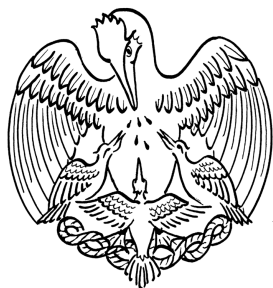


SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE



NEWSLETTER

September 2008

Dates for your diary

Year 11 Parents' Information Evening	23 September	Open Evening/Teacher Training Day (Pupils not in School)	2 October
PSHE Day	23 September		
The Theatre Centre, London, performing 'Knock Against My Heart' (3.30 - 5 pm, £2 on the door)	24 September	Half Term	27 October

Dear Parent

Welcome to the new term. I hope the summer break offered you time to rest and relax with friends and family and that you and yours have returned to school and work much refreshed.

I should like to extend a particularly warm welcome to our new parents and pupils. Starting a new school is always a little daunting, but please be assured that we will all do our best to ensure that our new Year 7s have a smooth transition from primary to secondary; they have certainly started exceptionally well and already seem to be able to find their way around school with ease, while some of our new staff are still looking a wee shade lost.

We are also delighted to welcome some 15 new pupils who have joined us from other countries or have just moved into the area. We have been extremely impressed by their confidence in these early days and hope they will enjoy their time at SVC.

The uncertain weather is continuing to pose some challenges for all of us, but so far we have lost no small pupils in large puddles. Only a matter of time ...

New staff

We have been very fortunate in being able to appoint staff of very high calibre to replace our out-going colleagues. Those who have joined us this September are:

Year Managers: Miss Levison, Year 7; Mrs Maltby, Year 8;
Maths: Miss Gibbs, Mrs Hogg and Mr Tanner;
Head of Science: Miss Froment;
Citizenship and RE: Miss Edwards;
English: Mr Stewart;
Modern Foreign Languages: Miss Bell, Miss Perkins and Mr Goossens.

Not surprisingly, they have all been extremely complimentary about our pupils and how polite, friendly and welcoming they have been. Our new colleagues have my very best wishes for their success at SVC.

GCSE results

Our staff are in remarkably good form, having enjoyed

their annual convalescent spell and returned to school to hear of the success of last year's Year 11 in their GCSE examinations.

Once more, our young people broke all previous records. As you may be aware, the measure by which schools' success is judged is the proportion of pupils who achieve 5 or more GCSE passes at A* - C. We were delighted for our pupils that 78% of them achieved this mile-stone, the majority with far more than 5 passes. Beyond that, 30% of the passes were at A* or A grades and 55% of them at A*, A or B.

Some 17 of our pupils achieved 11 or more passes at A* / A and some of the individual subject results were stunning. Overall, however, the most important factor for all of us is that our young people can go on to pursue their chosen post-16 pathways.

SATs results

We were all very frustrated not to be able to end the year positively for our Year 9 pupils who had worked hard to do their best in the SATs in English, Maths and Science and ultimately achieved very good results. It is some small consolation that the company whose disorganisation led to such chaos has had its contract terminated for next year, but that the hard work of pupils and their teachers nationwide culminated in such shocking ineptitude on the

part of the marking company is unforgivable.

However, Year 9 pupils did very well indeed. The percentage of the pupils who took the tests and gained a Level 5 or above in English was 92%, in Maths 86% and in Science 84%.

Behind these statistics lie some very impressive performances. For example, 42 pupils achieved Level 8 in Maths; 50 achieved Level 7 and a total of 142 pupils gained Level 6 or above.

In English and Science also, the achievements at the upper levels were impressive: in each subject, 60% of pupils achieved Level 6 or above.

I am, as always, deeply indebted to my colleagues who give so much to their pupils in and out of lessons, supporting them to achieve their potential. I would also like to pay tribute to our parents for all *you* do to support the work of the school; it is a fact universally acknowledged – by teachers certainly! – that when home and school work together in partnership, the outcomes for young people are impressive.

A Village College for Trumpington

As our established parents know, we have joined the competition to promote the new school in Trumpington. I am very grateful to those parents who wrote in support of our bid. You can see the finished product on our website

<http://sawstonvc.org/news/>, and click on to "A Village college for Trumpington". We believe strongly that founding a 21st Century village college in Trumpington would continue the legacy of our own founder, Henry Morris, whose vision of a school indivisible from its community has allowed young and old to be educated together and young people to develop a sense of their place in the community; it would also bring significant benefits to our own pupils and staff in terms of expanded opportunities. Fundamentally, however, it would allow us to play a key rôle in the settling of the incoming community, an aspiration entirely in sympathy with Henry Morris's principles.

