



THE ALLEYN COURT NEWSLETTER

Friday June 13th 2008



There I was thinking all would be plain sailing till the end of term and my prospective retirement, and then, hey presto, who should come to call on Monday morning but OFSTED! If truth be told, we have been expecting an Inspection in our Pre-prep for some time, but of course no notice is given these days and it is always going to be a shock when the Inspectorate suddenly swoops.

Of course we have no need to fear. As all of you know who have had children in our Pre-prep, the quality of care is first class and the teaching excellent. The pupils are happy, the facilities are great and the sense of family and belonging is almost palpable.

The Summer Ball is tomorrow. Simone Foley and Sarah Saunders, who together have organised the Ball on behalf of the PTA, have timidly been eyeing the 5 day forecasts and shaking their fists at the showers. In this my final year Miren and I have been invited by the PTA as Guests of Honour and we look forward to seeing many of you there. I know we will all have a wonderful time, whatever the weather!

This evening our School Choir will be performing in the annual SEESMA

Concert at The Cliffs Pavilion. They have worked very hard with Miss Furley to learn their songs. I, together with many Alley Court parents, will be proudly watching them sing.

This is the final Newsletter of the school year and I always have the sad task of saying goodbye to the pupils who are leaving and to members of staff who are moving on or retiring. Our Year 6s have worked hard and been a credit to the school. We will miss them all: their contribution to the school has been excellent from their participation in "Bugsy" and "Grease" to their roles as Prefects, Monitors and Librarians, to their innumerable successes in sporting events. We have had two fine Head Pupils in Kira Parekh and Toby Gibbons and I am grateful to them for their excellent contributions throughout the school year.

We are also saying goodbye to two members of staff, Anne Slocombe and me. Mrs Slocombe is retiring after 22 years on this site, firstly at Eton House and then Alley Court. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude for her great contribution to the success and well being of our pupils. Thank you, Anne for all your years of loyal service to the school.

Joining us as our new Year 3 teacher we are delighted to welcome Miss Hazel Ditchburn. Miss Ditchburn comes to us from Rochford County Primary School. She has a BEd (Hons) and a PG Dip Ed from Anglia Ruskin University and has been a Primary School teacher for 16 years. We very much look forward to Miss Ditchburn coming to Alley Court in September.

On Thursday 19th June pupils will be moving up to their next year's teacher for an hour and a half's induction lesson. The classes will move on as follows for the start of September 2008:

1R becomes 2A(Ilen)
1H becomes 2B(oston)
2A becomes 3D(itchburn)
2B become 3E(kins)
3S becomes 4W(edderkop)
3E becomes 4S(hields)
4W becomes 5G(abarrot)
4S becomes 5L(arwood)
5L becomes 6H(art)
5G becomes 6C(handler)

We are having our Prize-Giving Day this year on Monday 7th July at 7.00 p.m. Our Guest of Honour this year will be The Right Honourable Michael Portillo, former politician and now broadcaster, writer and political commentator. Most recently



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he was the Chairman of the Man Booker Prize Selection Committee. School will break up at 12.30 p.m. on that day (Pre-prep at 12.00 noon), and all prize winners, and pupils from Year 3 upwards, will be expected to attend in school Summer uniform.

If you still have a cup or trophy at home from last year's Prize-Giving, or a Summer Term Sports' Trophy, please would you ensure it is engraved and brought back to school as soon as possible.

This coming Monday, 16th June, it is the Year 4 and Junior School Parents' Evening. I would ask you, as best as you can, to please keep to your allotted time so that other parents are not held up.

There are other fairly imminent events that I would like to remind you about. At 7.00 p.m. on Thursday 28th June we are holding our evening of Music, Drama and Dance. This is always a special evening as many of our pupils will be performing items for the first time in public.

