




This month's newsletter will be an extended version as we've just got so much to tell you! It's continued to be 'one of those years' so far at Thomley due to the flood and now a recent burglary. However we're not ones to wallow, so onwards and upwards to a brighter May and the rest of the year. We just want to say a very big thank you to everyone for their support, patience and donations over the last few months.

The Thomley team 

Bad news first.....We've been burgled!



If the flood wasn't enough to start the year off, we've now been burgled!! The thieves (we can assure you other words were used to describe them at the time!) broke into the canteen and barn, stealing the dehumidifiers that were drying out the flood and our ride on lawn mower!

As a result, this year's projects have suffered a bit of a setback, however we aim to have the canteen up and running by summer.

Revision of recommended donations and introduction of gift vouchers

Although we make every effort to minimise costs to visitors, it has unfortunately come to that time when we need to look at increasing our recommended donations.

During this year's evaluation, we have decided to ask all our **families, groups and schools** their thoughts on our current recommended donations and ideas on possible increases. In response to the evaluation, revised recommended donations will be made effective from **1st September for groups and schools and 1st October for families.**

Please bear in mind that recommended donations cover just 13% of Thomley's running costs, so any additional donations are welcome. However recommended donations are flexible and families will not be turned away if costs are prohibitive

Birthday Parties (Up to 20 children)

The following recommended donations will be effective from the 1st June 2009 :



- 2hr party - £100 (inc. 30 min sensory room session)
- Full day party - £120 (inc. 1 hour sensory room session)

We also now offer after school birthday parties on request. These parties are from 4-6pm, with a recommended donation of £120 (including 30 min sensory room session).

We will require 25% of the above recommended donation at the time of booking.

(Please note, all parties which have already pre-booked for 2009 will remain at our current recommended donation)

Gift Vouchers

We have been approached by many families asking if we could offer gift vouchers, making an ideal and extremely useful present. We completely agree and will be introducing a gift voucher scheme in June. For more information please ask the office.



Upcoming dates

Open 10am-3.30pm

May School Holidays

26th -30th May
(27th - open 10am-4pm)

Summer Holiday

21st July -29th August

Pre-School Days

12th May
9th June
14th July

Adult Days

5th May
2nd June
7th July

Quiet Days (Max 30)

30th May
27th June

Teenage Day

21st July
(younger siblings welcome)

Dads Day

16th May
(for families with disabled children only)

Closures

Sat 18th July -due to staff training

Open day -29th August

If you are coming with fewer than originally booked, please let us know so we can offer places to others.

Schools Open Week - 23rd to 29th June

This year we'd really like to encourage more schools to visit Thomley and see first hand how our centre can compliment their school activities. We have decided to hold a **Schools Open Week between the 23rd - 29th June** for all special schools, inclusive mainstream schools or home - schooled disabled children. If you would like to encourage your child's school to get involved then please pass on our details!



FAREWELL TO PETER SIMMONDS - TRUSTEE

Since 2004, Peter Simmonds has brought valuable personal and professional experiences to Thomley's board of Trustees. Sadly Peter has had to step down from the board, and we would like to thank him for his time and commitment to the organisation. On behalf of all at Thomley, we bid him farewell and wish him all the best for the future. **THANK YOU PETER.**

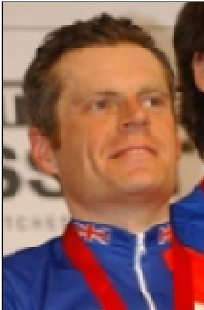
WELCOME TO LISA SHOESMITH – FINANCE TRUSTEE



We are delighted that our board of Trustees is not however shrinking. We would like to welcome Lisa Shoemith who, after 4 years of involvement with Thomley already, has agreed to become an official member of the board, as Finance Trustee. Qualified as a Chartered Accountant, Lisa brings valuable experience from the commercial sector where she works as General Manager of the Really Good card company.

In the capacity of Finance Trustee, Lisa will play an advisory role, helping Thomley to make prudent financial decisions and remain compliant to legal regulations.

