

the avenue

summer 2013

From the Head

The end of a school year is always a time to look back and this year we have particular reason to do so as we thank Andrew Holmes for all that he has achieved as Head of Friends' Junior School. The fact that the Junior School is such a happy, vibrant community is due in no small part to Andrew's leadership, and parents, pupils, (current and past) governors and colleagues have found various intriguing ways this term to show how much Andrew will be missed. Part of Andrew's job has been to steer through the move into our splendid new buildings which, amazingly enough, are already about to celebrate their first birthday. I know that Andrew feels he can hand on to our new Head, Ruth Darvill, in the knowledge of a job well done, and rightly so.



Phil Richardson has even further to look back as he begins his retirement from Friends' as he has spent over half of his life at the school. While this is not unusual for some of our younger pupils, for a man of more mature years (Phil joined the staff in 1978) it shows a life of considerable dedication to the school. Phil is an inspirational art teacher and many generations of artists have benefitted from his skill, knowledge, patience and kindness. Although Phil has only taught a few periods in recent years, nonetheless, we will miss seeing him.

The summer term is often remembered for sunny days and sporting achievements. At least we have managed the achievements, if not the sun. Congratulations to Hannah Irwin on smashing the 30 year old 1500m record on the track, to Lucy Robinson on her county hockey selection and to William Palmer, who joins the Great Britain Para swimming team on its tour of the USA this summer. Well done to all our pupils who have represented the school so well this year.

Well done too, to Nathan Gibbs, Grace King, Issy Riley and Lani Hunter who qualified for the National Inter Schools' Show Jumping finals in October.

Away from the sports field pupils across the school have achieved fantastic results in their LAMDA speech and drama exams, with two passes, 12 'merits' and a staggering 27 passes with 'distinction'. Our musicians have also impressed this year with over half of all grades being passed with 'merit' or 'distinction'. Particular congratulations to Jessie Harris for passing Grade 8 flute with merit and to Mike Hibbert on passing his Grade 8 singing, also with merit.

And so we come to the end of another year. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of The Avenue, which captures just a flavour of how busy and enjoyable it has been.

Graham Wigley

Mr. Holmes's life story - as told by Edmund Heaney and Sophie Griffiths

Andrew Holmes was born on the 9th of November 1953 in Chelmsford. His childhood consisted of living on train station platforms as his father was a stationmaster. His greatest childhood fear was the 11 plus exam!

Talk about being active, in his spare time Mr Holmes either played football or cricket, maybe that is why he is so brilliant at taking cricket and football club! He went to three different primary schools, and loved taking part in games and sports but his favourite subject

was Geography, mainly because he got to go on lots of field trips! He got caned twice while at school, but he insists he is, of course, innocent! He enjoyed school and in Year 8 he was sent to boarding school, but THEY DIDN'T PLAY FOOTBALL!!!!

His first job was teaching at Kent College. There was a time when Mr Holmes lived in England and worked in Wales! How does that work? He has been a teacher for thirty-seven years and sadly is retiring this term. One of the reasons he became a teacher was to work with children (and because he heard the holidays were long!) He finds some parts of his job challenging and some parts not. It's a very big mix. When he isn't working he likes to go outside and enjoy nice long walks with his family. When he retires he hopes to spend more time with his wife and looking after his garden and the allotment he has recently bought. He is also hoping to get a new motorbike!

If you were going to run a school his advice would be... do lots of assemblies! His favourite part of his job is working with children and seeing them learn. Looking back he said there were some things he would change but overall he's had a good run.

We wish Andrew Holmes a fond farewell and a long and happy retirement.



Junior School Sports Day

The Junior School held their annual Sports Day towards the end of this term with athletic activities for children from Nursery through to Year 6. Early Years and Infants enjoyed a morning full of exciting events such as parachute games, an egg and spoon race and hurdle races to name a few, while the Juniors took to track and field events in the afternoon. All pupils gave their best effort to gain house points throughout the afternoon. Congratulations to Fry who were the winners of the house competition with 648 points. Cadbury finished in second place with 590 points with Penn not far behind on 575 points.

