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May 2012 contents







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SNAPDRAGONS KEYNSHAM

Take a look into the new Snapdragons and see what lies in store for the children who will attend there.

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NEWSDESK

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INCOMING

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Parfnt ffaturfs

HOMEPLAY

How to care for a guinea pig, farmyard iPad apps and how to make your own flower flags!

THE GUIDE

Encouraging creativity in your home with Kat Davey and Hayley Fitton on her EYP role.

OUR STAFF

STAFF NEWS

Announcements straight from the staff room
- births, marriages & promotions. Also read about
our staff charity missions with Lisa Flenley in her
Moonwalk & Josie Pearce straight from China!

Shaper (on)

ATWORTH

43 Bath Road, Atworth, Wiltshire, SN12 8JW 01225 707009

BROADWOOD

Broadwood Avenue, Corsham, SN13 0LX 01225 811515

CORSHAM

Pound Pill, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 9YW 01249 714060

GROSVENOR

4 Grosvenor Place, Bath, BAI 6AX 01225 483660

KEYNSHAM

Ellsbridge House, Bath Road, Keynsham, BS31 ITL 0117 986 1173

MELKSHAM

3 St Margaret's Gardens, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7BT 01225 899488

WESTON

Henley Lodge, Weston Road, Bath, BAI 2XT 01225 426255

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James Collard Mary Llewellin

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Francesca Thompson Sara Steinfeldt

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITORS

Rosemary Collard







newsdesk

ur festival of the month in March was Holi, the famous Hindu festival for Spring.

Holi is a fun-filled, colourful celebration said to have originated from when the mischievous Lord Krishna scattered coloured powder over his beloved Radha and the other gopis (milkmaids) and these days the "play of colours" is still the major feature. People take to the streets with bright colours smeared on their faces and scatter coloured powder in the crowds. Children with big syringes, or 'pichkaris', squirt coloured water so that everyone's clothes become a riot of colour. People exchange good wishes, sweets and gifts, bonfires are lit and there is music and dancing.



As Holi marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring, prayers are offered for a good growing season and a fruitful harvest. The sense of a new season also allows people to forgive each other over past disagreements and make fresh starts in their relationships.

At Atworth the trees in the front garden were draped with jewel-coloured saris and sitar music drifted across the lawn as the children and staff from Melksham and Atworth got together for their very own Holi. Everyone wore old clothes or white pillow cases and enjoyed some exhuberant throwing of colours and squirting of water using water balloons and pichkaris improvised from recycled plastic bottles. The children snacked on Indian food and thandai, a cooling milk drink.

All the other nurseries also celebrated in style and it was no coincidence that the artist of the month was Jackson Pollock, famous for his splatter paintings, so there were even more opportunities for colourful creativity! The children certainly enjoyed the chance to cover each other - and the staff - with an array of paints!





Mobile hero!

Two year old Matthew, who attends Snapdragons Melksham, proved recently that he can keep a cool head in an emergency.

When his mum collapsed one morning at their home, he quickly found her phone and called his Aunty Vicky. After Matthew told her his mummy was ill, Vicky contacted Matthew's grandmother, who rushed to the rescue.

While they waited for help to come, Matthew stayed close to his mum and kept telling her not to worry because nanny was on her way.

Matthew tells us that he likes playing with his mummy's phone and he knew who to call because the numbers have pictures and he saw his Aunty Vicky. What a brave boy!



ICT CONFERENCE We are excited to be given the opportunity to speak at the South West ICT Conference on July 4th. We will be running a seminar, speaking about the use of iPads in Early Years.



Easter parades

Flocks of giant yellow chicks and super-sized rabbits set the keen eyed nature lovers in Bath and Wiltshire a-twitter just before Easter. What could it mean? Where had they come from? They needn't have worried, it was just those fun-loving children and staff from Snapdragons Grosvenor and Atworth dressed up for their easter egg hunts. Easter activities took place in all the

nurseries with some beautiful displays, crafts, baking and egg hunts. At Corsham the children hunted for eggs and paraded in their beautiful bonnets and in Broadwood children and parents turned out for a teddy bears' picnic and bonnet parade.

