

SOMERSET RURAL MUSIC SCHOOL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2009

Welcome back!

to the beginning of a new year and we hope that you have had an enjoyable holiday. The last twelve months have been a difficult period for SRMS. Brian Cresswell who founded SRMS and was its first Director for over 25 years is enjoying a well-earned retirement, and has proved difficult to replace. His successor Jason Bidmead had to resign for personal reasons after a term.

So since January the Committee, teachers and support staff, and many volunteers have had to keep the school afloat because of a belief in the work SRMS does and because we are all convinced that there is still a role in the Taunton area (if not wider!) for an organisation that provides musical activities on Saturday mornings.

We are aware that things have not run smoothly and that the quality of provision has not been as good as you deserve and we want to provide. But we have been learning fast and hope, and indeed must, raise our game.

We have had some successes, not least in stabilizing the school's financial position (although we are still on a knife-edge!) and there was a steady increase in numbers after a sharp fall after Christmas. We have now lost some of the ground we clawed back but we are determined to keep going and recover. Obviously, we need more students and although we have stepped up our advertising we still have much work to do to make sure our message is reaching the right people. The distribution of over 1,000 fliers in Taunton town centre last Saturday was just a start.

A New Director

We are pleased therefore that Dave Organ, who has taught Brass at the school for over 25 years is prepared to act as Director of SRMS. He brings much knowledge and experience to the job – although we don't expect miracles (yet!). Dave will continue teaching Brass instruments but he should be free for an hour each Saturday during the morning to be able to talk to parents and prospective students.

Resignations and Retirements

The end of a school year often brings the departure of valuable and highly esteemed members of staff and we have seen four depart.... Gwyn Flitters, who taught recorder, aural and choir; Richard Sleeman, electric guitar; Geoff Westcott, clarinet, saxophone and flute, and finally Phil Weare, art and crafts. We are very grateful for their contributions and wish them well for the future.

But We Welcome.....

Andy Frost who has previously taught here on Saturday mornings on electric guitar; whilst Mary Williams will take charge of art and crafts with the assistance of Hannah Duddridge, a former pupil at Heathfield. We should also mention that Julia Gauler joined the staff after Easter to teach primarily flute, and we are grateful for the contribution she has already made.

Changes in Programme

Three changes to last term's programme have been made for this term:

Recorders will be from 9.30 to 10.30;
Art and Crafts from 10.00 to 12.00
Music Theory from 9.30 to 11.00

Finally, two reminders

The SRMS mobile phone number is 07754 916 502 if you need to contact us.

And if during the term, there are any changes to your home address, telephone numbers or e-mail address please let us know..