Thanks to parents for coming along to support what is always an enjoyable day, and to the PTA for providing refreshments.



Senior School Sports Day

Sports Day this year saw pupils running a selection of distances and as ever, the event closed with the most exciting event – the team relays. There was a great atmosphere of inter-house rivalry, with all our athletes doing their very best for their house points, cheered on by staff and families. There were some fine individual performances, but notably Hannah Irwin, Year 10 achieved some outstanding results. She broke the 30 year old 1500m record by 5 seconds, as well as the 800m record from 1975 with a time of 2:27:06. She also shattered the longstanding 100m record with a time of 12:94. This is an outstanding achievement by any athlete and she should be commended on her success. Byron Dean ran extremely well in the boys' U15, 1500m race to break one of our 'new' records.

Tuke was the winning house with 1668 points, followed by Lister with 1352 points, and in third place was Mennell with 1242 points.

Hannah Irwin continued her on track form winning the North West Essex 1500m trial and went on to represent them in the Essex championships at Chelmsford. Hannah was running in an age group which includes girls a year older than herself and did extremely well to finish 6th in the final. Hannah has been awarded Full School Colours for her achievements this year. Well done.



An Interview with Phil Richardson

When did you start teaching at Friends'?

I started in 1978 after seven years of teaching. I was previously at a school in Surrey where I was Head of Art and Master of Shooting!

How has your job changed over the years?

I have seen Friends' move from a predominantly boarding school, with activities and things going on all the time, to a largely day school. Boarding staff were teachers, and all staff were very involved in boarding, often staying at school until 9pm. The school changed a lot with the loss of Saturday morning school.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time here?

The first day my daughter came into my class – and I really enjoyed teaching her! I loved it.

What roles have you taken on while at Friends'?

I initiated Good Morning and I was a founding member of the Marketing Committee. We were very proud of our innovative prospectus. The logo I created is still in use today.

What is your favourite colour?

Yellowy Green – Yellow because it's friendly and Green because it's rural. Red is far too sexy!

Samuel Palmer is one of your favourite artists, what is it about his work that connects with you?

I think his work has the ability to combine the objective world with a stunning imagination.

You often talk about yourself as a painter but you have had huge success with ceramics. Why do you think this is?

I've designed for Moorcroft, and it was probably a case of being in the right place at the right time. They have used about six designs of mine over the years.

What is the most successful approach you have found to education?

In terms of art education, I don't think you can teach imagination and creativity, but you can encourage it and lay the path for its development. The skill of drawing can be taught and is central to be able to progress in art. Drawing is taught best through life drawing and still life drawing. One of the first things I implemented here as Head of Art was life drawing classes for our Sixth Form artists.

What will you miss the most?

Serena! No doubt about it. But I will also miss teasing my students!

What are you most looking forward to when you retire?

The freedom to do what I want – which is to paint without interruption.

We wish him all the best in his retirement and hope he gets the chance to do just that! He will be greatly missed by both staff and students.



Egyptian Day

Baking Egyptian bread, basket making and sarcophagi were all on the menu during Year 2s' Egyptian day this term. Spending the day in costume added to the excitement of doing all things Egyptian and made for a brilliant and out of the ordinary day.



Junior School Swimming Gala

Junior School swimmers took to our indoor school pool for the annual swimming gala just before the end of Spring Term. With fantastic support from parents and pupils swimming for their house it proved a very exciting competition. Victory came during the last race in which Fry snatched a win with 168 points. Penn were second with 163 points and Cadbury third with 153 points.



Year 6 Girls Emerge Triumphant..Again!

In April our Year 6 runners competed at the Essex Primary School Cross Country Championships at Hylands Park. Running against a field of Essex primary schools the Girls' Team ran a superb race to win gold and take home the trophy.