“Having been involved with Thomley since 2005 and visited for a day every few months, I've seen how the Centre has grown and matured into the facility it is today and I was delighted and honoured when I was approached about becoming a Trustee”.



WELCOME TO BRYAN STEEL – THOMLEY SPORTS AMBASSADOR

Many of you may remember Bryan Steel, the Olympic & World Championship medallist cyclist, who officially opened Thomley's cycle track in 2008. Bryan was so inspired by the ethos of Thomley that he has offered his ongoing support in the role of 'Sports Ambassador'. As Ambassador, Bryan will not only provide high profile representation for Thomley, but will also offer hands-on support to any of our sporting activities. Initial projects include the development of our 'safe cycling project' and moral support to Edd and Ben, our marathon men! We are honoured that Bryan has chosen to lend his credibility to Thomley and to act as an Ambassador for our work.

“When I visited Thomley to open their cycle track, I was so inspired with the work that is being done there. Thomley gives young people with disabilities and their families a chance to relax and to have fun. Even when the centre is full, everyone is an individual and all needs are catered for”.

In his youth Bryan was classed as a disaffected child, not attending school for various reasons and eventually getting into trouble at school, with his family and the police. When he started secondary school Bryan was overweight and bullied and it was later discovered that he was dyslexic. Through his brother, Bryan found cycling. This was something that he was good at and helped focus his life, bringing it back on track and changing it for the better. Within 4 years Bryan was selected for the National Cycling team of which he remained a member until he retired in 2004.

Over his 14 year international cycling career, Bryan clocked up an impressive collection of medals, winning four World Championship silvers (2000, 2001, 2003 and 2004), a World Championship bronze (2002), a Commonwealth Games Silver (2002) and an Olympic Bronze. Bryan retired from sport after the Athens Olympics and now works for several Charities and Associations.

A NEW ARRIVAL AT THOMLEY!!



Congratulations to Dawn, and husband Mark, who are expecting their first child in September!! We're so excited and couldn't be happier for them both!

This will mean that **we are recruiting for a full time playworker** to cover Dawn's 6 month maternity leave, with the possibility of a job share / part time position once Dawn has returned....

We are looking for a dynamic, experienced and committed individual to join the team, with key responsibilities for activity planning, organisation and preparation. Level 2 Playwork qualification or equivalent is essential. As an organisation, we are currently under-represented by male staff and we therefore welcome male applicants.

Please see <http://thomleyactivitycentre.org/about-us/staff-vacancies/> or contact Claire for further details relating to salary and job description on 01844 338380 / claire@thomleyhall.org

The closing date is Monday 25th May and interviews will be held between the 2nd and 3rd June

Easter Activities

This was yet another jam packed holiday, with our 'eggcellent' annual Easter hunt and egg rolling competition in the first week. On your next trip to Thomley, make sure you visit our brand new living willow den on the field, which was built by many of your own hands!! With miserable weather on the Thursday, our outdoor fort building became an indoor event with dens, castles and pirate ships!

After Easter we started the week with some fantastic yoga inspired 'tatty bumpkin' toddler sessions! Meg and Mog (the very spoilt Thomley gerbils!) had their 1st birthday celebrations with cakes, balloons and their furry friends from Zoolab (although perhaps the snake and cockroach were not particularly furry!). The end of the week was dominated by mud, mud pies and more mud!! (Can you tell we like to get messy?!?!). Our woodwork sessions were as popular as ever, with some fantastic bird boxes and name plaque designs.

Also a big thank you to Paul Saxton and the girls from the Ladies Reading Royals for continuing to offer football skills sessions over both weeks of the holiday.



Every little helps

New target for Tesco Vouchers...we still need your help!

Collection dates between 2nd March- 7th June

Wow thanks to you we've reached our target of 2,500!!! So we've decided to up our target to **5000 vouchers!!!**

Thank you so much to everyone who has been collecting on our behalf. You have collected an amazing total of 3,100 vouchers so we can buy everything that we had on our wish list. We have now reset our target to **5000 vouchers** which will enable us to buy the following items too.....

