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The Westonbirt School Termly Newsletter

AUTUMN 2009



Celebrating Success

This summer our girls gained excellent public examination results with 61% of their A Levels graded A or B.

A quarter of the girls gained three or more A grades. These splendid results secured their places on a wide variety of university courses ranging from Physics (Tamar Willson, pictured above left with Korrin

Saunders and Director of Studies Mr Gluning) and Engineering with Management (Chawinda Sriprasert) at Imperial College London to Hospitality Business Management (Phoebe Odam-Smith) at University College Birmingham.

The A Level candidates included the first four girls to benefit from our new Sir William Romney Sixth Form Scholarships. These were created in 2006 to offer assisted places to girls leaving the local state secondary school after its own sixth form had closed.

Year 11's GCSE results were superb, with half of them graded at A or A*. Katharine Curry topped the points table with 7A's, 2 As and 1 B.

These strong academic results consolidate Westonbirt's reputation as a school at which all girls achieve their very best in every respect.

This term we welcomed a record number of new girls to our Sixth Form including the country's top GCSE scorer and a rising star in the fencing world with her sights set on the Olympics.

Whatever your daughter's strengths, you can be sure that she will thrive at Westonbirt!



Their smiles say it all! Mrs Mary Henderson with Georgina Blackmore



Kushi Gujral with Deputy Head Ms Caroline Adler

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Time for Alice in Wonderland



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Going for Gold Awards



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Mamma Mia - it's Abba Night!





From the Headmistress

This Autumn Term got off to a beautiful start. The disappointing July and August turned into the Indian Summer which welcomed back the Westonbirt girls and staff. My colleagues and I noticed no settling in problems for new girls. We credit this partly to our friendly girls and excellent pastoral care system, and partly to the fact that the girls enjoyed being outside in the warm sunshine for much of their free time.

A record number of girls trialled for the **lacrosse teams** on the first Saturday of term and on the Sunday the whole school, plus families, dogs and picnics, took part in the annual **Westonbirt Wander** to Tetbury and back.

South Cerney Water Park was a popular destination for the Year 9's raft building and bonding Sunday, as well as for the Senior Choir's Mystery Trip and a wakeboarding expedition led by Miss Stephanie Caller, the new Assistant Housemistress of Holford, who is an international wakeboarding champion!

One unexpected feature of the new term was our **Speech Day**, which usually takes place on the last day of the Summer Term. This year it had to be postponed because of an outbreak of swine flu. Fortunately the few who caught it recovered well and our guest speaker, the author **Mrs Alison Baverstock** (pictured above, centre, with, from left to right, myself, Deputy Head Girl Charlotte Hunt, Chairman of Governors Richard Marriott and Head Girl Harriet Malma-Derben) was able to join us in September to inspire girls, parents and staff.

Many people ask me for obvious reasons whether our pupil numbers are suffering as a result of the recession. I am pleased to reply that they are not. We had two classes at our Year 6 Taster Day in September, excellent attendance at our Autumn Open Day and **record numbers** joining our Sixth Form this term.

It was all change for Years 12 and 13 as their welcomed their new Housemistress, Miss Freya Goolden, and donned smart jackets as part of their everyday wear. This has helped make the girls look smarter and more businesslike. I am particularly pleased to report favourable comments from girls and parents in the Main School about the much improved Sixth Form dress.

As always, I commend to you all of the variety of events, both academic and extra-curricular, which enrich this long Autumn Term. It has been a pleasure to meet many new parents who are already involved in the life of the school and I look forward to seeing many more of you in the six weeks leading up to the Christmas Carol Service on December 12th.

Mary Henderson



Georgie Fenn and Katie O'Neill in the Junior Play.

Skilling Up for Successful Careers

Former pupil Hermione Berry was the perfect role model for our pupils when she came to speak about her highly successful jewellery business at our **Year 10 Key Skills Day** last term. The girls enjoyed modelling her creations (*Hannah Lawrence is pictured right*) before testing their own business skills.

Mrs Dunn, Head of Careers, set them the task of making saleable products from foil, paper cups and sellotape. They applied for loans from a team of hardened bank managers (aka the Maths Department) and arranged the purchase of materials from



a tough negotiator, the Operations Bursar.

As always, the girls devised some fiendishly clever business ideas, learned a great deal about all of the key skills required in the world of work, from number skills to communications, and a good time was had by all.

Summer Art Exhibition

The traditional end of year **Art Exhibition** was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. The artists clearly gained inspiration from our beautiful English countryside setting, as well as the many trips they had enjoyed to art galleries and museums.



SUMMER TERM HIGHLIGHTS



Laura Snape and Issy Yerburgh as Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Classic Triumph for Junior Play

Last term Mrs Toghill brought together the girls from Years 7, 8 and 9 in our first cross-year Junior Play, replacing our traditional Year 7 and Year 9 productions and giving Year 8s also the chance to perform. A stage crew from the senior classes supported the production, and musical direction was provided by Dr Exon. This ambitious show took us on a lively romp through the classic children's stories, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. The extensive cast list provided numerous cameo roles and all the players embraced their opportunities to steal the show.

Music Inspires Special Guests

Musical entertainment of a different kind was provided by the **Samba Band** last term for a specially invited audience from the **Paternoster School** in Cirencester for children with learning difficulties. Sixth formers helped host the event, which was organised by the Westonbirt School Foundation. "We all enjoyed seeing our young visitors respond enthusiastically to this invigorating sound and to our beautiful setting," reports Mrs Charlotte Rogers-Jones, Foundation Director.



Non-stop Practice for US Tour

A visit from Stockport Lacrosse Club provided an excellent opportunity for an out-of-season warm-up for our impending **USA Lacrosse Tour**. Organised by our Head of PE, the former England lacrosse player Mrs Rachel Whitton, this is one of many exciting events to help us prepare to play school and college teams throughout New England in 2010.