On Monday 30th June at 9.15 a.m. we are holding first a Literacy Parent Training session led by Miss Boston, followed immediately by a Maths session presented by Miss Shields. These

awareness-raising presentations are primarily targeted at prospective Year 1 and 2 parents, but if anyone else is interested, please let the Office know and you will be cordially invited to attend.

I really want to draw your attention to the Race for Life that is taking in place in Southend on Sunday 29th June. Not only are several members of our catering staff at Thorpe Bay participating, but also Bethany Rungay (4S), who will run a very long way to raise money for Cancer Research. Please feel you can sponsor her or our Catering Staff so that this run can raise as much as it can to fight cancer.

Please also take note of the following major sporting and school-based events:

- ISA National Athletics Championships – Wed 18th June in Birmingham
- Junior Sports' Day – Thurs 19th June at 2.15 p.m.
- PTA Summer Fair – Sat 28th June at 12.00 noon
- Pre-prep Sports' Day – Wed 2nd July at 10.00 a.m. at Thorpe Bay
- Senior School Sports' Finals – Sat 5th July at 10.00 a.m.
- Bouncy Castle Extravaganza and Non-Uniform Day (proceeds to the Pavilion Appeal) – Tue 8th July 3.00

p.m. (Westcliff Pre-prep to finish at 2.30 p.m.)

- School Trip Day and Pre-Prep Teddy Bears Picnic – Thurs 10th July
- Alley Court breaks up – Fri 11th July at 12.30 p.m. (Pre-preps at 12.00 noon)
- Start of Autumn Term – Tue 2nd September
- PTA Family Fun Sports' Morning (postponed from 17th May) – Sat 27th September – football instead of cricket and the chance to see Mr Davies spreading himself rather more majestically and purposefully than my rather self-harming antics last time around.

A week ago the ISA Regional Athletics Championships were held at Gloucester Park, Basildon. As usual we entered a strong team, which participated in the full range of events. In all we came out with 6 Regional Champions, who will go on to represent East Anglia in National Championships on Wednesday 18th June at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham.

In Year 4 Harrison Smith (4W) won the 600 metres in 1m 58.9 seconds and Robert Pinkerton (4W) won the Cricketball Throw with a distance of 36m 30 cm, whilst the Year 4 Boys' Team came 2nd in the whole competition. Our Year 5 Boys performed exceptionally well



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with James Bowie (5L) placed first in the 75m with a time of 11.39s, Luke Saville Champion in the 150m in 22.32s and also in the Long Jump with a distance of 3m 97cms, and Laurence Willmore winning the 600m in a time of 1m 52s. The Year 5 Boys' Team deservedly came first. Our Year 6 Boys performed well, but just missed out on championship honours with four seconds and three thirds. The team was placed 2nd overall.

Whilst there were no winners amongst our girls, two, Natasha May (4W) and Lucy Kidwell (5L) did come 3rd in their respective 600m finals.

These were remarkable performances from all who took part in the competition and simply go to underline the excellence of the training our pupils receive at Alley Court. We wish all the boys taking part in the Nationals next week the best of luck.

Our cricket teams have had mixed success. Against Felsted with 3 of our best players unavailable our U11s scored 100 for 9 against Felsted's 111 for 8. This was a good performance in the circumstances. However, fortunes were reversed against Widford Lodge two days ago when we won by 84 runs. There were two outstanding performances in

this match. Toby Gibbons (6C) scored 98 not out whilst Matt Bevan (6H) scored 45 not out. These were brilliant batting performances for which Toby will receive a presentation new bat from Alley Court for scoring over 75 runs. To crown their performances Toby also took 3 catches and Matt took a wicket to reduce Widford Lodge to 84 for 9 in the allocated 22 overs.

Our U10s went up to Chigwell only to find their match abandoned thanks to a particularly heavy shower. Chigwell had scored 81 for 4 and we were on 18 for 1.

We are still awaiting many of you to complete the Pupil Information Forms that were issued last November. This is a particularly important data trawl as we are computerising all pupil details. Please would you ensure that you return the completed form to the Office as soon as possible as we very much want to upload all pupil details before the end of term. If you have mislaid your form, please collect a new one from the Office.

