

TOWERS NEWS

CHRISTMAS 2005



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Goodbye 2004

As usual the end of the year saw virtually everyone involved in the school production of 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Both performances were sell-outs and it is hard to describe the atmosphere created in the Ghost Scene. Suffice it to say that Leah Lumsdaine's screams were blood curdling. Emily Bell was a very strong Tevye and there were many other notable characters some of whom have now gone on to their Sixth Forms. It is good to hear that Vanessa McAuley has a major part in 'Salad Days' at St Teresa's, Effingham and both Alanya Noquet and Francesca Zoutewelle have parts in the next Hurstpierpoint production. 'Fiddler on the Roof' was a particular triumph because so many of the parts were males played convincingly by females and credit must go to Mrs Sparkes for her amazing energy and creativity. The weekend continued on a high when, on Sunday, the Juniors performed 'The Christmas Children' this was written by Mrs Haines and it was obvious that the girls were enjoying themselves in this modern day nativity. All other end of Christmas Term activities were successful with the Carol Singers at Holmbush raising £350 for local homeless people and Retiring collections taken at the two school carol services added another £150 to this amount.



The ghost scene - 'Fiddler on The Roof'



The Tevye and the 'boys'



'The Christmas Children'



Brazil 2005



In January 2005, Sister Mary Andrew had the joy of visiting the Sisters in Brazil and afterwards she wrote: We have 185 Sisters working there, in twenty communities, and I was able to meet about 100 of them. After a few days in the Regional House in Salvador, we traveled north for about 11½ hours and visited some of the communities. We saw the work of our Sisters in schools, and with the poor, especially with those who were once "Street Children". In various factories they are taught to make jewellery, brooms, bread, cakes, ice-cream, disinfectant; they are taught how to cook, and how to embroider. All this eventually helps them to earn a living. With Sister Sheila, I visited the slums of Bariri where our Sisters have recently purchased a tiny building. Here, the women of the slums will learn how to cook and how to do manicures, and thus be able to lift themselves out of the dreadful poverty in which they live. They count on the little help which we send them regularly, and for which they are so grateful.

Sister Mary Andrew with some of the children

Tsunami Auction

Obviously Towers girls were just as deeply moved as the rest of the world when they heard of the dreadful Asian disaster and even before school had returned in January members of Year 11 had decided what they would like to do to help.

They felt that they needed to raise money but they were sure that places like Sri Lanka would need help for years to come and so Year 11 led by Rhiannon Stuart-Jones, Vanessa McAuley, Alanya Noquet and Francesca Zoutewelle took a vote. Should they do a one off fund-raise with the potential of a commercial company doubling whatever they raised or should they fund raise with a view to twinning with a badly damaged school then continue to raise money to help that school in the future? The vote was in favour of the twinning idea as they felt that their interest would be maintained and that they would be able to see what good their money was doing. CAFOD have agreed to find a suitable school so that the plan can be put into action.

So towards the end of January an Auction of Promises was held in the Hall. The girls had charmed local traders and twisted the arms of various parents and friends so that the vast number of promises included: A night in a Honeymoon Suite, a free dental check up, the chance to swap places with the Head of The Towers for the day, an opportunity to have lunch with Bishop Kieran, a helicopter flight and lots lots more. The evening also included a slide show of the areas damaged by the tsunami, a raffle, a lockery (buy a key and open the corresponding locker to discover what you have won) and a lucky sock dip. (Clean odd sock with a gift inside) They hoped that this start on the road to twinning with a school may lead, in the future, to letters and possible exchange visits. When Sunday afternoon arrived a mixture of Year 10 and 11 transformed the Hall with decorated tables and a banner. The PTA put tickets on the tombola prizes and the girls filled the lockers with items for the 'lockery'. At 7pm Bishop Kieran arrived and after Mark Woods, from CAFOD, had given a short address the Bishop cautioned us all about bidding for "three loads of ironing" as he thought that there was a possibility that the bidder could end up with three loads of washing to do! The atmosphere in the Hall was like a party and the auctioneer, Mr Hope, made the whole evening such amazing fun. Rhiannon and her Father had put a great deal of work into making the evening a success and were delighted that the final total came to £8000. The girls were very grateful to all who gave gifts and made bids. Shortly after the event Rhiannon, Alanya and Fran were all invited by Bishop Kieran to have a guided tour of the CAFOD headquarters in London and very recently we have heard that Rhiannon will have the opportunity to go out to Sri Lanka to see what our fundraising has helped to achieve. As often happens at The Towers that was not quite the end of the fundraising and just before half term Mrs Sawyer and a band of helpers made and sold pancakes at a cost of 25p for one. As the total raised was over £40 this represents quite a number of pancakes consumed! The photograph shows Sophie Picton and Hannah Page with one of the delicious pancakes.



