



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010

During 2010, The Trust has completed the payment and fund raising for the Rowdeford Arts Centre. This was the conclusion of an Appeal that raised nearly £600,000.

The Arts Centre officially opened on January 28th and it was agreed that the objectives had been achieved by providing a facility for the community as well as use by the school. Not only has the Centre enabled the school to deliver individual therapy for the first time but during the year it has been used by a wide variety of group. These have varied from Art workshops to county meetings about the future of special education and the monthly National Autistic Society club. The building has proved that it is versatile and is proving a great asset to the Rowdeford environment.

Fund Raising carried on throughout the year. Maggie Moore must be especially thanked as she single handed organised a “**Stroll About Supper**” in her village as well as completing the **Great North Run** on behalf of the Trust.

The Bath Antiques Fair again allowed us to be the Charity for their Charity night, thanks to Maggie Moore and Mike Bowden who did the day stint followed by the Goodwins and the Grews.

The Devizes retiring MP, The Rt. Hon **Michael Ancram** and whose wife Jane is our Patron, kindly gave the proceeds of his retiring collection to Rowdeford Charity Trust.

The Garden Fair in May again was a great success under the direction of Jeremy Sidmouth and his team. Sadly for the Trust, Jeremy has decided to step down as Chairman due to his other commitments but Mike Bowden has kindly stepped in as chair. Jeremy's contribution to Rowdeford has been immense and given in a quiet and unassuming way. He has helped in the Garden project in many ways, from manpower to dig weeds, to advice from his great knowledge about plants, to founding and organising the first Garden Fair at Rowdeford.

Ladies Lunch and Hat Parade Friday 29th October with Joan Pressley Hats was a great success and enjoyed by those who attended so thanks to Elizabeth and her team who organised the event and provided lunch. It proved very popular and I hope that it will be repeated again.

Winter Wonderland 4th & 5th December was held over two nights in early December in the frosty and beautifully decorated garden, of Cynthia and Mark Wilkinson in Bromham. The project was masterminded very skilfully, by Elizabeth Frearson and Lambert Courth who put in untold hours to make the project such a fantastic success. The Creation and delivery of Winter Wonderland needed over 100 Volunteers to make it happen (which impressively even included this year's very busy High Sheriff of Wiltshire), a great community and school effort. With over 3,000 visitors over the two nights the support from the County was outstanding and on occasions tested those parking so many cars!

A former Governor of Rowdeford School who bought her two year old grandson commented “What a lovely venue, lots of helpful helpers and a great atmosphere.” Father Christmas was much in demand and his team of Elves were kept very busy on both evenings. The hot food and Drinks organised by Janey Hillier proved very popular, and the cup cakes beautifully decorated by Horton Art Club were well appreciated.

Registered Charity No: 1088605

Patron: Lady Jane Ancram

Arts Centre Project Patron: Mark Wilkinson

Trustees: Mike Bowden (President), Lambert Courth, Nemmy Elliott, John Gaca, Jonathan Grew (Chairman), Elizabeth Frearson (Charity Correspondent), Maggie Moore, Neil Patterson

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The Pantomime Trail was enjoyed by all; the Pantomime Trail competition entrants were received by, the majestically dressed Old King Cole (The Trust President).

The Head teacher of Rowdeford School, Ingrid Lancaster-Gaye, summed up Winter Wonderland by saying “it was a truly magical spectacle and more successful than ever could have been anticipated. Thank you to all of you who came along and supported the event and also thank you to the army of kind people who so cheerfully made it possible.” I echo these words and reiterated my thanks to the organising team.

THE FUTURE

The completion of the Arts Centre means that the key objective for the Charity over the last few years has been achieved. The Charity therefore consulted the school and the Governors to establish their view how the Charity’s objects could best be met in the future.

There is a need to prepare children with special needs for an independent future once they leave the security of school. A priority is to find a way that they can better integrate into mainstream society and, wherever possible, carry out an occupation with confidence. Within the school campus there are still the derelict remains of the old kennels and these beg to be utilised for a positive purpose. The school has already established a speciality in horticulture with the Victorian Garden. The Charity therefore agreed that a Feasibility Study should be undertaken to establish how best to build on this and meet the need for vocational education through the potential offered by the derelict kennels and the surrounding woodland.

The resulting study is ongoing with a view to creating a Vocational Centre. The School, Governors, county educational representatives, the Trust and George Batterham, the Architect, have started discussions on the potential. The concept is crystallising and we hope to make an announcement about phase one of the project in March and give a clear vision of the objectives and the build plan, together with the all important budget for the project.

Thank you all for your continued support throughout the year and I hope that you will find the new project as exciting as we do.

Jonathan Grew
Chairman

January 2011

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