



ALDWICKBURY FRIENDS ASSOCIATION (AFA)

The Aldwickbury Bazaar

Questions are often asked about the origins of the rather unique Aldwickbury Bazaar. Unique in a number of aspects; like being an outdoor event in November! The Bazaar Committee and SMT have discussed this regularly over the years, looking at when else could it be held. It is hard to think of a time when it could fit into a busy summer schedule – and just think what the weather can be like in June!

The first proper reference found about the Bazaar is in the 1975 School Magazine where Mr Chidell (former Headmaster) explains the purpose behind the Development Fund. He believed that rather than financing building projects at the School through professional appeals, the best way to raise money was through a series of smaller efforts. The Bazaar features in this list of events which raised money for the school -including jumble sales, the sale of scrap paper and the selling of produce grown in the garden nursery (which was on the site of the Pre-Prep building). By these means he raised £100,000 over 27 years to help create the Aldwickbury we recognise today.

Then in the 1978 magazine an article appears that explains that three years previously a group of mothers were “persuaded” to be involved in the School Bazaar – sound familiar? They found it a “rewarding challenge”! It also reads as if the Bazaar was held in the Christmas term and, in what can be regarded as one of the foundation stones of the whole event, “newcomers to the School” were invited for “help and new ideas”. It was a School community effort then.

From 1979 it was a small event held on Friday afternoon using the hall and gym with a few outside games. It always had a focus on the boys being involved although parents were the engine. It was moved to a Saturday because it was becoming disruptive to routine at a time of year when academic matters were of greater importance and preparations for the play and carols were an important afternoon focus. Senior boys enjoyed the Saturday spot - after all Saturday morning lessons had just been abandoned as a part of giving families more time together. It was always a home-grown event and the outdoors activities grew inexorably.

The Bazaar funds were used to buy additional items for the school, from typewriters to science equipment.



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When Mr Hales joined the school in 2003 he felt it was a good moment to allocate the money raised through the Bazaar to the extra luxuries that would enhance the boys' play time at the school, so the original adventure playgrounds were built as well as the addition of various other items of play equipment for the Pre-Prep. Alongside this, items that would benefit the Bazaar, such as new trestle tables and the popcorn machine have been purchased. The boys' views have always been taken into account as well as taking suggestions from staff and parents.

We also felt it was important to help the boys understand their responsibility to support charitable causes, so 50% of the money raised goes to a charity or charities that the boys in Years 3 – 8 have voted for.

Looking into the origins of the Bazaar the basic tenets would seem to be:

- The whole school community comes together in a purposeful way
- The older boys are given the responsibility of contributing independently of their parents
- Parents are given the opportunity to be involved in a school event that benefits both the school and charitable causes
- It is an event that is focussed on the boys (and siblings)
- It is good old-fashioned fun!

One question that is raised annually is why there aren't more stalls for parents, e.g. craft stalls etc. Countless emails are received from small companies who would like to attend our 'Christmas Fair'. The majority of these would give 10% of their profit to the Bazaar fund. The Bazaar Committee have also discussed this regularly and it is always decided that it would change the nature of the event. There are many opportunities through coffee morning invitations and Christmas Fairs held by numerous organisations to buy these types of products.

Aldwickbury Bazaar is "bizarre" but the formula has worked over the years. It is so special to see the fun the children have in a very safe environment and having the freedom to spend their money with abandon! It is an event focussed on the boys' involvement in a school community occasion. Hopefully this article has helped explain



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the Bazaar a little. The comment often heard from parents who have seen several bazaars come and go is that they understand it now! So give the Aldwickbury Bazaar a go – it is different from almost any other school fair but it's great to be a bit different every now and then, especially on a cold morning in November!

In 2012 AFA officially took over the management of the Bazaar and the money raised now contributes to the AFA community building and fund-raising efforts as well as a chosen charity.

Claire Hales