

Dates for your diary

- **11 November**
Diploma Roadshow
- **13 November**
GCSE Maths Module
- **20 November**
Non-uniform day
- **23-27 November** Year
11 Mock Exams
- **28 November**
Choirs at Ely
Cathedral
- **1 – 4 December**
Yr 11 Art Mock Exams
- **7 December**
PSHE Day
- **18 December**
Great St Mary's Carol
Concert
Autumn Term ends
- **6 January**
Beginning of Spring
Term

Dear Parent

I hope you enjoyed the half term break, those of you lucky enough to have one. Our staff have returned from their darkened rooms ready to take on the challenges of the new half term following the many successes of the old one.

Open Evening

We were immensely grateful to our pupils for turning out in vast number to support our annual evening for prospective pupils and their parents. By our reckoning, some 250 of our school population were involved in all aspects of the event – they worked in departments, sold refreshments in the Languages' café, parked cars, welcomed and guided the visitors, played in the orchestra and in the Jazz Band, and, of course, spoke to parents and Year 6. Congratulations must go to Ajay Jones and Lucy Fitzpatrick our Head Boy and Girl, and to Max Holden and Rosanna Larter, who charmed the audience only 4 weeks into their sojourn at SVC.

The consequence of another very successful evening is that it is likely Year 6 will sign up in droves to attend the College next September. Filling up each year group is very healthy for the school's budget; the consequence of that is that it maintains a vibrant school experience for all of our pupils.

The opening of the Science Building

We were delighted finally to open our new Science Building on 6 October when Sir John Sulston joined us to

about the power of science to reach out to the limits of the imagination, the limits of the universe. Our guests were greatly energised by the Samba Band who acted as guides to lead us all to the entrance to the new building. OK, the route wasn't quite as direct as it could have been, Mrs Macleod losing her way somewhere around Library Court, but it was altogether great fun for guests and pupils alike. Teachers gave up the unequal struggle to teach their classes and allowed pupils to watch the spectacle from their classroom windows. Our cheerleaders finished off the celebrations before guests visited the laboratories where Year 10 pupils were engaged in a wide range of practical scientific investigations.

The momentousness of the occasion was supplemented when we were asked if a camera team from BBC Newsnight could join us. They were hoping to interview Sir John for a forthcoming edition of the programme on the last decade of scientific endeavour. Of course we agreed – it all added to the prestige of the occasion. The programme is scheduled to be aired on Wednesday 11 November. We are pretty convinced that the Samba Band will feature somewhere in the programme, no matter its irrelevance to the subject matter; when you see a BBC cameraman rolling on the lawn of Fountain Court to bring some arty perspective to his film, you just know that he won't let it go to waste.

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**Barcodes: Henry Morris Hall:
Monday 16 November 7 – 8.30 pm**

As part of Cambridge Music Festival, our pupils have been participating with pupils from Icknield, Shelford and Stapleford Primary Schools in a ground-breaking musical composition project, named Barcodes. The project has explored DNA and music and how the structure and expression of both can be analysed, copied, varied or altered by external forces. The project is led by Cameron Sinclair, as music leader, and by Sheila Toper and Kathie Neal, the science leaders.

You can hear the outcomes of the project on 16 November when the pupils involved will present their compositions to the audience. If you wish to attend, please book your *free* place by contacting our Arts Development Manager, Lesley Morgan, who brokered this opportunity for our young people, on 01223 712825, at lmorgan@sawstonvc.org or ask for tickets at the College Reception.

Swine flu

We waited with some trepidation for the onslaught of swine flu predicted in the media last half term. A few unlucky families fell victim to it, but the mass numbers simply didn't materialise. Still, that's not to say that it won't come our way in the run-up to Christmas.

There has been a great deal of conflicting advice, not least from the national swine flu helpline that advised one of our mothers to keep her children off school for two weeks. Being a hardy sort who only keeps her children off school if death is imminent, she questioned this advice. When we checked it out with our local practice, their advice – much more sensible and in line with DCSF and LA guidance – was that children should stay off school if they have flu-like symptoms until their symptoms are

gone; this could be as few as 2 days or as many as 7.

Despite the usual run-of-the-mill coughs, sneezes and diseases, our school attendance is currently breaking all records at 95%. We credit this entirely to our parent body who understand the vital importance of attendance to success ... and have no doubt impressed that on their offspring, who, most of the time, undone homework excepted, really enjoy coming to school. Thank you!

