

Chairman's Report for 07/08

I can't believe a whole year has gone by, yet again and here we are, at another AGM.

However, I do feel that we have achieved quite a lot this year. Firstly, we now have a new PA Website. It has its own domain name and it links to the school website. Many thanks to Eric Towers for creating and maintaining it for us. If you haven't already seen it, do take a look at www.strs-pa.org.uk

In the academic year 06/07 Uniform Sales were in a critical situation. The previous Uniform Co-ordinators Sally Creese and Anita Grogan's personal workloads had increased and they were unable to spend the amount of time necessary to enable the PA to continue selling the Uniforms 'in house'. It was thought that the Uniform would have to be sold by a school outfitters or similar, but the situation was saved by the willingness of some new year 7 parents who came forward to take on the Uniform Co-ordination. Special thanks to Denise Sheldon and Linda Lee for taking on this role and also to their Team of willing helpers, which enabled us to keep the uniform sales 'in house'. And I must say, I didn't realise what a benefit to parents that was, until I personally had to buy my daughter's uniform directly from Trutex in the summer! It was an excruciatingly painful experience and, in fact, I'm still waiting to be credited for returned items!

In 07/08 year we didn't plan an Autumn Ball, but one was programmed for the 08/09 academic year.

The Year 7 Informal Evening received lots of positive feedback, with several parents pledging their help and support to the PA. Several parents asked us about 'Car Sharing', so the PA decided that they would like to help parents of boys starting at the school, with transportation. A 'Reply Slip' was created, and parents were asked to complete it with 'Requests for help' and 'Offers of Help' and return it to the school. Take up of this initiative was not huge, but we did manage to put some parents in touch with others, who then started their own 'car share' schemes. The committee felt that it had introduced the slips a little late and that it should promote 'Car Sharing' prior to the boys starting at the school, which we duly did in July 07, with large white boards in the Hall on the morning when the boys and their parents came to collect their uniform and meet their teachers. One was for 'Offers of Help' and the other was for 'Help Needed'. The boards were a great success, with parents exchanging contact details on the spot!

At the beginning of the academic year, it was agreed that the PA would raise money this year to fund some new Bike Sheds, Refurbish the 6th Form Common Rooms and Study Area and contribute towards the Managed Network. The PA has also continued to fund the running costs of the minibuses and the affiliation and membership fees. In addition, the PA funded the replacement of two Laser Cutter Tubes for the CAD/CAM equipment, a Music Room Laptop for use by GCSE and GCE Students and 2 x Water Fountains.

The Christmas Fayre was a great success, although a lot of work. Deborah Reed again collected and folder the ticket stubs, which makes life so much easier on the day – thank you Deborah and thanks to everyone else who gave their time to make this event so successful and to those who donated & made items to be sold. The total profit this year was £2513

In January, it was decided that the PA would benefit from appointing a Christmas Fayre Co-ordinator. Carole Walsh had inherited the role and was trying to combine it with being the PA Secretary and working full time. Many thanks to Carole for managing to do this and doing it all so well too, but it was a great relief when Katie Panton stepped forward and volunteered to become the Christmas Fayre Co-ordinator. Thank you so much, Katie, and we look forward to working with you towards the 08 Christmas Fayre.

In January our Treasurer (and 'stand in' 100 Club Organiser), Keith Tranter, resigned from the Committee. Special thanks to Keith for his many years service as Treasurer and his valuable and 'unique' input to the meetings. I'm pleased to say that although he might not be Treasurer anymore, he has offered to continue helping with Uniform Sales, Car Boot Sales etc.,

Many thanks to Anne Rawlins, who took over from Keith as Treasurer and to Debbie Ireland, who has taken on the running of the 100 Club.

Julie Melvyn has, once again, worked her magic with the Car Boot Sales and has somehow managed to tame the unruly crowds and I can tell you, as one who has faced the sheer aggression from some of those trying to enter the Car Boot Sale before it opens, this was no mean feat. They now stand meekly at the gates, like lambs, until she says they can enter AND somehow she also gets them to put 'voluntary contributions' into the awaiting buckets, as they pass them. Amazing. Even more amazing is the fact that the Car Boot Sales this academic year raised over £1500 for the PA. Thank you, Julie and, in turn, thanks also to those who came to help you, and to your husband and family for supporting you, when the time and effort you had to put in to make it work, encroached so much on your 'family time'. It really is very much appreciated.

