

ACTION ZONE

SureStart Thetford

Toys to try at home

Excellence in Education

Higher education extra

Grease is the word

Looking to Europe

June 2003

Three steps forward for Thetford

Watch out for



Been to Thetford library recently and seen the SureStart Story Sacks? These can be borrowed, free of charge.

Each Story Sack has a well known children's story, complete with puppets and other materials to make the story come alive and help develop children's love of books.



The Story Sack library is just one of the benefits that SureStart is already bringing to Thetford. And there are many more which families with children under 4 will soon be seeing - such as:

- ▶ improved outdoor play and learning facilities
- ▶ exciting art, craft and music sessions
- ▶ improved access for parents to health and family support

SureStart programme manager Gina Vass-Bowen says, 'We're building on what's here already so we can help make life better for Thetford's under 4s and their families.'

SureStart will bring an extra £9 million to the town over the next nine years, including a possible £1 million for a purpose-built day care centre.



To help shape SureStart's future make your views known. Just come along to a SureStart event and speak to one of the team. There are also regular meetings of the SureStart parents' forum.

For more information contact Kate or Gina on 01842 766438 or email: surestart.thetford@virgin.net

New director for sixth form

Thomas Paine Sixth Form - a joint sixth form between Charles Burrell and Rosemary Musker High Schools - is being launched in September. The new Director will be Lyndsay Knight who comes from Costessey High School.

New vocational courses are being offered together with a wide range of A level subjects. So many more courses means there is no need to travel out of Thetford for top quality education.



For more details call Thomas Paine Sixth Form on 01842 757078.

From Zone to Cluster

The Thetford Excellence Cluster starts in January as the Thetford Education Action Zone ends in December.

The new Excellence Cluster will include all the existing Education Action Zone schools plus Wymondham College and Fred Nicholson Special School in Dereham.

Together the schools in the Thetford Excellence Cluster will receive additional government funds of up £650,000 a year for three years - so the town's schools will continue to raise standards.

Among other things there will be extra support for:

- ▶ Gifted and Talented pupils
- ▶ nurture groups to continue in two primary schools
- ▶ new bases in each of the two high schools for students who need extra support
- ▶ learning mentors to work with small groups to enable pupils to do well in school

Also, some of the other very successful work of the Education Action Zone will continue. For example:

- ▶ literacy in the primary schools
- ▶ workplace linked learning in the high schools
- ▶ the SHARE Family Partnership programme - which will be extended into the high schools.

Thetford schools have been successful in raising standards over the last few years. The Thetford Excellence Cluster will mean they can continue to provide the best for their pupils and families.

Here SHARE and everywhere

Chances are everyone in Thetford knows someone who is 'SHARE aware.'

SHARE - the family partnership programme - is now in all nine of the town's primary and nursery schools, and there are plans to work with the high schools too.

SHARE helps parents and teachers work together to improve children's learning.

Parents can find out how:
► to support their child's learning at home
► schools use new ways to help children learn
and it's a chance for parents and carers to get together with each other.

So far, twenty-six teachers and teaching assistants in Thetford are SHARE trained, and more are coming on board all the time.

Weekly SHARE sessions usually last about 45 minutes to an hour. Parents can come along to as many sessions as they can manage. Some are taking part in their second year of SHARE.

Activities like the Great Knicker Elastic Caper - which is all about shapes and sizes. - help parents to see how their children are being taught in the classroom.

Teachers and other staff are always around and parents can take any materials home so the fun can continue at home.

For more information about SHARE, talk to your school SHARE teacher, or contact Beverley Bird (Family Partnership Team) at Thetford EAZ 01842 760293.



Gina Cason and Kevin Austin getting to grips with their elastic at Canterbury Infant School

Battling Bullying

About 20,000 children a year call Childline about bullying. It can happen anywhere from the classroom or playground to bus stop and doorstep. Some children are bullied in their own homes.

Bullying can mean anything from being called names or being teased to being physically attacked. It hurts and causes worry and anxiety.

Anyone who is being bullied can do something about it. The most important thing to do is to tell a trusted friend or adult about it.

Teachers will always listen carefully when someone tells them about being bullied. In almost all cases they will not act without the agreement of the person who is being bullied.

The simple message schools want to get over is **'We say no to bullying'**.



Admirals' Junior School held a Battling Bullying Day that included making videos, music, drama, poetry and story writing, art, circle time activities, self defence and story reading.