We will be presenting our bid through our emerging Trust, the Henry Morris Community Trust, to the Trumpington Community on 16 September alongside the other promoters, the CAM Educational Trust (The Netherhall School) and the Cambridge Education Foundation (The Parkside Federation). If you are interested in hearing our and others' proposals, you can come to Cambridge Professional Development Centre (CPDC) in Trumpington either to meet the promoters informally from 3 – 4.00pm or to hear the formal presentations from 6 – 9.00pm. There will be the opportunity to ask questions of all promoters at that time. Thank you, once again, for your support of this significant project.

Science College

From this month, Sawston Village College is officially a specialist Science College. We chose to apply to be designated as a Science College, believing that that specialism fits well Cambridge's profile and with our location 'at the epicentre of biotechnology'.

The change of specialism has come at an excellent time, matching as it does the building of our new Science Wing. When we returned from the holiday, the roof of the new building was clearly in evidence above the hoardings surrounding the site. We have tried to mirror the original architecture of Fountain Court in the creation of the new building and are confident that our architects have done an excellent job of reflecting our wishes.

The first phase of the building work will be completed by February, allowing the first laboratories to be in use from that time. We then move on to the second phase which will run concurrently with the refurbishment of the Edinburgh Wing, in which Maths and ICT will eventually be housed.

Parents' lunch

School lunches are once more in the news – today's directive from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) that we should be serving meals to our young people on china plates has left us feeling rather inadequate. Our current plates have a distinct advantage in that

when they are dropped they bounce. Still, we are giving serious consideration to starched linen napkins and tablecloths ...

However, I would conjecture that you might share our view that ensuring that high-quality food is served is rather more important. To assure you of that – more importantly to have the chance to meet you informally – we should like to invite those parents who are able to come during the day to join us for lunch in the Dining Hall on Wednesday 24 September at 12 noon. Following lunch, we will have coffee with representatives of the School Forum, our new pupil leadership group. You will have the chance to chat with them and find out their views on school – and on school food.

Should you wish to join us, please contact the school office on 712777 or e-mail to nperry@sawstonvc.org no later than Friday 19 September.

Congratulations

Alice Woodward, Year 9, and **Emily Morris**, Year 8, represented Cambridgeshire U13 girls vs Suffolk U13 girls at a match played in Ipswich. They were fortunate enough to help the team to an 8 wicket victory on what was a very chilly day.

Alice was also a member of the first County girls' team to play at Fenner's at the beginning of the school holidays.

The District Cricket Finals took place at the end of last term. All three of SVC's teams qualified for the finals day at Fenner's Cricket Ground.

Year 7 boys, Year 8 boys and Year 7 and 8 girls all won their qualifying competitions to reach the finals.

Both the Year 7 boys and Year 8 boys became District Champions by beating Impington in their respective final play-offs.

The girls' team played well and ended the day in 3rd position out of 6 teams. Girl of the match was Emily Coote, not surprising, as Emily has now also been selected to play at County level.

Ben Kelk, Year 11, participated in the UK School Games, a multi-sport event for the UK's elite young athletes of school age. The games took place in Bath and Bristol between 28 to 31 August.

Athletes competed in regional teams from all over the UK. Ben's season's best time qualified him for the East of England team in the 100m Hurdles as the fastest hurdler. He qualified for the final by finishing 3rd in his heat in 13.88 seconds.

In a very close final he produced a personal best of 13.72sec to finish 6th. London 2012 perhaps?

Georgina Schwiening who completed 8 triathlons before the start of the holidays and now tops the Eastern Region League table with maximum points.

George's performance qualified her to represent the East of England at the annual National competition (Inter-regional competition) which was held at Aldershot on the 30th August. George put in a good performance and is now ranked 10th in Great Britain in her age-group. She came out of the swim in 13th place but then really excelled in the cycling event. Her bike time was the 5th fastest.

It is a real credit to George that she achieved to the level she did, particularly as she was in trainers, chasing girls who were on carbon-fibre bikes equipped with tri-bars wearing velodrome style helmets and cleated shoes; all in all, a very creditable performance for her first season in triathlon.

Diana Paulding

We were delighted to hear from the 'Young Writers' organisation that a poem written by Diana had been one of five chosen from 37,000 poems for publication in 'Away with Words'. This was a wonderful achievement. If you would like to read her poem, please visit our website <http://sawstonvc.org/news/>; you will find it linked to this news item

Year 8 Maths Team

A retrospective success is the excellent performance of a group of 4 yr 8 pupils who took part in the Cambridgeshire Team Maths Challenge at Over Community Centre last term. The team,

Daniel Xie, Nicola Ede, Aidan Shields and Catriona Smith, finished third, one point behind Bottisham and Comberton Village Colleges. Comberton won on a tie-break question.

The competition was a mix of team rounds, Maths puzzles and individual questions. Over 20 schools fielded a team. As usual our pupils were a credit to our school. Many congratulations to Daniel, Nicola, Aidan and Catriona on their achievement.

