow.

During the week many other events were organised other than the skiing and three in particular are worth writing about. The trip to Aqua Parc was thoroughly enjoyed by the children, Mr Beckett and the staff with the themed water slides having everything from gentle doughnut rides to wild black-hole rides!

There was also a charity bingo night to 'recycle poverty'. Ashfold made a clean sweep of the evening and won all the prizes on offer with Stuart King taking the top prize of an MP3 player. With the money raised, the charity was able to send six goats to Africa to help 'butt out poverty' and because Ashfold won all the prizes we were able to name all the goats. We wish Abigail, Billy, Boy George, Olivia and friends all the best in their foreign endeavours!!

The final trip was an evening at a health spa with thermal springs. It was a wonderfully relaxing evening, letting the water jets massage away those aching skiing legs. It was also rather surreal to be outside in a pool surrounded by the snow covered Alps in the distance.

The end of the week saw snow, more sunshine and some of the parents successfully persuading Gerry (owner of The Ski Company) to 'April Fool' Mr Bentley with a change of flight plans! Awards were given to the children, all of whom had improved incredibly over the week and in the alternative award ceremony Olivia Batchelor won 'wipe out of the week' for skiing straight through a bright orange 'turn right' sign, Darren Christie won 'best accident off the slopes' for falling out of his bunk bed, Stuart King won 'best accident on the slopes' for arguing with a T-bar and Mrs Hutt won the 'most attention seeking parent' award for managing to get two rather tanned and handsome ski-instructors to stretch her off the mountain!

My thanks to Mr Andrew Bentley and his team of helpers for making this trip such a wonderfully enjoyable experience for both parents and children.

### ***OAs represent England***

In my last newsletter I celebrated:

**Zoe Shipperley** (leaver Summer 2003) who is currently in the England U16 Ladies hockey squad.

Over the holidays I also learned that...

**Jamie Dalrymple** (leaver Summer 1994) is with England's 'A' touring cricket team in the West Indies, and ...

**Max Brunner** (leaver Summer 2001) is now playing in the England U18 Rugby squad.

### ***National Schools Representation***

Over the Easter Holidays, Ashfold children also achieved impressively at National Level:

**Matthew Judge** (Form VI) has been selected to join the National Prep Schools Football Squad.

**Dominic** and **Alex Noakes** (Forms VI & III) went to the IAPS Squash Tournament, Alex coming second, Dominic fourth and playing together as a pair they also came fourth in the competition. My thanks go to Mr Ben Hignell for giving up time during the holidays to take them.

**Emily Kerr** and **Chrystia Reynolds** (Form IV) and **Millie Hope** (Form III) all represented Ashfold at the National School's Cross Country Riding competition, Millie coming tenth in the Junior (U11) individual competition.

### ***Forthcoming Events***

#### Tuesday 2nd May - OXFAM Silver Coin Trail

Last year's trail was wonderfully successful at both raising money for our chosen charity and for developing House spirit. If you could help your children collect as many silver coins as possible for this year's event, it would be wonderful to try to set a new record for the longest House trail.

#### Tuesday 2nd May - Parents Coffee Morning

Do please come along and meet me and other parents. If you need more of an incentive, then I'll be talking about the new Summer Games programme, the swimming pool and costumes, after which I'll take questions on anything you'd like.

#### Tuesday 9th May - School Photo

May I remind all Pre-School and PPI parents to try to arrange for your children to be in school for the photograph at 10.30 a.m. if they don't usually come in on Tuesday mornings?

#### Friday 19th May - School Evensong

Do please feel free to join us at this service at 5.10 p.m. in Church. Mr Peter Middleton, who is speaking, is Housemaster to lots of Old Ashfoldians and promises to entertain us all. This will be over by 6.00 p.m. and is a three-line whip for all Form III - VI children. If for some reason your child will have to be taken out of school early and will therefore be unable to attend, please write to me.

### Friday 2nd June - Pre Prep Parents' Meeting

Having laid on a parents' meeting to replace written reports last term, we felt you might prefer to have the opportunity of walking around the classrooms viewing your children's work, rather than having a third formal 1:1 ten-minute meeting in the year. Parents have enjoyed this format in the Senior and Junior Departments, so we hope you will too. However, following the morning, I would appreciate your thoughts on the success, or otherwise, of this initiative.

### Tuesday 20th June - Forms II to Milton Keynes Victorian Museum

You've guessed it Form II Parents, we'll be asking you to dress up your children as Victorians. If you need guidance, Form teachers will assist.

## ***Noticeboard***

### Calling all Gravediggers

The Gravediggers is a parent, staff and Old Boys side which plays cricket on Sundays during the Summer Term against a number of local teams - always at Ashfold. This is civilised Sunday afternoon cricket, but the vicar will not be umpiring. Mr John Miller, our Gravedigger Secretary and his various Team Managers, are always on the look-out for new talent, so if you are an enthusiast, or 'used to play a bit', do please contact him on 'john@johncmiller.freeserve.co.uk' or 01844 218500. If you are nervous about signing up because you are worried that it might all be a bit too professional for you (unlikely), then do feel free to catch me, Andrew Bentley, Ben Hignell, David Venn or Mark Strong, as we all occasionally play for the team and will be able to tell you more.

### Family Swimming

Families are warmly invited to join our Swimming Club and to swim in our newly refurbished pool. Membership entitles families to swim 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 Reception Office.

### 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 are again collecting Tesco's 'Computers for Schools' tokens, so if you do shop in Tesco could I ask that you keep an eye out for these tokens and hand them in to your child's Form Teachers/Tutors.

## ***Fasti Changes***

I am sorry if these changes cause you any inconvenience.

Sun 18th June	Insert: VI Form Expedition returns from Brecon Beacons
Mon 19th June	Delete: VI Form Expedition returns from Brecon Beacons
Tue 27th June	Insert: Stowe Triangular Athletics
Mon 3rd July	Delete: Stowe Triangular Athletics tbc