- * Hockey set -730 vouchers * Tippin targets - 460 vouchers ** Mini beast mobiles - 450 vouchers
- *Dial-a-bug -280 vouchers *RSPB Singing Birds – 230 vouchers each

This is the only voucher scheme that Thomley is eligible for so we really need your help..... please, please, please collect on our behalf! Thank you

2009 Craft Fairs

Unfortunately we have decided that we are not going to hold a summer craft fair this year, as we are planning to put all our efforts into supporting Edd and Ben, our marathon men! We still plan to hold our annual Christmas Craft and Food Fair on Saturday 21st November..... so keep the date in your diary! If you would be interested in running a stall, then please email milly@thomleyhall.org or call the office for further details.

Wish list...

Thank you so much for all your recent donations from our wish list. These donations enable us to keep the centre looking good and help us with projects that we could not otherwise afford.

We are currently wishing for.....

- Picnic table umbrellas with weights
- High chair with harness
- Gas barbeque
- Folding wheelchair
- Hand mixer
- Microphone and mini PA system
- Rotary washing line
- Swing ball
- Tents
- Binoculars
- Old carpet
- Chicken wire
- White socks

Change of details

Joe is in the process of updating our database so that we can actually use it! If you know that your details are not up to date e.g. address, telephone numbers, sibling or additional children please email joe@thomleyhall.org or call the office.



Spaces at Desborough Den!

(High Wycombe)

Spaces are available at this popular inclusive Saturday Club for all children aged 5-12 years. The club aims to provide families of children who have special needs valuable respite care.

£12 per session.

For further details contact Ella Hay (Manager) 01494 713994 or visit www.desplayden.co.uk



Don't forget our Dad's day (for families of disabled children only) on Saturday 16th May.

Thomley is a great place to meet, chat or just play! One of our regular dad's thought the following...

'I have enjoyed some great Dad's days at Thomley. With stimulating activities and friendly attentive staff, all in a safe and secure environment...I couldn't recommend this centre enough'



Support our new parent led project.....

Wine and Words

Hello, my name is Chris Beck and I visit Thomley Hall with my son Barnaby.

I am working with Claire and Milly on a new 'Creative' project and I would be delighted to hear from other parents, siblings, family members and carers who have first-hand experience of living, knowing and working with children/young people who have disabilities.

I would like to invite you to join me, in creating a '**Book of Awareness**' entitled '**That's how it is**' to be filled with words, poetry, songs, sketches and illustrations written and created by families who know 'How it is'. Inspired by our children, not only will this project/book allow us to share our experiences but also offer insight and awareness to those who may not truly understand.

You may like to write just one line of thought, a rhyme or a poem. It could be a song, a small pencil sketch or cartoon...it really doesn't matter as long as it relates to your experience of '**how it is**' for you. Submissions can of course, be anonymous.

The proposed planning of this project goes something like this!

1. I will be introducing myself to you at 'Family Days' and 'Dads and Male Carers Days' to hear your ideas and thoughts, and hopefully to inspire you all to join in.
2. We plan to hold a '**Words and Wine**' evening which will be an opportunity to share a glass of wine together, be introduced to this exciting new venture and to hear a few words written or a couple of songs sung.
3. (A few months down the road) we will stage a '**That's how it is**' event to share ALL the work created to date. Finally ALL work/submissions will be collated and our book – '**That's how it is**' will then be printed and published and ready to share with the world!

Apart from sharing '**That's how it is**' with all those people we know, it can of course be sold as a book, becoming a great 'gift of awareness' and raising some much needed and deserved funds for our well loved Thomley Hall.

Thank you for reading this article. I look forward to meeting you all and hopefully working together to create and compile our very own book of awareness.

Please start now – any thoughts and words that come to mind – write them down.

Many thanks and very best wishes to you all

Chris



Chris and Barnaby working on our new living willow den!

HOW TO CONTACT US

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