Hannah & Sophie making pancakes



The bidders

Ski Trip

The new term began well with all the skiers arriving back with all bones intact apart from Miss Hall who suffered a broken collar bone. Everyone had an excellent time and all places were quickly taken for the January 2006 trip.



Three skiers

Debate

Debates can be heated but here at The Towers the girls are so poised and clam that they take even the most awkward questions in their stride. The debating team comprising of Emma Anderson, Natalie Muldoon and Emily Bell with their claim 'The Consumer is being conned' was such good team that they won the local heat of the Rotary Club competition, 'Youthspeaks'. They beat teams from other local schools including Lancing College and Shoreham College.

Choral speakers take Chichester by storm

Late in January the Choral Speaking Choir were invited to read the first two lessons at Chichester Cathedral on Education Sunday. The congregation were most impressed and one lady declared that she had been attending services at the Cathedral for the past 22 years and she had never before heard anything quite so amazing. The main question asked was 'When can you return?'. It is important to recognise the work that Mrs Stredwick puts in with this group so that their performances always look effortless and are very polished.

Thank you

In February Colin Austen, our much loved and well-respected Caretaker and Groundsman, retired. He and his wife Jill, who retired a couple of years ago, had given 50 years of loyal service between them. At an informal gathering Sister Patrick presented Colin with a Waterford Crystal Clock and a token for a course of golf lessons and Sister Mary Andrew presented Jill with some flowers. Colin, whilst a difficult act to replace, was succeeded by Steve Biswell who has settled down well and is proving to be as obliging and charming as Colin.



Farewell to Colin

Ahead of the Crowd

In late February Lydia Grows took part in the ISA London South East regional heat of the Cross Country Championship, held at Shoreham College, and won. Lydia went through to a very muddy final at Princethorpe College in Rugby and became the ISA national cross-country champion. This explains why Lydia always comes first in the Arundel and Brighton 'Youthgather' sponsored walk – she runs!



Lydia shows off her medal

Active Boarders

Whilst there are a variety of activities organised for the boarders at the weekends one of their favourites is to walk around the shops, where they never seem to tire and have boundless energy. At the start of the Autumn term the weather was so glorious that we decided to plan a few walks in the wonderful countryside around The Towers. We are fortunate to be set in the foothills of the South Downs and ought to make the most of this. Apart from the cries of 'my feet hurt', 'it's too hot', when will we get there?', they actually enjoyed the splendid views from the top of the Bostal, the tour of Lancing College Farm, the opportunity to walk beside the river and pick / eat blackberries. Whilst they played games in the evening Kate and Lil, our two gap assistants, used any blackberries that were left to make a blackberry and apple crumble. Yum!

Boarders having fun



Keith Tugwell

A tribute to Keith

Sadly, towards the end of the Spring Term, Keith Tugwell, our maintenance man and minibus driver of many years fell ill and died at the start of the Easter holiday. For some years Keith had been suffering from respiratory problems but his death was sudden and unexpected. Keith was, quite simply, a gentleman, who served The Towers well and who always approached any job with a cheerful good humour. He is sadly missed.

Australian Gappies

Well this year has been one full of new experiences, some good, some bad and some that were completely unexpected. From our first week here at The Towers we were trying out new things, like setting off the fire alarm while trying to cook toast which resulted in evacuating all the boarders outside into the dark. This would have to be one of the bad experiences, we still haven't quite got over the embarrassment, but our toaster really is hard to work. Honestly!