Buoyant from their success, they, along with other Junior School runners who had previously qualified, competed in the Essex School Games 2013 Cross Country County finals the following day. The venue was the Olympic mountain bike course, complete with a number of hills and a gravel surface, which made for a very challenging run. Friends' again enjoyed success with Lily Godfrey gaining 2nd place in the Year 4 race, Max Godfrey finishing 2nd in the Year 5 race and Indigo Collecott finishing 3rd in the Year 6 race. The Year 6 Girls continued their winning streak by finishing first in the team event to become double county champions.

Pictured: Cross Country County Champions: Grace, Harriet, Indigo, Florence, Flora and Sophie.



Victorian Day

Dressed as Victorian children, pupils in Year 5 visited Stibbington Education Centre to experience life as a school child in 1896. Each child took on a new identity as one of the children who had actually attended the village school. Seeing their history topic come alive, they researched their new family trees, explored the 1896 census and saw the school records. They also walked around Stibbington, to see the houses the families had lived in and also the churchyard containing the graves of some of their relatives. After a proper Victorian lunch of cold tea, bread, cheese, scones and apples the indomitable Miss Flack took our pupils for a lesson in the schoolroom. After a strenuous session of the three Rs, the Victorian toys proved very popular during breaktime! This visit gave the students a great deal of insight into their history topic and a taste of the Victorian era through first hand research.



Grandparents' Afternoon in the Junior School

An ever-popular event, Grandparents' enjoyed a tour of the Junior School, a strawberry tea and a concert involving the Junior School Band and some whole school singing. A lovely afternoon which we look forward to again next year.



Friends and Families Day

Our annual day of celebration once again proved a great success; from the speeches, choir performances and presentation of awards to the family picnics, the vintage tea party and departmental displays and Junior School class activities. It was our special pleasure to welcome Paul Parker, Recording Clerk to the Society of Friends, a role which he himself described as 'nearest to a Quaker Chief Executive'. The highlight for most, especially those who have had a connection with the Junior School through the years, was the Big Song and Dance, which this year was bigger and better than ever. Involving those Seniors who had gone through the Junior School, the enormous circle dance formed a tribute to Andrew Holmes on what was his last Friends and Families Day as Head of the Junior School.

Global Dance Show

Hosted by David Vant, Guy Ellis and Byron Dean, our annual dance production was another resounding success. Year 7 and 8 drama groups, the dance troupe and solo

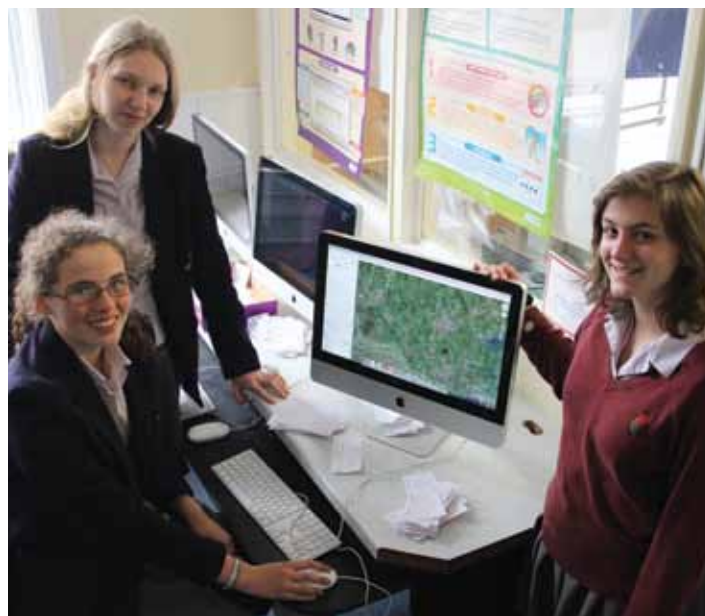


acts performed a host of international dances to a packed audience. Choreographed by Shelley Dowsett, the dancing was of a very high quality and made for a wonderful show.