Charles Burrell High School's anti-bullying day also featured workshops run by the Norfolk YMCA and the Red Balloon Theatre Company.



Thetford Millennium Citizens' Awards

Awarded for outstanding work in the community, the Millennium Citizens' Awards are a way of recognising individuals (or groups) who have given something of themselves to help and support others. They are a public 'thank you' for caring.

The fourth round of Awards will be presented in July. Entrants have to be nominated, so if you know a young person (or group of young people) who you feel deserve to be thanked publicly - just fill in the form and give it to the school that the young person attends.

Please make sure your nomination arrives at the school by Monday 30 June.

Every nomination, whatever it is, will be considered by the school's Awards Committee. If it benefits the community that person can be eligible for an award.

Every young person nominated will receive a certificate and two pupils from each school will be named 'Millennium Citizens' and their names added to the roll of honour board in the school.



Lunchtime Raleigh

Literacy club activities include drama sessions, working with puppets and planning and creating their own Big Book. The club was funded by the Education Action Zone for Gifted and Talented activities.



A coach from Norwich City Football Club has been visiting Raleigh Infant School at lunchtimes. The children have been able to sharpen up their ball skills.

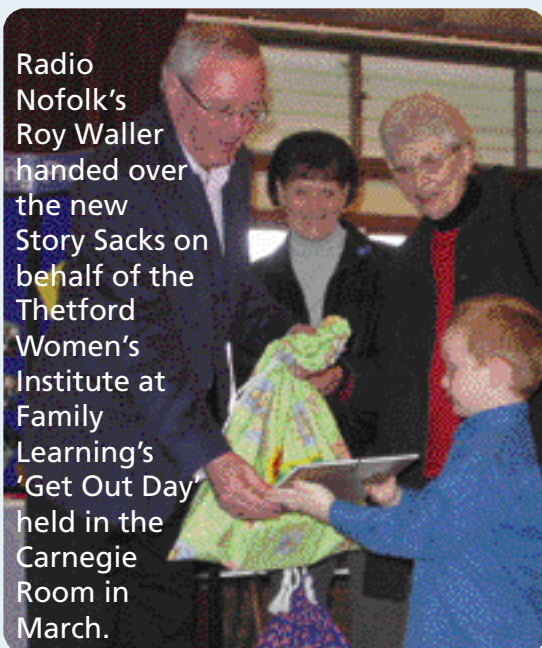


Millennium Citizens' Awards.

I wish to nominate
from..... school
for the award because:

Signed Date Address

Return to nominee's school by Monday 30 June.



Radio Norfolk's Roy Waller handed over the new Story Sacks on behalf of the Thetford Women's Institute at Family Learning's 'Get Out Day' held in the Carnegie Room in March.

A very hungry caterpillar and the Queen's knickers

New story sacks for children with embroidered book marks and soft toys that help bring alive the fantastic stories of 'A Very Hungry Caterpillar' and 'The Queen's Knickers' are the latest additions to Books for Babies sessions.

These sessions - where under sixes gather, with their parents, to hear stories and join in story related activities - usually attract between 30 and 60 people.

Janet King, Books for Babies co-ordinator, knows 'Books for Babies' is making a big difference. 'We want to encourage children to enjoy books, and the sooner they get to know them the better. Books open up new worlds and a love of reading lasts for life.'

'We have a free book loan scheme, regular celebrations for one, two and three year olds, as well as a scheme that encourages people to donate books that toddlers can share with their families.'

'The parent of every new born baby in Thetford receives a 'Books for Babies' welcome pack with a book, a toy and some songs together with details of the sessions we run, so we hope that everyone will come along and share the experience.'

For more information contact 'Books for Babies' at Tanner House 01842 755492 or Thetford EAZ Family Partnership 01842 760293.

Summer School News

This year's two-week Gifted and Talented Summer School with the Black Cat Theatre Company will study Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and will feature workshops and drama improvisations.

The summer school, which is open to 10 and 11 year olds who have been identified by their school as children most likely to benefit from the experience, is part of 500 summer schools in the country.

The idea is to stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm for learning and develop a wide range of skills by presenting them with unusual and thought provoking experiences.



The Super Learning Week was held in conjunction with the University of the First Age.

Roll up Roll up

A clown without a circus. A problem for 7 and 8 year olds at Norwich Road Primary School to deal with.