Cheeky Monkeys Tea Party

Grosvenor also hosted an afternoon tea party in aid of the

National Childbirth
Trust. The children
were able to join
in with music and
forest sessions
in their beautiful
garden before
enjoying some
delicious homemade
cakes with their
families and guests.



Our new Melksham garden

A new wild forest garden is being developed at Melksham and we're very excited about the opportunities it will give the children to engage in forest school activities and creative outdoor learning with all the staff, especially Lorraine Pascoe who is

currently training to be a Level 3 Forest School Leader. Work has already begun and you can follow the progress on the photos page of the website. To launch the garden we will be holding a Forest Garden Family Barbecue, so watch out for details!

We were very sad to say goodbye to Thomas the Tank Engine who has gone into retirement after many excellent years of service at his post in the centre of the "Thomas Garden". Thomas was beginning to look very tired and his creaking joints were no longer able to support the children!

In other news

World music

Using Wiltshire Local Authority grant for two year olds, our Melksham, Corsham and Broadwood nurseries have invested in some wonderful 'World Music' Resource Kits from The Musical Tree House. The kits feature instruments made from natural materials and sourced from around the world and are specially chosen to help Early Years development. Our staff will be trained by The Musical Tree House in a schedule of sessions to expand their repertoire of music, learn how to play the instruments and engage children in rhythm circles, singing, musical and coordination games and dance exercises.



THANKS FOR OUR WOOD We would like to thank Richard & Rees from Dick Willows, Bathford, for being so patient and helping us choose some wonderful large tree stumps for our garden in Melksham!







OOH LA LA Children at Snapdragons Weston enjoyed an exciting 'French Day' in April, which included the opportunity to learn basic French words, taste French delicacies and decorate French flags!



trip to Warleigh Lodge Farm, near Bathford, is a springtime fixture that never fails to delight our children. Julian and Rosemary, the owners of this beautiful farm, are well-used to hosting visits from local schools and nurseries and clearly enjoy sharing their knowledge as they patiently show the children how to care for the animals and appreciate the surroundings.

This year was no different, despite the brutal onslaught of the April weather, and children from all our nurseries had a wonderful time running through the fields, exploring Peter Rabbit's Tree and riding in a trailer to visit the cows and sheep. Then it was back to the farmyard for a bit of hard work because there were all sorts of jobs to be done. Julian needed our help to feed the lambs and goats, groom the donkeys and give the pigs some fresh hay to sleep on. Phew!

We'd like to thank Julian and Rosemary for letting us visit again this year and for another exciting insight into life on a farm. Don't forget to share the fun by watching the videos and viewing the photos on the website.

Did you know you can book a children's party at Warleigh Lodge Farm? They also sell free range eggs and a delicious selection of sausages. For more information, call 01225 859065.



"I GET THE PICTURE," SNAPPED HAYLEY. LOSING NO TIME, SHE PUNCHED THE NUMBERS
INTO THE PHONE AND BEGAN TO TALK. "BATMAN? IS THAT YOU? YOU'VE GOT TO GET HERE
QUICKLY. WE NEED HELP. WE NEED YOU TO SET SOME GROUND RULES FOR SUPERHERO PLAY!"

In other news

Judging honours After winning the Website of the Year Award at the 2011 Nursery World Awards, we were absolutely delighted when James Collard, director and creative media expert, was asked to be on the panel of judges for the 2012 awards. These prestigious awards are recognised as a benchmark of quality within the industry and we would like to congratulate James for this achievement.

Book at bedtime

We had another super bedtime story session at Broadwood to mark World Book Day on 1st March. Thank you to George's mum, Amanda, for reading his favourite story to everyone.

Parent questionnaire

Our annual parent surveys are available online now! We want to get as much feedback as possible and are offering you the chance to win a week's free childcare if you complete the survey! http://goo.gl/IPULx

COSTUME DRAMA Dressing up was all the rage at Corsham with a Rainbow Day and a Flower Power Day producing some amazing costumes.





snapdragons keynsham

Our new nursery at Keynsham will be built on the knowledge and experience in nursery care and education that we have built up over the past 14 years. As in all our nurseries, the children in our care will enjoy a rich and stimulating environment that will enable them to think creatively and imaginatively to enable them to become the artists, engineers, inventors, scientists or novelists of the future. At Ellsbridge House, both the indoor and outdoor space is being planned to maximise its value to everyone and the design will be driven by the children's interests and needs. An emphasis on outdoor play and Forest School sessions will give the children independence and empowerment, the facility to explore and make sense of life.