Another new experience, caused by a slight misunderstanding, was spending the night locked out of the school. Whilst it was interesting seeing the English countryside at night and getting close to a hedgehog was exciting (we only found out afterwards that they apparently have lots of fleas, so no more picking them up), it was not an experience we wished to repeat. However, due to our forgetfulness our wish was not granted and although this time Lil managed climb a fence and make enough noise to awaken Sr. Patrick it was still quite a nasty experience.

It was a total surprise to us to learn that one The Towers mothers was also an old girl of our high school in Sydney, this resulted in quite a few dinners of reminiscing about Oz and the many people we know in common. This was definitely a pick-me-up when we were feeling homesick. Thanks jool!

Between us this year we've visited fourteen countries, sampled a small piece of the cultures and brought half of it home with us!

As a result we're really not looking forward to the airline weight restrictions.

But, the best experience of this year has to have been getting to know our girls (which they are now... OUR girls, we sometimes feel like mothers with 40 kids). It has been such a wonderful experience and we're going to miss them so much and hope they'll pop 'down under' for a visit.



Katie and Lil braiding Alicia's hair

Junior IT suite and the PTA

In April the Juniors were delighted to be able to announce the opening of their own IT suite. This facility with an interactive whiteboard and multimedia projector means that the Juniors no longer have to use the Senior School suite. They are delighted and they now much prefer to use their own room with its flat screen monitors than come across to the Senior School.

At this point it is important to mention the work of the PTA. The Computer Suite is just one way in which the school has benefited from the hard work of our parents. On behalf of the pupils I would like to thank them for all of their efforts this year. Malcolm Bennett retired as Treasurer after many years of hard work and has been replaced by Elizabeth Peirce, mother of Sarah in Year 8. In addition a few other 'old hands' retired from the committee although they have promised their help at future events. We would like to thank Sharron and Kevin Baker and Pat Carroll. This year the PTA AGM provided the Choir with an opportunity to perform their items prior to appearing at the Actors' Church in Covent Garden. The Christmas Bazaar was its usual amazing success and reflects a great deal of hard work prior to the event itself. So a huge thank you to all who give their time to raise funds for the school and support us in so many ways.



The new Junior IT suite

Election Fever at the Towers

It is often said that young people are not interested in politics and for that reason, although they may get married at 16, they may not vote until they are 18. Here at The Towers the girls organised their own Mock Election. They selected candidates for the three main parties, read the manifestos, prepared posters and leaflets and the three 'candidates' were given an opportunity to speak to the school about their policies. The candidates: Kristina Barnett (Labour), Rosie St John (Conservative) and Natalie Muldoon (Liberal Democrat) were questioned by the school about their policies and plans. As Kristina was only Year 9 she should be congratulated on her courage to defend her ideas in front of all the other pupils and staff.

We were unsure whether the Towers vote would reflect that of the Nation. It did not as here Liberal Democrats were the winners



The three candidates

School Leaders

As the Year 11 girls begin to prepare to take their GCSE examinations they need to shed their other responsibilities in order to give them time to devote to revision. In 2005, because the GCSE examinations began so early we decided to hand over to the new prefects as soon as possible. The results of the voting for the various School Offices were Head Girl: Lydia Miller, Deputy Head Girl: Emily Bell and Joint Heads of Boarding: Lydia Grows and Tara Backry. Already they have started well and are full of excellent ideas to move the school forward as well as continue with our excellent fundraising tradition.



Emily Bell, Lydia Grows, Lydia Miller and Tara Backry

Towers Toddlers are Tops and Value-added is High

Earlier in the year we were able to celebrate a very positive Ofsted Report of our Foundation Stage provision.

The inspection which looks at the provision for our age 4 children gave a pleasing judgement that the teaching in the areas of language and literacy was very good and that mathematical skills were promoted very effectively through a good range of resources and activities. This explains why the progress of the children is good.

The report also stated that children are able to make good relationships with adults and with each other. Parents were made to feel very welcome at the school and they work well in partnership with the staff to promote the children's learning.

The building and the grounds are an idyllic setting for young children and it is wonderful that there is a continuity between the key stages from 4 - 16. The school's value-added figure from Key Stage 2 to GCSE is an astonishing 104. This indicates that the girls continue to build on the excellent work started in the Junior School.