They set to and made a big top, a few costumes, masks, programmes and a promotional video. And it only took them a week.

Headteacher Dulcie Ogilvie thought it was amazing. 'We had brain gyms designed to help the children find out how their brains work - to help them with their learning.'

'Everyone had fun and played their part to the full and the result was a colourful and spectacular success.'

Toys galore - and some to your door



Imagine a room full of toys to play with - and the ones you like you can take home. Sound like paradise? Well it's the Toy Library at Fulmerston Road.

Michelle Ashford, chairperson of the Toy Library committee says 'Everybody is welcome to come along and try out the toys and see what's for hire. It's a great way for children to try out the toys before parents decide whether to buy them.'

The Toy Library, now in its third year, has a vast selection of toys for babies right up to teenagers and the hire charges start at just 30p a week and are never more than £5.50 - but that's for the large outdoor climbing toys. It even includes delivery and someone to set it up too.

'A lot of people hire in toys to make a party extra special. We want to encourage people to come and try us out - and the toys of course.'

'That's why we have the family discos and other events throughout the year.' says Michelle. 'We always have tea and coffee and every day at 10am is children's snack time. We love it when people drop in to meet each other and have a bit of a chat.'

The Toy Library, Fulmerston Road is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9am to 12 noon and Saturdays 12-2 pm. For more information contact Michelle Ashford on 07789 474231.

Moving on with the Great Zulu Nation

The singing, soft at first, grew louder and closer. It seemed the owners of those incredibly beautiful voices were trying to communicate with us as we sat, quietly waiting.

The music became people, dressed in patterned clothes, with beaded hair. The mighty Zulu Nation had arrived to visit us.

What an amazing sight they were, in their tribal attire, their strange language spreading to every corner of the hall. They danced in unison, mesmerising us and drawing us into their rhythms.

The Zulus introduced us to their customs and rituals and acted out the story of their culture. They spoke to us and we replied with the strange words they had taught us.

We were invited to dance with them, to wear their costumes, hold their spears and shields, to be a small part of their community. Later they encouraged us to sing their songs, dance their dances and draw the houses they once lived in.

It was an incredible day, one we'll never forget. It was brilliant to be introduced to a taste of another culture so different from ours. The whole experience was summed up totally by one boy. 'It was wicked!'

Thank you, to the Zulu Nation from all at Abbey Farm Junior School.

This visit from Zulu Nation was just one of the activities for pupils preparing for their next school - either a junior or high school.



European Day

A taste of European living was on the menu at Charles Burrell for their International Spring Day in Europe Event.

All the meals served in the canteen represented at least one of the 15 countries in the European Union - pizza, paella and delicious Portuguese spicy sausage for starters. Students also had the chance to compete for gift vouchers worth 22 euros (or £15) in a general knowledge quiz about European affairs.

'Students play a part in the local, national and international community so opportunities like this are not to be missed' said Assistant Head Robert Ogden.

Commonwealth Day

Queensway Community Junior School celebrated Commonwealth Day with games, music, food and costumes of the various member countries.



Grease is the word ... and sold out

With two awe inspiring performances of Grease, Charles Burrell High School announced its intention to bid for Performing Arts Specialist College Status.

Show director Linda Taylor-Kahr sees the show as just the beginning. 'We are so proud of what has been achieved, it has been an inspiration for the whole school. The 60 students from all year groups were magnificent and everyone wants to do another one next year.'

Rehearsals were squeezed into every available lunchtime and after school session since September, and word quickly spread that something special was going to come out.

'The students picked up the discipline very quickly and their enthusiasm was so infectious that their confidence grew in every way. 600 people saw the performances over two nights and we could have sold out twice over.'

Charles Burrell High School is planning to bid for specialist school status in the performing arts. If successful the school will attract additional government money to help develop its facilities to support its teaching in this area.

Thetford Education Action Zone *Excellence in education*



Thetford Education Action Zone
c/o Baxter Healthcare, Caxton Way,
Thetford IP24 3SE
tel: 01842 760293 fax: 01842 754736
email: education@thetford-eaz.org.uk
web site: www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk
Chairman: Mike Shenstone;
Project Director: Graham Sigley

Learning+Skills Council
Norfolk



If you would like the information in this newsletter in large print, or in another format, please contact Thetford Education Action Zone 01842 760293