A dedicated art studio will mean that children will be able to work on projects they are interested in and return to them on a daily basis because we know that thinking and being creative needs time, atmosphere and space to develop.

Working with parents in a partnership of learning and care, we are confident that whilst giving children the freedom to play and experiment, we can support their decisions and judgements and encourage expressions of ideas, helping them to become happy, confident and independent learners.

Together, with our dedicated and caring team, we will provide your child with an outstanding childhood experience, ensuring a happy and confident foundation for school. Welcome to our Snapdragons family, Keynsham!





Education in our nurseries doesn't stop with the children, our staff are constantly offered opportunities to learn and build on their skills too. We have built up a highly knowledgeable team of qualified professionals and at Keynsham we will develop a teaching facility where we can deliver in-house training to staff from all our nurseries. Innovations in education and developments in nursery practice will be passed on to our staff regularly, resulting in an even more skilled and professional workforce.

From the earliest beginnings in our baby room, all the way through to pre-school, the children will learn a love of language and books, of exploring and questioning, of creating and attempting new challenges. They will be introduced to artists and musicians, to iPads and to Forest School where going outside and getting muddy in the woodlands, skipping through the grass and going on nature rambles are year-round, everyday activities that your child will simply love.

THE RESTORATION

Ellsbridge House is a listed building and a well-loved local landmark with a rich history and we've been really excited about restoring it to its former glory. We've pulled down modern partitions revealing the original beautifully proportioned rooms and allowing natural light to flood back in. We've retained the built-in cupboards and an amazing victorian range in the kitchen and we've carefully repaired the decorative plaster mouldings on the ceilings and cornices.







NEW TECHNOLOGY

The extent of the work needed to restore the building has given us the perfect opportunity to add some thoroughly modern touches. The children's toilets are being fitted with automatic no-touch flushes for maximum hygiene and the environmentally friendly taps and lights will be operated by movement sensors to conserve water and power. CCTV in the rooms will be used to help train the staff so that they can monitor and maintain their excellent practice.

KITCHEN GARDEN

Within the grounds of Ellsbridge house is a historic walled kitchen garden, which we are restoring to its original use. The children will help to plant and grow their own choice of vegetables, fruit and herbs and take part in regular cooking sessions, using their home-grown produce. We believe that involving the children in their food from "field to fork" gives them a life-long love of healthy eating. Look out for our feature next month as we investigate the benefits of healthy eating.

HOW TO BE A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

There's lots more information about Snapdragons Keynsham on our website (www.snapdragonsnursery.com/keynsham) and you can register for updates there too. We'll let you know all about our progress and you'll be the first to hear about our open days in July! And don't forget to come along to our Forest Festival on the 8th September - more information will be available on the website.

Snapdragons Keynsham - opening in September 2012.

A new era in childcare for Keynsham. Don't take our word for it, come and see.

Homeplay

iPad app review by Lisa Missen, Snapdragons Broadwood

Preschool Playmat: Farm-Fun



This app is based around a farm-yard and has four different interactive activities for young children to explore. It has simple and clear instructions for the children to follow and understand.

Each activity concentrates on a different element of mathematical development. For example, the "memory barn" helps to enhance children's concentration and recall,

with the "counting the animals" activity helping to promote counting and number recognition.

Activities and articles to inspire you when at home

with your children.

I feel this app is well designed with bright, colourful images and it's always the first one chosen by the children in our pre-school room.

Preschool Playmat: Farm-Fun is available on the iOS App Store for £1.99



Which pet is right for you?

PART TWO: GUINEA PIGS



Guinea pigs are very sociable animals and can make great pets for all sorts of households. They enjoy the company

of people when they are used to them, but often need the companionship of other guinea pigs.

Guinea pigs have very sensitive hearing and will be scared by loud noises - it is important that young children are always supervised.

HOUSING

The accommodation has to be large enough to provide both living and sleeping areas. For two guinea pigs this should be at least 120cm long x 60cm wide x 60cm high with separate sleeping compartments for each animal. If housed

outside the hutch needs to be raised about a metre off the ground, insulated and be weather, draught and predator proof.