Going for Gold

Girls working for their Bronze, Silver and Gold **Duke of Edinburgh Awards** were not the only ones to be aiming high last term.

Sports Day, as ever, saw fierce competition between the Houses, with Badminton finally declared winner. Official photographer for the day was Sixth Former Lily Wade.

Some of the girls hot-footed their way round Kemble Airfield in the local **Race For Life**, a 5km run exclusively for women to raise money for **Cancer Research**. Their stylish costumes and obvious team spirit attracted the eye of **Heart FM Radio** who interviewed our team live on air.



Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh candidates trekked through the Wye Valley while our Golden girls conquered Mount Snowdon.



MOVING ON!

NEWS FOR THE WESTONBIRT ASSOCIATION

The School always welcomes its past pupils back, whether for the Association's annual **Reunion Day** in October, for year group reunions (1996, 1990 and 2002 girls are returning soon!) or for individual visits. We also enjoy their news sent from afar.

Last term **Hermione Berry** (2001 leaver) spoke to our pupils about her flourishing jewellery business, www.hermionejewellery.co.uk (see page 2). Pictured right with Housemistress Miss Sally Gould is 2003 leaver **Tant Bhirombhakdhi**, now PA to the Prime Minister of Thailand. She returned to present a donation to the Westonbirt School Foundation's Music Appeal. We were also pleased to welcome 2001 leaver **Lulu Zhu** from China.

Clemmie Dalrymple-Hamilton, who left in 2007, came to speak at Notices about the Morocco Hitch, a charity project in which she was one of 1,000 people to hitchhike to Morocco to raise money for Link Community Development, which funds education in sub-Saharan Africa.

1982 leaver **Sarah Bass née Bedford**, now resident in the USA, brought her mother and

daughters to see us. 1949 leaver **Anne Brailey née Gillibrand**, inspired by a Westonbirt lecture to emigrate to Canada, also returned for a visit. Now working in India, 1991 leaver **Susie Griffiths-Jones** came to tell us about her recently published book.



Mrs Joanna Rigg and her daughters Marion and Katie were curious to find out more about the school of which Mrs Rigg's mother, **Miss Angela Mason**, had been the first Deputy Head.

1958 leaver **Margaret Squires née Renshaw** of St Andrews won a place on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of the artist

Anthony Gormley's Oneanother Project. A keen Munro-bagger, she treated the plinth as a hill and built a cairn of charity shop books to raise funds for the Mountain Rescue Teams of Scotland. For more information, visit www.oneanother.co.uk/participants/Margaret.S.

For more news of your former friends and teachers, the Association News magazine offers excellent value at just £6 each year! Information about the Association and its events, including next year's 80th Anniversary Garden Party on Sunday 20th June, is available at www.westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk/alumni-area.html.

Making Friends at Westonbirt

The Autumn Term will be as busy as ever for parents as well as girls, if they take up the invitations extended by the **Friends of Westonbirt School (FOW)**, Chairman Sally Moreland reports.

On Saturday 17th October we welcomed the actors from the Murder by Candlelit Theatre Company to provide lively entertainment and tax our little grey cells with their highly popular **Murder Mystery Evening**.

The first weekend in November will be busy with the **Autumn Westonbirt Lecture** followed by the optional **post-lecture supper** on Friday 6th November and the **Bonfire Party** on Sunday 8th

The girls jump for joy at the FOW Abba Night, a very popular summer event for all ages, organised by FOW.



November, the latter jointly organised with Rose Hill Westonbirt Parents Association (RHWP).

On Friday 20th November we will hold our second **Festive Fayre and Wine Tasting Evening** with Thomas Panton Wine Merchants. From 4pm onwards you may sample fine wines from all over the world and shop at a wide range of festive stalls for everything from Christmas decorations to cakes and candles. Admission is free and there will be a charity collection in aid of Gloucestershire Air Ambulance.

St Andrew's Night will take place on Friday 27th November when guests and girls reel to George Buchanan and his band.

The finale to the year will be on Friday 4th December when the committees of both FOW and RHWPA very much hope you will be able to join us to celebrate Christmas at their **Drinks Party**.

With the proceeds from these events we will be purchasing jackets for the sports department, a Junior Lacrosse Cup and new choir uniform.

We do hope that we may welcome you, your family and friends to our events and would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your continuing support.

If you have not received details and would like to attend any FOW event, please contact Miss Eileen Galbraith (01666 880333) during office hours. Thank you.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WINTER 2009-10

Friday 6th November (7.30pm)

The Autumn Westonbirt Lecture: Henry Hemming goes "In Search of the English Eccentric" followed by optional supper

Sunday 8th November (6pm)

Friends of Westonbirt School & RHWPA Joint Bonfire Party

Thursday 19th (7.30pm)

& Friday 20th November (2pm)

Senior School Play: "Pygmalion" by Bernard Shaw

Friday 20th November

(4-8.30pm)
Friends of Westonbirt School's Wine Tasting & Festive Food Fayre

Friday 27th November (7.30pm)

Friends of Westonbirt School's St Andrew's Night Reels

Friday 4th December (6pm)

Friends of Westonbirt School & RHWPA Joint Christmas Drinks Party

Thursday 10th December (8pm)

Community Carols (everyone welcome)

Saturday 12th December (11am)

School Carol Service (for current pupils' families only)

Saturday 23rd January (7.30pm)

Friends of Westonbirt School invite you to their Burns Night Dinner & Dance

Saturday 30th January

Confirmation by the Bishop of Tewkesbury

Friday 5th February (6pm)

Friends of Westonbirt School's AGM & Quiz Night

For more information, please contact us at:

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