

St Dunstan's College Family

Annual Report

The Family Society is a voluntary organisation run by parents for the benefit of the pupils and the staff at the College. We are a fundraising and social group who arrange events at the College to raise extra money to obtain the items that the staff feel would be helpful in fulfilling your children's life at school. All parents are automatically members of the Society and pay a small annual subscription at the start of the January term. This year we donated some money to the Music Department to purchase a much wanted xylophone. We also support the annual Sixth Form Ball, which for the first time was held away from school, by giving them £1000 towards this very successful event. Another way in which we can support the pupils is by providing funds for the College Travel Bursary, which is administered in strictest confidence by the Headmaster, meaning that any child who needs some financial support does not miss out on their school trip.

We began the new school year with a new team of parents and some new staff members, trying to build on the successes of previous years. In September we had our annual cheese and wine evening which we are delighted to say was an enormous success. Over 200 parents and staff attended and for the first year ever we actually made a profit, which amounted to £460.

The evening is really for new parents to get to know the staff and other parents in an informal atmosphere, though existing parents are extremely welcome and are useful sources of information. So to make some money for the pupils during the evening was an added bonus!

The AGM is always held at the beginning of October and although these sorts of meetings can be a bit of a dry old do, parental support is so hugely appreciated by the Committee that we try and encourage as many parents to come as possible. So this year the Headmaster gave a talk about the College and we welcomed some new members on to the Committee. It can be a useful evening as the attendance is not huge but it can give parents the opportunity to talk to the other members of the Family Society and also some staff in an uncrowded, unhurried atmosphere, and of course partake in the obligatory glass of wine!

In November we held the second annual theme evening. Following the success of the previous year's French evening, this year we embarked on a Turkish theme. Parents and staff thoroughly enjoyed eating the most delicious Turkish food washed down with some surprisingly good Turkish wine, whilst watching the considerable skills of a very talented belly dancer! Of course those brave enough, (perhaps with some help from the wine) showed off their belly dancing prowess as well. I don't think the



dancer felt too threatened by what she saw! We made a handsome profit of £600, but none of this would have been possible without the catering skills of Teresa and Mike Tildesley who are parents at the College.

We were very proud to hand over the long awaited mini bus to the College one Saturday morning in November. Having the funds to be able to pay for such an expensive item (over £22,000) really is a credit to the parents who have supported the Family Society over the years. Having an extra mini bus has already proved invaluable to the staff and pupils.

In January we made some changes to our very profitable annual disco. The Prep and Lower school had their separate events and the parents danced away this year to a live band – The Electric Landladies. The pupils had great fun on the Friday evening dancing to their disco and joining in the karaoke, whilst drinking vast amounts of sweet fizzy drinks. The Lower school girls seemed to certainly get some exercise but not necessarily by dancing but more by walking miles up and down the main corridor – strutting their stuff!

The parents exercised the Saturday night away to the hugely popular Electric Landladies, and drank vast amounts from the bar, but most of it not sweet and fizzy!

This year have seen some changes to our usual events, and the most noticeable has been the introduction of the St Dunstan's College Summer Ball. As a result the Family Society joined the team organising that event so that there





OH! WHAT A BALL

At last on July 6, 2002 the moment we had planned for months had finally arrived – the St Dunstan's College Summer Ball. This was the first ball held at the College in recent years and so it was only appropriate that it was billed as a Golden Jubilee Ball in honour of the Queen's celebrations. The ball was held mainly for two reasons, one to raise money for the new Learning Resources Centre to replace and improve the Library facilities for all the pupils, and the second for parents, staff and Governors to socialise at a different type of function.

Although the Family Society did not run the Ball we were part of a team which organised the event. Plans were laid in the previous August championed by the Headmaster and spearheaded by Jackie Holloway (parent and special events organiser).

On the Friday afternoon prior to the big night, amid shrieks of delight from the youngest members of the College, the Pre Prep and Prep pupils started a Great Balloon Race. They had each sponsored a balloon and waited through the summer holidays to see whose was found to have travelled the furthest.