Past Pupils and staff

This annual event, the last Sunday in June, is always an opportunity to catch up on 'gossip' and simply take pleasure in each other's company. Many like to reminisce and others to discuss what has happened since last they met. The day was blessed with lovely weather and everyone was able to sit outside with a delicious tea after an emotional Service in the chapel. We would be delighted to welcome back more past pupils and staff. All are most welcome. Many will be delighted to hear that Mother Bernard celebrated her 90th birthday in November although Mother Bernard, herself, would have preferred the day to have passed by unnoticed! Although her health is not wonderful she is exceptionally alert and is an avid follower of English cricket.



An Inspirational Prize Giving

Whilst it is lovely to have a famous person come along to Prize Giving to present the prizes what do they really know and feel about The Towers? I have often thought how much more appropriate it would be to persuade a past pupil, who has something interesting and inspirational to say, to be there for our girls as a role model. When Arlene Gaujal-Kempler (nee Burgess) came along to visit the school en route to Glyndebourne I was impressed with her obvious love of the school but also her vitality and her ideas and so she became the first 'victim'. Here is her speech from Open Day.

I heard Imelda Staunton the other day on Desert Island Discs.

Perhaps not all of you know what it is? It's a radio programme on Radio 4 on which people who have accomplished things in all walks of life are interviewed and have to choose 8 pieces of music and an inanimate object to keep them company while they are stranded on a desert island. Sue Lawley, the interviewer thanked Imelda for being her guest to which Imelda replied that at last she knew that having been on the programme she had finally "made it".

My secret ambition for the last twenty years has been to be invited on Desert Island Discs; I haven't as yet achieved anything important enough to get me on it but I haven't given up hope and in the mean time to have been asked to give out the prizes today at The Towers is possibly a step in the right direction to that goal.

When I asked Carole Baker what was expected of me she asked me to be inspirational as an old girl and to make it short. I don't know whether I shall meet the first requirement but have obeyed her for the second much to everyone's relief.

The Towers played an essential part in my life; it was here that I not only learnt to speak French but where I was introduced to France and its culture. The Order of the Blessed Sacrament was part of the French Order - Le Saint Sacrement, and our Reverend Mother at the time was a very formidable French lady. Most, if not all the nuns spoke French fluently and French was taught to a high standard as I understand it still is.

During the last term French students were sent over from the twin schools in Paris to improve their French, I understand that they still come and that we have some here today; alors je salue les jeunes françaises parmi nous, I was a sixth former at the time and might have been head girl or prefect, anyway something bossy and could do nothing to drum any discipline into these French girls; they never stopped talking when they lined up, would not keep silence before refectory and had never heard about netball. They had an assurance about them, I was intrigued by them and wanted to know

more about their lifestyle, their culture, their language. I therefore decided to leave for Paris and take a course at the Sorbonne and have never returned. I have lived all my life in France and have been made welcome there both as a professional woman and as a foreigner.

I have run a listed property company, a financial institution for Deutsche Bank and today I manage an investment fund which will be floated in 2006. I have been decorated by the French Minister of Finance and when I look back I wonder how it all happened but know that it all started here.

Living in the heart of Europe I did consider saying a few words about the recent French NON to the European Constitution, but heeding Carole's recommendation to keep it short I shall leave that subject to those more knowledgeable than I.

Instead, I thought by means of inspiration I would give you, the young generation of girls who will be going forth in life in a few years just one word of advice: An easy word to remember, a difficult word to follow; The verb TO DARE.

Dare to be yourselves

Dare to use the gifts you have all been endowed with to the utmost

Dare to make the effort to make things happen.

I have been told that you all worked together to collect for the Tsunami disaster and that it was a huge success - you made a change, you made something happen

Dare to say no to what is wrong and yes to what is right

Dare to make your own aspirations and ambitions happen

I think we all know what they are, different for each of us, but we get put off course.

We listen to the opinion of others, we get held back by our own fear of the judgement of others or our own fear of failure. No one wants to be like Icarus, to attempt to fly and find themselves crashing into the sea. But I think that to dare to try is more interesting, more rewarding than actually achieving the goal in itself.