SVC out and about

Our pupils have enjoyed two wonderful residential trips in recent weeks: to the Battlefields of France with the History Department and to Paris under the auspices of Art and Languages. I was delighted to receive a letter from the coach driver who accompanied the trip to Paris. He said, 'Having spent the first part of last week in the company of a group of your students under the supervision of three teachers in Paris, I would like to say how impressive they were. The students were polite and cheerful whilst appreciating their teachers' efforts on their behalf. In recent months, I have taken a number of school parties abroad and sadly, the behaviour of both staff and students has fallen rather short of what I would consider appropriate. Please pass my thanks to your colleagues for restoring my faith in the teaching profession.'

My thanks go to all of our staff who make it possible for our young people to continue to travel abroad in these litigious times and to our pupils for making it a pleasure to take them.

An invitation to lunch

I hope you will wish to join me for school lunch at 12.30 pm on **Wednesday 2 December**. Parents who have attended such occasions in the past have enjoyed seeing the

variety of food on offer in our cafeteria and choosing their own, which almost always has included a pudding with custard ... echoes of our own school days, although our cook's custard comes lump-free, which is something of an innovation.

If you wish to join me for lunch and the opportunity to have coffee with the School Senate in the Library afterwards, please contact Miss Gemma Cox on 712818 or at gcox@sawstonvc.org to book your place. On the day itself, please come to Reception and I will meet you there. I look forward to seeing you.

Sawston Cinema

I was delighted to be able to accompany James O'Dell and Jack Sawcer to the Cambourne offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council for a lunch-time screening of 'Projecting the Past', the film made by Sawston Cinema Group. Jack and James were the co-presenters of the film and did a wonderful job of answering the questions of councillors and invited guests about their first venture into film-making. The boys were a very real credit to the school: articulate, knowledgeable, polite and friendly. Lesley Morgan, our Arts Development Manager, Peter Harmer, our film-maker, and I were very proud to be associated with them and with the wonderful film made by our vibrant and creative cinema group.

In the meantime, the cinema goes from strength to strength, pulling in significant audiences for all of its films.

Forthcoming films for the remainder of this term are as follows.

Tuesday 24 November 6.30: The Rabbit-proof Fence
 Saturday 28 November 10.30 am: Monsters vs Aliens
 Saturday 28 November 7.00 pm: Slumdog Millionaire

Tuesday 8 December 6.30 pm: Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince

You can find the full details of the programme by following the link on our website at www.sawstonvc.org

My grateful thanks go to Lesley and to her fast becoming fanatical cinema group, who make it possible for the local community to have access to cinema on their doorstep.

Diplomas

You may well have been watching the press on the progress of this new qualification for 14 – 19-year-olds. We were very pleased that so many Year 9 pupils and their parents joined us in school on 22 October to find out more about the diploma lines that will be available to our pupils from this coming September. We will be offering Hospitality and Sport and Active Leisure to our pupils in our own school. A new base for Hospitality will be built in the spring term and will include a café which will be run by our Hospitality pupils. If our young people wish to study any of the five others on offer next year, they can travel to centres that will be offering them, funded by the school. These are: Public Services; Business, Administration and Finance; Retail Business; Travel and Tourism and Environment and Land-based Studies.

Year 9 pupils who are interested in any of the available diploma lines will be attending a diploma roadshow at an early stage this half term to prepare them to make the best choice of courses for Key Stage 4.

There's no doubt that it's a very exciting time in terms of curriculum expansion. From our perspective the most important issue is our ability to be able to match young people with the courses that will offer them the best chance to make a success of their

lives. The more we can offer, the better our chance of doing that.

The S.O.S (Save Our Sight) Year 9 Charity Event: Tuesday 10 November 2009

As part of their continuing work in Geography on the 'Developing World', pupils in Year 9 will be taking part in a special charity project. Over the last four years our pupils have raised £8,000 to support work carried out by national charities such as WaterAid, CAMFED, Recycle East and Pump Aid, all of whom focus on improving the quality of life of adults and children living in less economically developed countries in Africa.

As our Christmas Charity this year, on Tuesday 10 November, pupils in Year 9 will be given the opportunity to take part in a sponsored cycling challenge in the school gym, to help raise money for a leading UK charity called '**Sightsavers International**', which is an organisation that helps to tackle health problems and poverty in different parts of the world, most particularly in Africa.