The evening began at 7pm with guests invited for drinks at the Headmaster's Reception held in the Great Hall with the most delicious canapés, an appetiser for the wonderful food to come! Some people arrived later as they were so keen to try out the tethered balloon flight, with the best view of Catford, that was situated on the playing field. Well, OK, a view of Catford, but what a way to see it! The balloon was very kindly sponsored by parent and OD Martin Kemp (Train and Kemp).

Whilst the guests were enjoying their pre-dinner drinks they had the opportunity of having their photos

taken with the likes of Sean Connery or any of the Baywatch cast! And the queues were huge! So what if it was all done by computer!

Roaming amongst the assembled throng for the evening were magicians, a stilt walker dressed in World Cup football kit, a cartoonist who was a huge success with his exaggerated portraits of individual guests and did a particularly stunning vision of Mrs Holmes (Pre Prep staff).

Dinner was served at 8.30pm and 360 people sat down to a sumptuous repast including chicken baked with

lemon and rosemary, salad of salmon teriyaki, herb and vegetable tortellini, followed by wild berry tart and summer fruits rounded off with chocolate fruit kebabs all washed down with copious amounts of

champagne and wine in the true St Dunstan's fashion! And even more impressively the meal was eaten in a barely recognisable Refectory decorated in red, white and blue streamers and balloons. The sounds of a steel band added to the summer mood.

After dinner the guests retreated to the classrooms, gambling the night away at the Casino. For those who had more control, they headed off to play on the Dodgems, while others listened to a fortune teller or played on the Scalectrix!

But for the more energetic they danced the night away to two live bands, The Electric Landladies in the Refectory and Rolla Coaster in the Great Hall, both proving an enormous success and near tears when 1am came and they had to go home to bed!

Towards the end of the evening the raffle prizes were called by the Chairman of the Governors, Sir Paul Judge. It proved to be the most difficult choice for the winners as they could choose from a selection of amazing prizes, all donated by

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were no more functions run by us for the remainder of the year, but the Ball soon made up for that! There are various people who must be congratulated for their very hard work and their innovative ideas. Mary Petit, a parent and committee member, moved away during the year and we are very grateful for all her work. Sue Halliday (parent) has been a brilliant Secretary and Mike Watson (parent and OD) a great Treasurer. The other members also deserve our thanks, Meg Hindle (parent) whose catering advice has saved our bacon on many an occasion, Matthew Stilwell (parent), Catherine Hall (parent), Carole Beane (parent) and Eva Yemanakis (parent and staff) who always seem to be around when help is most needed. Renu Kapur (parent) for new ideas and useful contacts. Lesley Benson (parent) and Amanda Hughes (staff) for being there and extracting as much raffle money from parents as is decently possible! We also need to thank the Headmaster and Mrs Davies (Deputy Head) for all their help, advice and support. All these people together with the College House staff masterminded by Mick Kedge help make the events such a success and above all FUN!!

*Anne Thompson,
 Chairman SDCFS*

generous parents and local businesses. The winners could choose prizes such as a painting from Richard Spare a parent and artist whose work is sold worldwide, or a canapé reception in their own home, or an evening's babysitting. Champagne, wine, family days out, weekend breaks in France, trips to football matches and culinary prizes all made the raffle a huge success.

The committee's grateful thanks go to all the parents, staff and friends of the College who helped make the evening such an enormous success. There are, however, some people who must be singled out for praise: Meg Hindle parent and caterer (Aspect – Food by Design) who was more nervous about preparing the fabulous meal for the Ball than she had been, cooking for the Queen the week before!; Amanda Hughes (Pre Prep staff) who masterminded the colour theme and decorations that made the College look so good on the night, and also helped take control of the raffle; Renu Kapur who talked local businesses into donating such great prizes; Penny Phillips (Headmaster's Secretary) for behind the scenes admin; Stuart Robertson (OD) for liaising with the ODs; Mike Watson (parent and OD) and Martin Kemp (parent and OD) for worrying that there would not be enough for them to drink, therefore ensuring a plentiful supply of alcohol!; and last but not least the team which slaved away on the days before, setting everything up: Leslie Benson, Carole Beane, Jane Campbell, Jo Kemp, Sue Halliday and all the House staff.

Just a word of warning – we intend to do the same again next July! Make a note in your diaries and raid your children's bags for info nearer the time!

*Anne Thompson,
Chairman SDCFS*