

Alumni et Amicitia Association



for former pupils and staff of Leehurst, Swan, La Retraite,
La Retraite Swan, and Leehurst Swan Schools

Newsletter 5
December 2011

From the Headmaster

The unseasonably warm autumn weather is still with us as I write from my study at Leehurst Swan. This academic year has started in an equally warm and memorable manner. During the summer holiday the Governors realised the long cherished ambition of extending the school playing fields and purchased the adjoining piece of land, formerly known as the reservoir site, from the Environment Agency. This plot also gives the school direct access from St Mark's Avenue and increases the area of the school land to just under 6 acres. It has been good to reverse the reduction in school estate that has occurred in recent years.

The Academic results continue to go from strength to strength, pupils achieved a 96% pass rate in the GCSEs results of the summer and the number of A* and A grades increased to just under 40%. We continue to receive very kind comments as a result of the school inspection in which the inspectors found the personal development of the pupils in every aspect to be excellent, the highest grade awarded. This is probably the most important attribute a school can have and links us strongly with our traditions.

So the school continues to move forward, building on the good work of the past, and serving the present generation. Do keep in contact with your school and encourage others who are former pupils to join the AAA. Membership costs nothing, but happy memories are rekindled, like the warm winds of this autumn.

Roger Leake

Leehurst Swan School Carol Service 2012

The annual carol service will be held at Salisbury Cathedral on Thursday 15 December at 9.30 am. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

Come to tea on 2 February 2012!

Were you in the Pre-Prep or Prep and taught by Miss Herbert (Jan 1982-1983), Mrs O'Gorman (1983-2005) or Mrs Chalk (2005-2011)? You are invited to a celebration tea party to mark 25 years of Pre-Prep, and Pip Chalk's 30 years of teaching here, on Thursday 2 February 2012 1.30 - 3 pm in the Walker Hall at Leehurst Swan School. Please RSVP to school, and do bring any memorabilia.



Can someone identify this?

In the 'archives' is a tin of metal badges, mostly different coloured bars (in two sizes) associated with houses in the school over the years. There are also several of these 'medallions', suspended either from one of the bars - as in the picture - or from pieces of brown ribbon. The initials are L R C (La Retraite Convent?) but could someone please tell me what they signified and who wore them? JH



Sister Louise's bench

A bench has been placed in the school garden in memory of Sister Louise. Sister Patricia and Sister Pauline, from the La Retraite house in Salisbury came to the ceremony, together with Mrs Mary Paisey (on right of photograph) who is now Chairman of the Governors.

Email addresses

Did you receive this Newsletter on paper through the post? Have you got an email address we could use for sending future issues? It saves a huge amount of time and money. Thank you to everyone who responded to the last plea. We will of course continue to use envelopes and stamps for anyone who prefers it that way, we DO want to keep in touch!

People

As always, it is most interesting and enjoyable to hear from more former pupils. Thank you to everyone who has phoned, written or emailed, discovering us through word of mouth or by surfing the web. Completing the form accessed from the Alumni page on the school website is the simplest way of ensuring we have the necessary information to keep in contact.

Jessica March [1993-95]; Mary Abbott (Hogan) [1958-64]; Claire Stewart (Quick) [1987-94]; Jill James [to 1960]; Linette Brammer (Fox) [1958-60].

La Retraite 1962-68/9

Jackie Biddlecombe (nee Delaney) would like to get in touch with others who shared her years at school. A dozen of her contemporaries meet regularly, and they would be very pleased to hear from more, either people who would like to join in the reunions, or simply exchange news. So, if you were at LR in the 1960s, please contact her by email jbiddlecome@langdownsdfk.com, or write to AAA at school and we will forward the information.

Work experience prize 2011

Annabelle Le Gresley was awarded the prize for work experience (sponsored by AAA) at the senior school certificate evening in September. She is now at Andover College, and enjoying her course.

My first placement was at Salisbury Arts Centre, a local organisation working with the community within the arts. I worked with five different departments within the Arts Centre, I learnt about Youth Outreach, Event Management, Marketing, and Sound Technology. I helped lead a workshop for 8 year old pupils, interacting with the pupils and assisting the workshop leader. At the end of the week I had to present my findings from a survey I had previously created, to show the views of young people such as myself on what they wanted in a new music event aimed at their age group. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and found working in a team and interacting with both colleagues and the public, extremely interesting.

My second placement at The Army Parachute Association involved mainly office tasks such as answering the phones, cleaning and rigging. I found working with the riggers particularly compelling as I was able to take part in the re-lining of a canopy. It was fascinating to know how a parachute works, and helped me gain a better understanding of how to control my parachute. I found this placement a lot more arduous and my hands have only just recovered from the notorious 'line-burn'!

After my placements I have gained a better view on how vital both teamwork and Health and Safety are within the workplace.

Life since La Retraite

When I left La Retraite School in 2006 I was set on following a career path in law, and whilst studying for my A-levels my law lecturer persuaded me to apply to be a Magistrate. In September 2010, after many months of training, I was finally sworn in as a Magistrate on the Dorset bench. As the youngest member of the bench it has been a completely life changing experience, notably the reaction from other older members of the bench has been somewhat varied! I have now been doing this for just over a year and things still do not cease to surprise me, the work varies from an attempted murder to the DVLA and speeding cases.

Whilst applying to be a Magistrate I took a gamble and turned down a place at LSE to study law at the University of Winchester. Law was a brand new course there and I was in the second intake of students but luckily this paid off and my years there have been enjoyable if a lot of hard work. Despite having a love of law, I am currently working as an insurance broker at a private client brokers' firm dealing primarily with marine and commercial insurance. This change in career path has meant I am able to deal with clients and the public, and have traded the court room for getting to travel, notably to Monaco and Antibes for the super yacht shows - so I can't complain! Not entirely ready to give up law though so next year I plan to do a masters and the bar practice training course part-time to fit in around work, so will just have to see how that goes ...

Helen Rudolf

Exhibition at St Joseph's School

Thanks to Mike Watson, Leehurst Swan, in its earlier identities as Leehurst, and La Retraite, was represented at the Salisbury Celebration of Catholic Education last summer. He created two posters showing significant developments in the history of the schools, and found some valuable new material as well as using items from our archives.



A sewing class in the 1950s

Memories wanted

Preparations are gathering pace for a centenary publication recording the history of all the predecessor schools to Leehurst Swan. I am sure there are many people who have not yet been in touch with their memories, please do so.

In particular I would be delighted to hear from anyone who was a pupil in the very early years of Swan School, in the 1930s. Or maybe someone's father or grandfather was taught by Miss Swanton then, and has talked about their school-days? Are there any more photographs out there? Please contact me by any method you like; send written reminiscences or I am happy to visit. JH

Jane Howells

Alumni et Amicitia Association Leehurst Swan School

19 Campbell Rd, Salisbury SP1 3BQ

01722 333094

alumni@leehurstswan.org.uk www.leehurstswan.org.uk