HANDLING

In order to pick them up correctly you must always approach your guinea pig from the front, so they don't get frightened, then pick them up using both hands - one under the chest and tummy, the other supporting the hind quarters - then hold close against your body.

FEEDING

Guineas need to be fed a special diet in order to keep them healthy and strong - a specially formulated diet for guinea pigs together with a plentiful supply of good quality hay and small quantities of fresh vegetables (not lettuce or grass cuttings as these may cause stomach upsets) will supply sufficient vitamins, minerals and plant fibre to your pet.



VITAL STATISTICS

- Adults can weigh from 700g-1200g depending on breed and sex.
- They can live from 5-6 years but some may live longer.
- Maturity occurs at two months of age in females and three months in males.
- The peak reproductive period for females is from 3 or 4 months to 20 months of age.

You can find more information on guinea pigs such as vaccinations, neutering or anything else on the info pages at www.ashmanjones.co.uk



A piece of white cotton fabric (approx 15cm x 30cm)

A straight stick (approx 20cm)

- Flowers
- A hammer
- String
- Glue
- A flat surface a plank or a chopping board is great



Place the flowers in a pattern on one half of the fabric. Try and use lots of different colours for the best results!



Gently fold the other half of fabric over your flower design.



Press down with both your hands to squash your flowers down flat. Get them ready to hammer next!







Being careful of your fingers, hammer hard all over the fabric and watch the colours spread out of the flowers.

Open out your fabric and spread some glue all along one of the short ends, then tightly roll the glued end round your stick.

Finish by tying the string to each end of the stick to make a loop to hang your flag by. The flags look fantastic hanging from the trees in your garden at home so find somewhere prominent for them to go!

Theguide

Each month you can learn new practices and techniques to use at home with your child, written by some of the experienced staff working at Snapdragons.



Kat Davey, Head of Pre-School, Weston

Creative minds think alike

he Oxford English
Dictionary defines
the word "creative"
as "involving the use of the
imagination or original ideas
in order to create something".

It doesn't define what the "something" created should be. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that being creative is restricted to the arts - drawing, painting, theatre, dance, for example - but that would be missing the point.

Young children learn through creative thinking and it is important that we truly embrace each and every child's creativity and recognise that it is the creative process that children go through rather than the conclusion reached that is to be valued. The Early Years Foundation Stage states that "Creativity emerges as children become absorbed in action and explorations of their own ideas, expressing them through movement, making and transforming things using media and materials such as crayons, paints, scissors, words, sounds, movement, props and make believe." (DCSF, 2008). By acknowledging this we can make sure we are offering a wide range of creative opportunities. In our nurseries we have a strong belief that children should lead their own play and see their ideas brought to life. We provide a creative environment that allows the children to have freedom and to be innovative in a way that is unique to them.

At Snapdragons we are aware of what we can do to nurture the creative nature of each child. We ensure that our resources and materials, both recycled and new, are varied, interesting and useful. We allow children the time to explore and develop their ideas and the space to leave incompleted projects to return to later. We limit interruptions to children while they are creatively engaged

and motivated in order to allow their creations to reach a natural conclusion.

Within child care there has always been the question of why being creative is important to a child's development. You just have to step back to discover the answer: all children are born creative and this is how children learn. By embracing children's creativity we are allowing them to look at all situations and experiences in their own way and supporting them to take on challenges in a creative way. Every day we are inspired by the children's creativity and they show us new ways of looking at things and solving problems in an exciting and original way. "All children are naturally creative and they should have

opportunities to develop their skills and expression." (Brunton, 2007). Creativity is seen throughout learning communication skills, mark making, ICT, numbers, drawing, being on the move and much more.

Much of the creative process can take place outdoors through forest school sessions and exploration.

IMAGINATION

Imagination is the foundation of creativity and in young children this often manifests itself in role play. Within Snapdragons, there will be areas of the rooms that provide endless opportunities for the children's imaginations to be unleashed and these give them the



freedom to make up their own games as well as acting out memories of home life. For example, pretending to cook lunch or pretending to go on holiday. These role play games, while being based on their own observations, are often exciting and innovative in their execution, because they are not limited by adult experience.