Daisy Pulls It Off

Transformed into its new guise of a posh 1920's boarding school for young ladies, the Drama Studio provided the venue for this year's big production. Carefully produced to make optimum use of the more intimate space, there were some extremely memorable performances over the four evening shows. Directed by Head of Drama, Richard Smith, 'Daisy' appealed to all ages and it was wonderful to see many school families and friends support the show. The cast, who had been rehearsing since October last year, ranged from students in Year 7 through to Sixth Form. It was wonderful to see students who are taking drama at exam level act alongside those who have never been on stage before. Richard said, "It was a brilliant experience for all those involved, to entertain an audience over four nights and to see their acting skills develop during the whole process".



Eco-Schools Action Group

Our Eco -Schools Action Group have had another busy term. The textile recycling project was very well supported by both pupils and parents with 124 large bags of old clothes, shoes and textiles being collected, weighing in at 512kg. As well as learning about the importance of recycling, the project earned the school over £200 which was put towards new equipment for the Science Department.



It was also encouraging to see teachers, pupils and parents across the school take up the challenge of this term's Green Transport Day. Results were very pleasing with many choosing to travel by bus, car share, cycle, train and walk. Compared to a normal day, the Senior School recorded a carbon saving of 464 kg which represents a 54% reduction in the amount of CO2 generated. Many thanks to the Eco-schools Action Group for their enthusiasm and dedication to the cause.

ESOL Trip to Paris

The annual ESOL trip over the May Bank Holiday involved a group of 22 of our overseas students and three staff travelling on the Eurostar to see the sights of Paris in glorious spring sunshine. The group enjoyed a very full and exhausting itinerary; including the Palace of Versailles, the wonderful collection of impressionist art at the Musée d'Orsay, a trip on the bateabus to Notre Dame and the Hôtel de Ville, the Louvre and the Tuileries Gardens. A true high-point of the trip was the ascent of the Eiffel Tower. The trip encouraged an excellent group spirit, new friendships and an enthusiasm for such a beautiful city.



Sorrento Trip

Year 8 and 9 pupils travelled to Sorrento in May for a combined Geography and History trip. Outings to Pompeii and Herculaneum, walking up Vesuvius to admire the crater, and the stunning views over the Bay of Naples all made for a thrilling and exciting Italian adventure.

Sorrento itself, provided our students with an opportunity to soak up some Italian culture, with lots of local food tasting including traditional ice creams, Italian pizza, local salami, mozzarella, olive oil and fruits. A wonderful time was had by all.



A Fond Farewell to Barbara Askew

This term we are saying farewell to one of our long-serving members of staff. Barbara Askew has run Girls' and Sixth Form Boarding for the last nine years and has worked tirelessly to ensure the comfort and happiness of the boarders in her care. Boarding students organised a leaving dinner in her honour and many paid tribute to her during the meal and concert.

We wish Barbara well, and success as she moves on to her next adventure.



Students Experience Living for Sport

Former Paralympian and Paralympic medallist, Fran Williamson, who competed in Athens and Beijing, visited Friends' this term as part of the Sky Sports 'Living for Sport' campaign. As an athlete mentor for the project, she spent the day with a group of Year 8 and 9 students focusing on life skills, aspirations and building self-esteem through a variety of activities and workshops.

She shared her own story of achievement which she revealed, came only after a tough beginning. She attributed her determination and self-belief for her success as a swimmer, which came at 16 years old, after only starting the sport at the age of 13.

It was a privilege to have an inspirational athlete such as Fran spend time with our students and encourage them to realise their dreams and work hard to achieve them.

Duke Of Edinburgh Expedition

This term 27 pupils practised for their Bronze expedition in the Essex countryside. In cloudy but dry weather the pupils endured six hours of trekking, accompanied by various members of staff. After a minor delay all the pupils found their way successfully to the campsite. Tents were erected, dinner was cooked and a few games of cricket and football were played before everyone found their way to bed. Six o'clock in the morning came very quickly, but with good humour, everyone prepared for the day ahead. Their training was completed after another six hours of walking, an excellent and encouraging effort for the real thing next year.



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