Dare to take the risk of failing, something will come out of it. Not necessarily what was expected but something

So, in a nutshell that is my recommendation to you; follow your path

And if you do hear me one day on Desert Island Discs you know I'll have achieved my ambition

And now It's time to give out the prizes

Goodbye and Hello

At the end of the Summer term we said farewell to Joan Ford and Susan Sawyer. Joan taught geography here for 20 years but did much more besides. She was More Housemistress and an avid gym and sports supporter although she may well be remembered by the stomachs of the girls as the person who began the Tuck Shop. The boarders will never forget the Bingo evenings organized by Mrs Ford as the noise levels caused by sheer excitement were simply deafening. In the 12 years that Susan Sawyer was here she also did more than simply teach her subject – Home Economics. She was responsible for the girls producing the most amazing textiles and one of her pupils, Sarah Tester, went on to win a prize for a clever cross-stitch denoting The Towers and its staff. This now has pride of place in the front hall. As each annual play approached Mrs Sawyer was commissioned to put together some super costumes and she put her organizational skills to good use by running the Main School Library. It was appropriate that these two, who were swimming partners, should have decided to retire together.

Another member of the teaching staff who left during the year was Mrs Hilary Morris, who taught History for 9 years and whose enthusiasm for her subject engendered a love of history in all her pupils. We also said 'goodbye' to Sister Sheila whose energy when playing football or volleyball with the boarders is already being missed. Sister returned to Brazil after three years at The Towers and we would like to pay tribute to not only her enthusiasm and vitality but her gentle and caring nature.



Mrs Ford



Mrs Sawyer



We welcome to The Towers Ms Sue Garlick – History, Mr Antony Thurston – Geography (plus IT & RE), Miss Helen Wild – Home Economics & Library, Mrs Sandy Maclean – Mathematics and Swimming and Mrs Nicki Hanks – Year 5 Class Teacher. To The Blessed Sacrament Community we welcome Sister Consolata from Tanzania, Sister Fatima from Brazil and Sister Christine from Ireland.

Towerstania

After her visit to Brazil Sister Mary Andrew showed her photographs and shared her experiences with the rest of the school. One of the staff, Mrs Sharron Baker was so moved by the talk that she and another past parent and member of staff, Mrs Pat Carroll, decided to put together a fundraising activity. A 'Murder Mystery Evening' The Carrolls have been responsible for a number of such events over the past few years. In essence various parts of the school are 'redecorated' in order to set the scene and the clues to help solve the mystery are revealed by the replies given by the actors and actresses (pupils and staff). This time the title was 'Towerstania'. The main front door became the gangplank, the cellar in the listed building was transformed into the ill-fated engine room where the iceberg first struck and the school hall formed the basis of the dining room where it was possible to be seated at the Captain's Table. The evening raised £1400 which will be added to the figure of £1600 raised at the annual coffee morning to give a total of £3000 to be sent to Brazil to help with the various projects mentioned in Sister Mary Andrew's article. Sister Sheila, who has returned to Brazil, has asked us to help with a project to build a church for the people of Aracajon. At the moment, they use a kind of 'lean to'. The project will cost just over £8000 in total and we have been asked for £1900 as other sums have already been pledged. Thus the money raised so far can be taken by Sister Patricia and Sister Christina when they go to Brazil at the beginning of January. In addition Sister Mary Andrew has written a book called 'The Towers – the first 100 Years'- proceeds from the sale will go towards Brazil.

Colourful Charities

The girls have twice been given the opportunity to swap their bright red uniform for other colours. Before half term they dressed in pink to raise money for Cancer Research and then again after half term, on Halloween, they changed to a gothic look, this time to raise money for mucopolysaccharide research. On each occasion they paid a £1 for their change of dress and each charity benefited by £150.



Pretty in Pink



Gothic

Chair of Co-op branches out

The Year 10 & 11 girls at have opened their own Fair Trade Tuck Shop. The shop will stock only products for which the producers have received a fair price and it will be run as a non-profit-making co-operative. The girls are very lucky as Ms Adrienne Lowe, Head of Science, Work Experience and Enterprise initiative is also Chair of the South East Region Co-op and has been able to advise them and help with arranging stock for the shop.



All done with her 'workers'

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