CREATIVITY OUTDOORS

The creative process is obviously not confined to the indoors. "The creative use of the outdoor environment is also important as children do have greater response and show greater observational skills." (Compton, 2010). At Snapdragons, as well as playing outside every day, we have forest school sessions that allow the children to explore the outdoors and take part in a range of activities that incorporate all aspects of creative learning. Activities are planned but open-ended allowing the flexibility for tasks to develop in the direction of the children's interests. Resources and equipment are plentiful but not limiting, for example, a large tree trunk can become a horse, a dinosaur or a tractor; or a den built from leafy branches can be a castle, a cave or a cottage. Natural resources combined with vibrant and creative minds provide endless opportunities for every

child's development and discovery. Children learn, play and discover very differently indoors and outdoors so we provide a balance of creative opportunities.



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Each month we seek inspiration from our artist of the month. This is not to say we are expecting children to re-create pieces of artwork but more to look at all the wonderful ways of creating using a range of media and materials. For example, splatter painting was very popular when we looked at Jackson Pollock.

Being able to be a part of the children's creative space journey is something that is magical and priceless. The connections and relationships built through creativity are endless and every child is creative in their own special way. No two days are ever the same at Snapdragons and the children and the practitioners embrace each other's creativity so have lots of great fun exploring with a range of media and materials as well as imaginative games.

Kat Davey has worked for Snapdragons for 8 years and is currently studying for a Foundation Degree in Early Years Education.

theguide



My role as EYP

Hayley Fitton,
Deputy Manager, Grosvenor

When asked to write about the Early Years Professional Status I was really keen. I gained my qualification in June 2008 and have been working as the Early Years Professional (EYP) at Snapdragons Grosvenor since then.

To actually outline what an EYP does is really difficult. We are all so different. The qualification was introduced by the Government in September 2007. The aim was to encourage more graduates, with a variety of skills and experiences, to work within the Early Years sector. I was told that in becoming an EYP I would be an 'agent for change'. My own background is in dance and theatre so being an agent of any sort is very exciting for me!

When I started at Snapdragons Weston as a nursery assistant, I had been teaching dance for a few years and knew that working with children was where I wanted to base my career. I loved the course. It was hard work but so interesting I found myself reading more into each subject we studied. As well as looking in depth at the Early Years Foundation Stage we explored how we can improve the way we listen to children and treat every child as an individual. We worked on many aspects relating to children aged birth to five years. I was most interested in baby neuroscience and child protection.

There is an Early Years Professional responsible for each of the Snapdragons nurseries. Our key role is to lead and support others to ensure that good quality practice is implemented. At Grosvenor I am lucky to be able to spend time in all the rooms at nursery. I work with all the team to make targeted changes to the provision we offer. I also oversee all planning and learning journeys for the nursery making sure that our good provision is recorded! I run Big Steps sessions with Pre-School children helping them prepare their key skills for school. I am fortunate that I meet other EYPs once a term to share ideas. When planning Big Steps, I speak to the key people, the children and parents and reception teachers to ensure that we are preparing the childre for school in the best possible way.

Every day of my job is different and I love being able to spend time with children of all ages. Most of all I love that I get paid to have fun!

Staffnews



NEW BABIES

O1Vanessa Hill, Weston, George born 29th February 2012, weighing 7lb 13oz Kim Sabin, Grosvenor, Isabella May born 12th February 2012, weighing 6lb 11oz Stacey Hudd, Corsham, due September 2012 Sarah Hewitt, Grosvenor, due August 2012 Milli Prosser, Weston, due August 2012 Sacha Clayton, Weston, due September 2012 Katie Adams, Melksham, due September 2012

Kerry Price, Broadwood, due August 2012 **Natalie Smith**, Broadwood, due September 2012





MARRIAGES

02Hayley Fitton, Grosvenor, married to Ollie on 27th April 2012

Lily Ingham, Grosvenor, married to Sean on 21st April 2012

Rowena Berridge, Weston, engaged to Will no date yet set.

Vanesa Hill, Weston, engaged to Sam, no date yet set.