For over 50 years Sightsavers International have been working to prevent, cure and support people with blindness, and have helped to restore sight to over 5 million people; they have also treated over 100 million for potentially blinding conditions. The money raised by our pupils will be spent on projects to treat and prevent river blindness and trachoma, an infectious eye disease that is the major cause of blindness in young children living in Ghana.

A representative from the charity will be visiting the school to talk in a special assembly about the important work that Sightsavers does in different parts of Africa and the hopes and aspirations of the young adults and children that we will be supporting. For

further information on Sightsavers and the work that they do, please log on to www.sightsavers.org

Prize-giving 2009

Congratulations to our Year 12 pupils who returned for the last formal occasion at the College on Thursday 24 September. All received their 'graduation' scroll. Those whose achievement or endeavour had been particularly deserving of merit received prizes. The full list of prize-winners is attached to this newsletter.

Dr Rob Wallach was our guest speaker. We felt it was appropriate to have a guest speaker to represent the University of Cambridge in its 800th anniversary year. I think we too often take it for granted that we live in such close proximity to one of the world's greatest centres of learning; we should take every opportunity we can to inspire our young people to aspire to study there. Dr Wallach did just that by engaging his audience intellectually and by projecting warmth, humanity and great good humour.

Sawston Music Fund

A group of parents of former pupils who have benefited from the exemplary work of our Music staff have expressed the wish to start up a music fund to support the sustaining and expansion of musical activity at the College. The fund would be at Mrs Macleod's disposal; decisions on expenditure and deployment of the funds would be entirely hers. She would look to use the money to offer pupils additional musical activity beyond the school curriculum or to purchase instruments that might be beyond the capacity of the Music Department's capitation to afford.

We have agreed to administer the fund on behalf of the parents whose

concept it is. Should you wish to contribute to it, please make any cheque payable to Sawston Arts Appeal, the account through which we will channel the funds directly into the Sawston Music Fund.

A final assurance: as a school we make it a point of principle not to ask parents for money. We are a state-funded comprehensive school and as such believe that parents should not be expected to contribute additionally, unless it is for additional activities. This fund is entirely driven by former parents who wish to register their gratitude to our Music staff in tangible terms.

Sawston's got talent

Year 11 pupils have become adept over the years at finding ways in which to raise money for their ball. This year's cohort came up with a winning formula in Sawston's own version of this very popular talent show. The final was a tour de force with a wide range of performers and performances, among them actors, singers, cheerleaders, dancers and a rather bizarre drum-playing gorilla ... oh, and staff; well, the 'judges' had to have someone to buzz off and had no wish to destroy the self-esteem of the pupil performers.

In terms of my colleagues' performances, I have to say, as a purely objective observer, that while Mr Mastin and Miss Haworth did a very acceptable rendition of a number from High School Musical, it was Mr Stewart's performance of 'I will survive' that brought the audience to frenzy. His dancing was at times positively balletic and judges barely escaped lynching when they buzzed him off – we had all been so looking forward to a no doubt stunning climax only to have our expectations unfulfilled.

The worthy winners on the evening were the Year 9 Drama Queens, who

performed on three occasions through the course of the evening their own pastiche of the show entitled, 'Britain's Got *No* Talent', proving their own premise entirely wrong.

Jessica Parrish, Baixue He and Ailise Smith were the show's organisers and did an outstanding job of making sure it ran with all the precision of Swiss time-pieces. Jess took centre stage with Ajay Jones, their sartorial sparkle matched only by their glittering performances as the show's hosts.

And then, of course, there were the judges: Mr Reynolds, Miss Gelder and our very own Simon Cowell, Mr Doust, who definitely entered into the spirit of the event, leaving contestants' morale shredded and having to be rebuilt by the much more sympathetic Mr Reynolds and Miss Gelder. Mr Doust tried to claim he hadn't meant it really and that he was just in rôle - too late, I hear his victims chorus. Oh well.

Congratulations and thanks are due to Mrs Bucklow who did a huge amount to support Jess, Ailise and Baixue. Thanks to the sterling efforts of all of them, the Year 11 Ball Fund is well on track to ensure a stunning evening for the departing year group next July.