Sadly, two posts which we wanted to fill this year remained unfilled. Firstly a new post of Coffee Morning Co-ordinator, and secondly the post of Vice Chair. It was felt that Coffee Mornings/Evenings would give new parents the opportunity to meet other new parents. One parent, living in the Forest of Dean, offered to host a Coffee Morning and it was felt that this would be a lovely idea. We had hoped to host them in the Forest of Dean and at the School, but we couldn't recruit a co-ordinator. Hopefully someone will step forward to do this in 08/09

The Sports Evening took place this year and for the first time the PA was able to offer two BBQ's – the usual one, plus a Halal one, which was organised and run by Mohamed and Farzana Ghanti. Special thanks to them for organising this additional BBQ, and to Sally Creese and everyone else who

planned, organised and ran the usual BBQ, especially as our usual 'Chef', John Whitely, was not available that night!

In August 08, Bob Burns, the school's Bursar, retired. The PA will miss him enormously. He has worked closely with the PA for many years and administers the Gifting Scheme on behalf of the PA. In appreciation for his hard work, the PA presented him with a unique Laser Crystal of the Bluecoat Boy, which we had especially commissioned.

I would at this point like to mention Vivian Austin and Janet Swift. These wonderful ladies co-ordinate the Tea and Coffee Making Rota, so that it never has to be discussed at the main Committee Meetings. Their task isn't easy – I have heard reports of some parents who have previously offered to help with Tea and Coffee making, being quite rude when they are phoned up about it. I am also aware that on some occasions, those parents who have agreed to provide the Tea & Coffee simply haven't turned up, leaving an event without Refreshments! I'm sure you agree that these special ladies deserve medals for their persistence! Thank you Vivian and Janet.

Alison Halliday, one of our 'retired' PA Committee Members came forward again this year and offered to help with the Autumn Ball which was due to be held in October 08. She set up an e.mail address and designed the Flyers and Tickets for our planned 'Masked Ball', but sadly the tickets didn't sell as well as expected. An emergency letter was sent to all parents, asking them to confirm if they wanted to come, but we didn't meet the agreed 'required' 100 ticket sales and the event was cancelled. This was particularly galling when we knew, from the 133 stamps left at the end' that letters probably hadn't gone out to all parents. Hopefully there will be a better response to the 2010 Ball. In the meantime I would like to express my thanks to Alison Halliday and also to Peter & Ruth Andrews, who volunteered to organise the Ball with me and take it on in the future.

Sheila Johnston, another long time PA Helper has resigned, because her son, Luke, has moved on to Pate's 6th Form. Thanks to Sheila and also to her husband Angus, for their hard work and support, during their time at Tommies.

Carole Walsh, our wonderfully efficient PA Secretary resigned her post, just before the start of the new academic year. We are delighted that she wants to continue working with the PA; she simply can't get to the evening meetings anymore. Carole will be greatly missed at meetings, and I'm sure you'll all join me in thanking her for the huge amount of work she has done for the PA. Debbie Ireland has taken on the role and will also continue to run the 100 Club – thank you Debbie.

All in all, I can safely say that it was another excellent year for the PA and I would like to thank all of you who contributed to its success. If I haven't mentioned you personally, please don't be offended. Each and every one of you is truly appreciated.

Special thanks to Mr Kellie and Mr Carter, for continuing to support the work of the PA. I would also like to mention Julie Austin. Her support of the work of the PA has, once again, been unstinting. Despite an extremely heavy workload and the obvious pressures which come with that, she has remained cheerful, approachable and diligent. I am also aware that she has put in many 'personal' hours to support the PA, including delivering HUGE amounts of promotional Flyers for PA Events, in the local area, in her own time. Nicky (her assistant) has also helped with this and the PA is very grateful to both of them.

It is with sadness that I inform you, that this is my last Chairman's Report. I announced my resignation at the last PA Meeting and I stand down this evening. I do hope that someone will come forward to Chair the PA. I have had a lovely time working with you all and I have made many friends. I had hoped to stay in post until July 09, but sadly it wasn't to be.

I wish Sir Thomas Rich's School's Parents' Association continued success and please note – you can add me to the 'Willing Helpers' list.

Sali Gray – 7th October 2008