Please note that if children are not collected at the appropriate time at the Main School, they will immediately be taken to the Office. The Office staff will contact parents in the first instance and, if necessary, another appointed contact

number. If you are unable to collect your child at the normal time, please ensure that you notify the Office as soon as possible. If you have arranged for someone else to collect your child, please ensure that the form teacher is advised in the morning at registration.

With this Newsletter you should find in your child's bag an information sheet from the PTA outlining the prizes for the raffle and the items for auction at the Summer Ball tomorrow. Children in Years 4,5 and 6 will also have their final 3 Weekly Report.

In this my valedictory Newsletter I would like to thank you, the parents, who have given me so much support over the last seven years. I have so much enjoyed my time at Alley Court that I know that retirement and its concomitant lack of children will leave me feeling rather empty. However, as many of you know, Miren and I are soon to be grandparents for the first time and I will once again have to get used to another age group, changing nappies and pretending to enjoy Teletubbies. Of course s/he will be another member of the Chandler dynasty to support The Mighty Shrimpers. I would express particular gratitude to all the members of the PTA Committees since I arrived in 2001. They have



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tirelessly done so much for the school and the pupils, they have provided immensely enjoyable social programmes for the parents and the staff, and their meetings are always conducted in an atmosphere of cheerful good humour. I am full of admiration and thank you on behalf of the school from the bottom of my heart.

I would also like to thank all members of the teaching and non teaching staff, past and present, who have patiently put up with my foibles and idiosyncrasies and who have made Alley Court the great school it is with their brilliant contributions in and out of the classroom. You have always been very good to me and I will always be in your debt.

I would like to thank Mr John Wilcox, who saw fit to appoint me in the first place and has given me unstinting support ever since. Alley Court is very lucky to have the Wilcox family as its proprietors. Over four generations since Alley Court's foundation in 1904 the Wilcox family has remained a firm and unswerving bastion of support. Without them Alley Court would, quite simply, not exist. Thank you, John.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank all the pupils who have been at Alley Court at any time during the last 7 years. You have given me such pleasure with your warmth, friendship, courtesy and happiness. I will miss you all very much.

I am so pleased that I can pass on this thriving, exuberant school to such a good man as Gareth Davies. I know that he will lead Alley Court on to ever greater heights and will look after the school with love and care. On behalf of all of you I pass on all our best wishes to Lisa and Gareth in the imminent birth of their second child.

The beautiful Summer weather brings out the best at Alley Court. Once again we have our kestrels nesting on the roof right above the Geography Room. Mr Nick Chandler has great difficulty in concentrating on his lessons when he sees one of the parent birds aiming towards the window like a bullet only to veer up onto the roof at the last minute. Recently we also had a nest of blue tits squeezed into a tiny hole on the outside of the Assembly Hall wall. As they queued for lunch, our children were entertained by the tiny fledglings poking their heads out and squeaking and squawking as they waited for Mummy to

bring lunch. One fell out and was immediately replaced by Richard Newman. Therefore all survived and they have now successfully flown.

There are rabbits absolutely everywhere. It is becoming increasingly difficult to avoid them as we drive out of school! And as ever, the moorhens have raised a clutch of chicks by the side of the lake.

The final whole school photograph during my time here in some way conjures up this beautiful environment. The sun is shining, Jerry's grass is a wonderful green and the trees are in full verdant leafage behind the children's heads. I will certainly be ordering a copy for myself, as you too may wish to do. Order forms can now be obtained from the office and the photograph can be viewed in the Waiting Room.

This may well be the last time that you see a shrimp on an Alley Court Newsletter. It is a sad moment, especially if it finds itself replaced by a swan! Remember if I'm not cheering from the West Stand in person, I will be there with you in spirit.



With warmest wishes, et semper fidelis



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