PROMOTIONS

03Jo Whitehead, Corsham, now Head of Babies **Amy Porter**, Grosvenor, now Head of Pre-School **Becca Teague**, Weston, now Head of Koalas **Hayley Gould**, Weston, now Deputy Head of Koalas

Catherine Bond - after completing her secondment to Wiltshire Council where she worked as an advisory teacher, Catherine Bond returns to us in a full-time advisory teacher role. Initially Catherine will be supporting our Corsham nursery and from September she will oversee the introduction of the revised EYFS in all our nurseries. Catherine is a qualified Early Years teacher with many years experience and we are extremely lucky to have her back on the team.

Lisa's Moonwalk

We're delighted to welcome ex-Area Manager Lisa Flenley back from her extended maternity leave in a new part-time customer liaison role. As if the shock of coming back to work wasn't enough, Lisa is also following a punishing training schedule in preparation for the walk against breast cancer at the Moon Walk London 2012 on 12th May. At a full marathon length of 26.2 miles, this is no walk in the park, so we wish her lots of luck. If you would like to support Lisa and her team of walkers you can donate money to her cause at http://goo.gl/YKR5Z



"I want to spend my time here improving the holistic quality of care for the children."

NI HAO FROM CHINA WITH JOSIE PEARCE

I arrived in Changsha, in south central China in January 2012 to begin working for International China Concern. This is a charity committed to showing love, hope and opportunity to China's disabled children. There are thousands of abandoned children in China. This is largely due to the One Child Policy, superstitions, family pressures, lack of support services and the financial implications of raising disabled children. While adjustments to the policy are slowly decreasing the number of abandonments, hundreds of thousands of children are abandoned each year.

I am working with the youngest group of children in the charities care in Changsha. These children have medical conditions such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy. In China relationship is more important than credentials, so I have been spending my time working alongside local staff to model good practice and build relationships, so that they will respect my input, while providing a variety of stimulating activities to engage the children. The language barrier can make work more difficult but thankfully my mandarin slowly improves each day.

My long term aim is to improve the holistic quality of care for these children. To do this I am addressing issues of



resourcing and staff training. I hope to improve the quality and provision of play, and increase the variety of resources available to enable this. I also hope to implement the key family system and to enable therapists, teachers and carers to work together towards common goals.

I often think of everyone at Snapdragons and look back on my time there. Each day I pull on the knowledge and experiences I gained during that time and am thankful. If you would like more information on the charity or how you could help look up their website at www.chinaconcern.org or email me at josiep.china@gmail.com.

Josie worked at Snapdragons Weston and left us in 2011 to pursue her career in China.

Nursery dates for your calendar.

month away
May - July



Football match

Snap Daddies Utd (Grosvenor) v Bradfordon-Avon Ladies impartially refereed by our very own Shelley Hibbard.

Saturday 19th May 10:30



Woodland garden launch

Celebrate Melksham's new woodland garden with forest activities and a sizzling barbecue for all the family.

End of May

Other

Enchanted Forest Day

Elves, fairies, stories and crafts at Grosvenor

End of June

Jubilee Tea Party

A delightful treat at

Snapdragons Atworth

Wednesday 6th June



Summer Fete

Traditional summer fun for everyone in the spacious garden at Snapdragons Weston. Book your stalls!

Saturday 14th July 13:30 - 16:00



Sports days

Competing in a variety of events including egg and spoon and the parent dash, there is something for everyone!

June / July - check nursery for details

Other
School leaver events
Check your nursery for details
of events for school leavers.
Various dates across summer
Family Barbecue
Join us at Broadwood for a
barbecue with your family.
Friday 27th July



August - December



The Olympics

Enjoy the Olympics at Snapdragons as the nurseries host exciting activities throughout the games!

July & August - check nursery for details



Forest Festival

Round off the summer festival season with some fun and games with us at Keynsham. Advance tickets on sale soon.

Saturday 8th September 10:00 - 17:00

Other **Halloween**

The perfect time of the year for dressing up for parties! *October*



Winter Wonderland

It's time again to revel in the snow and browse the stalls as we host our annual Winter Wonderland Fayre!

Saturday 8th December 13:30 - 16:00



Christmas shows

See our latest groups of Pre-Schoolers entertain with the Christmas Nativities and Holiday Shows!

Dates to be confirmed

Other **Bonfire**

With bonfires, sparklers and fireworks, we will have a blast! *November*