Cinema coming back to Sawston

Our established parents will know that our Arts Manager has been working hard to bring cinema back to the Youth Centre for the school and for the local community. We are all very excited about the possibilities.

We are exceptionally grateful to our funders: South Cambridgeshire District Council, the UK Film Council and the Community Safety Partnership and to the Cambridge Film Trust for their expertise and advice. Building work for a new projection room was completed earlier in the year and cinema equipment was installed during the summer holiday. You might well have seen Luke Heavens and Johnny Young interviewed about the project on BBC's Look East – budding media stars without question.

Cinema operations will be managed by our pupils, who will be undergoing training in the skills required to run a

cinema for the community thanks to a grant from Awards for All. Training will be delivered by the Cambridge Film Trust, with some sessions scheduled to take place at the Arts Picturehouse in Cambridge.

Running parallel to this project is another exciting venture. We recently received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund – Young Roots – for a project to trace the history of cinema in Sawston. As part of this project, young people from the school will be undergoing oral history training in order to interview older members of the community about their memories of the cinema. Some interviews will be recorded on film – to be screened in the newly established cinema - and some will be posted on the dedicated archive website which is being set up as part of this project: www.sawstoncinema.org.uk/archive.

Theatrical opportunities

Rough Magicke, a Theatre Company of drama students in their early twenties, will be performing their production of 'Songs for A New World' in the Henry Morris Hall at 3:30 pm on Wed Sept 17. This production is aimed at GCSE pupils or those Year 9 pupils interested in taking Drama next year. Entrance is free.

The Theatre Centre, a professional company from London, is coming to the College on Sept 24 to perform 'Knock Against My Heart' at

3:30 pm in the Henry Morris Hall.

From **the company that performed 'Romeo in the City'** (performed at SVC last year), comes 'Knock Against My Heart', a new play inspired by The Tempest, written by Oladipo Agboluaje, set in the favelas of Rio. Again, this play is aimed at GCSE Drama pupils and others in the school interested in Theatre. Admission will be £3.

Mr Higgins also has tickets for 'War Horse' at the National Theatre on Tuesday 2 December. This is an after-school trip and is aimed at Years 9, 10 and 11. It will cost just over £20.

For more details, please check the College website following the links to forthcoming events.

ParentMail

If you would like to be informed of school news by e-mail and would welcome the opportunity to avoid having to delve regularly to the bottom of school bags to find it out, a perilous activity at the best of times, then, please, log on to our website at www.sawstonvc.org and follow the link to 'News and events'. The procedure for registering with ParentMail is outlined there.

Parental questionnaire

As our established parents will already know, we conduct a randomised anonymous questionnaire, analysed by an

external company, to gauge parental perception of the school's work. We were once again delighted by the very positive feedback we received. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the following aspects of the school's work: high-quality educational provision; community spirit; happiness of child; school discipline and control of bullying.

However, parents were – understandably – less happy with last year's parents' evenings; experienced parents had brought sleeping bags with them to cope with the queues. We had tried to streamline our system by introducing computerised booking. Despite the best efforts of our office staff, the system left some of our parents with few appointments and some of our staff with gaps that, in other circumstances, they could have filled with more appointments.

This year, we are extending the time-frame for parents' evenings to 4.00 – 7.30 pm, rather than 6.30 pm, as in previous years. We hope this will ensure that parents will find it easier to make appointments to suit their schedules and be able to speak to all of the teachers they wish to see.

Please be assured that if you have any complaint or concern about any aspect of your child's school life, we would want to address it immediately rather than wait until a formal opportunity presents itself. Your child's form tutor, Year Manager, Head of Year or any

member of the Senior Leadership Team would be happy to help. If your enquiry or concern relates to a subject issue, the class teacher or Subject Leader will, equally, respond positively to any approach.

Buses

The start of term was made very difficult, if not impossible, for some of our families because of confusion linked to some of our bus routes.

For many of our pupils, bus passes had failed to arrive in time for the start of term. For others, it was the buses that failed to arrive.

We had managed to agree extra bus capacity for some villages and some routes during the summer holiday; unfortunately, the bus company concerned failed to tell its drivers, who declared themselves mystified by the mention of new bus routes 597A and B.

We hope the situation is beginning to settle down – Mr Russell may shortly have time to do something other than telephone bus companies, the Local Authority and anxious parents.

In the interim, please accept our apologies for such a stressful start for some of our pupils – particularly our Year 7s; while it was no fault on our part, we know how essential it is that parents can take for granted their children's safe transport to school.

And for next year? We are seriously considering buying our own bus to service those villages that have in the past been disadvantaged. Yes, really!

Community Education

As the winter nights draw in – did they ever leave? – I hope your thoughts will be turning to ways in which you can usefully occupy your time. We can help with that!

Please contact the Community Education Office on 01223 712424 for further details.

June Cannie
Principal