Sawston Youth Drama (SYD) celebrates ...

its fortieth anniversary next year unbelievably. This wonderful organisation has done so much to engage young dramatists and musicians during its long existence. Under Mark Long's outstanding leadership it has flourished in recent years with many new branches growing from the bole. Now we have SYD 7s, SYD Juniors and SYD Seniors.

To celebrate this auspicious anniversary, Mark and his very able team will be re-running SYD's original production of 'Oklahoma'. Please keep your diaries free for the week 9 -13

February so you can join the festivities and pay tribute to the achievements of those who have contributed so extensively to SYD's success, among whom our own Mrs Macleod and Miss Haworth.

And yet more Arts news

Congratulations to Nicola Ede (Yr 10) and Amy Fallon, Amelia Dearing, Max Reader and Lilli Newson (all Year 9) on achieving their Bronze Arts Awards. They each produced folders of exquisite quality that earned high praise from the moderator.

He said, 'What I really enjoyed about this was that each student comes across as an individual. There is a very personal and passionate commitment and, especially in 12-year-olds, a remarkable confidence.' He hoped some of them would now go on and do silver level and felt that the portfolios were strong on the apprenticeship element, where the relationships between the young people were 'caring and serious'.

Our grateful thanks go to Lesley Morgan who through her own hard work and commitment has made it possible for our young people to have their artistic endeavours interests and achievement accredited in this national award.

Children in Need

You will, I'm sure, be aware that the fund-raising for this excellent cause is focused on 20 November. We will be holding a non-uniform day as is our usual custom. It's worth noting that a non-uniform day is not a dressing up day; it is a normal school day and lessons will take place as usual. It is also important that our young people ensure that no member of our school community goes home feeling bad about his or her choice of clothes. If someone doesn't have the latest fashion jeans or designer top it may be

because they are not driven by fashion, not because they can't afford it. I would encourage our pupils, therefore, not to give Mr Holloway or Mr Morris a bad time.

The Ethos Forum has plans for a range of other fund-raising activity: they intend to stretch a line of pennies across the playground; hold a cake stall – a sure winner with our pupils ... and staff; have a chocolate fountain; persuade some misguided teachers to have sponges thrown at them and hold a pupil vs teachers football match on the Astro turf.

Without doubt, they will once more be able to raise a significant amount for distribution to causes of their choice and children far less fortunate than the vast majority of our school community. They have my thanks and admiration.

A link to Russia

Miss Haworth has been working to establish links with schools abroad and has made SVC's first foray into Russia through a link with a school in Siberia. Miss Haworth presented the Siberian school to our pupils in last week's assemblies. One of our colleagues wrote to her after one of the assemblies, 'It's great to see that children are the same the world over and I got a real sense that our pupils could see they are a part of a global community.' This is exactly the point of expanding our links beyond Europe.

I am very grateful to her and to our pupils who have been involved in the project for making the link possible. It has to be said that not many staff are lining up to lead the first trip to sub-zero temperatures in Russia ... but there are bound to be some hardy sorts that will step up when the occasion arrives.

And finally, I hope you and yours manage to keep warm in the forthcoming colder winter months.

June Cannie
Principal

Year 12 prize-winners**Achievement (GCSE)**

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Ella Gough | 11A*, 1A |
| Peter Christov | 11A*, 1A |
| Sam Fleck | 11A* |
| Sam Love | 10A*, 2A |
| Catriona Davidson | 10A*, 2A |
| Beni Bienz | 10A*, 2A |

Subject prizes

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Art | Peter Christov |
| DT | Sam Love |
| Dance | Anna Tenberg |
| Drama | Lucy Goodman |
| Business Studies | Sam Fleck |
| RE | Catriona Davidson |
| PE | Ben Kelk |
| | Vicky Reynolds-Cocroft |
| English | Ciaran Grace |
| Languages | Ella Gough |
| H & S Care | Emma Nicholas |
| ICT | Luke Heavens |
| Construction | Sam Carter |
| CoPE | Tom Borrowdale |
| Music | Tom Byers |
| Mathematics | Samir Sattar |
| History | Ritwika Sengupta |
| Geography | Emily Driscoll |
| Engineering | Sven Mattes |
| Science | Imogen Howard |

Endeavour prizes

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Imogen Howard | Tom Borrowdale |
| Melanie Vance | Alex Reader |
| Amy Goodsell | Li Xie |

Head of Year prizes

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Lucy Goodman | Tom Borrowdale |
| Chloë Thompson | |

Henry Morris Community Award

Luke Heavens