

FOTM Chairman's Report 2009-10

This has been another great year of fundraising and fun for FOTM and Manor families! The Autumn Term began with a flourish as we welcomed new parents at the Curriculum Evenings held for each part of the school. Later in September we joined the rest of the country in support of the Macmillan Coffee Morning, another sociable way to help new mums settle in, as well as joining in this worthy cause and raising over £250.

The tenth annual Charity Gift Fair followed in October; once again the school was transformed into a shopping paradise, half the proceeds going to the Starlight Foundation which organises special treats for children with life threatening illnesses and the other half to FOTM. It is always a pleasure to see parents and grandparents supporting this event so wholeheartedly.

So we arrived at one of our big nights of the year- Fireworks! In spite of the rain and wind that threatened to blow the gazebos away, preparations went ahead as usual in true Manor tradition! We must have done something good as 5pm drew near the weather calmed down and over 600 guests enjoyed the succulent pig roast and hot dogs washed down by delicious mulled wine. Everyone gathered on the field to watch the amazing display of fireworks, after which our enormous bonfire was lit by our head of PE, Angela O'Rourke, a keen supporter of FOTM events.

In the Spring Term we repeated our "Ask the Family" Quiz Night. This was another successful evening as family teams battled their wits against each other to answer Annabel's huge variety of questions. Denise's fish n' chip supper was much enjoyed by all participants during the interval.

Ferret racing at the Manor; this must be a first! The June sun shone as FOTM held its Country Fayre and tremendous fun was had by all ages. The ferrets were certainly the star attraction as people rushed to place their bets on their favourite ferret! The gun dogs and the birds of prey displayed their talents and the younger children loved spending their time with all the farm animals. An array of delicious refreshments and stalls completed the picture of a perfect English summer afternoon and managed to raise just under £500 along the way.

The sun continued to shine as parents and children alike enjoyed the delights of FOTM's "Tea at Three." Homemade cakes and tea proved the perfect spot on the lawn to watch Year 4 House Rounders whilst raising £150 for Helen and Douglas House. Our coffee mornings earlier in the year also raised funds for Action Aid and Operation Christmas Child with the Christmas shoe box appeal.

Rather than raising money for one big project for the school last year we asked the different school departments to apply to FOTM/SHUS for grants towards equipment. We were able to provide 6 new violins for the Music department, audio machines and books on tape for the library, a paint drier for Pre-Nursery, a printing press for the Art department, up-to-date software for Learning Support, large planters for the Year 1 garden, indoor athletics equipment for the PE department and money to help develop the area round the pond for use in Science lessons and Grubs. At the moment we are looking into the possibility of raising funds for a school minibus in the coming academic year and developing the pond area even further into a wildlife sanctuary.

In recent years the FOTM executive has been able to work hand- in hand with SHUS and the Gift fair which also come under the umbrella of FOTM. Some members sit on both committees and this has led to an easy working relationship which I have much appreciated. My thanks to Philippa Johnson and Victoria Basil who have led SHUS and the Gift Fair during the present academic year. This is so important as we are all working towards the same aim, to raise funds for the school and to help the wider community.

Finally, it has been both a privilege and a pleasure to be the Chair of FOTM for the last 3 years. I have enjoyed working with such a great team and we have had enormous fun organising all the various big occasions at the Manor. I would like to thank all my friends on the committee for their continued support, hard work and spare time so freely given. Clare Simpson who bravely joined the team when her daughter joined the school in Year 5 and who leaves this summer, and especially Anna Dashwood, who is standing down this year, for her enormous contribution to the Gift Fair, the Ball Committee and everything FOTM. My particular thanks also to Annabel Gaskell who has worked tirelessly alongside me as first secretary and ,more recently, as Treasurer; she has overseen the Fireworks, masterminded the Quiz Night and singlehandedly overhauled the FOTM website and the accounts. I quite simply could not have managed without her. I am confident that FOTM will continue to thrive in the capable hands of Sarah Wilkinson and I wish the new committee every success in their activities next year.

Caroline Steinsberg

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