



THE HEMEL HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL NEWS

www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

14th December 2007

HeadLines

Following my headlines of last week, I have been taken aback by the number of comments received from those of you who endorsed my words about the celebration of the Christmas season in school. Thank you.

At Tuesday's Carol Service, which was such a good beginning to Advent, I gave an address, which I make no apologies for reproducing in this newsletter. Although the Christmas message is a personal view, I hope that it will strike a seasonal chord with many of you. I look forward to seeing you at our Christmas Concert on Tuesday.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Headteacher's Address Carol Service 2007

Every week sees me writing the Headlines for our school newsletter. Usually these occasions come and go without comment from anyone. Sometimes, I wonder what would happen if the same Headlines appeared for two weeks running. Would anyone notice apart from my sister who reads every newsletter via the website? During my first year, I did receive a letter from an academic unconnected with the school who marvelled at my use of the subjunctive and the pluperfect tense – something which has occurred to most of you, obviously, but you were afraid to ask me in case I snapped back over-grammatically. However, a month ago I was taken aback when it became clear that lots of people had read the Headlines about Remembrance and had been moved by the story of my grandfather. He fought in World War 1. He spent nearly five years in a Prisoner of War camp in Germany during the Second World War you see, and although he died when I was five, I feel that I knew him very well indeed.

In researching his life, I have read much on World War 1 and 2 and as a byline to my grandfather's story, I have become fascinated with one particular incident in World War 1 which I believed to be apocryphal or at least vastly exaggerated until recently. I came across the incident first in that marvellous film of a wonderful play 'Oh, What A Lovely War' by Joan Littlewood. It is the first winter of the war – in 1914. Trench warfare begins but on Christmas day the British soldiers hear the sound of singing: 'Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht'. The soldiers begin talking across 'no mans' land':

Hey Tommy. How is it viz you?

Lovely! Very good! Very well, thank you.

Guten singing Jerry.

It is for you now to sing us a good song for Christmas.

Oh, ja.

They sing 'Christmas Day in the Cookhouse' (a song with words inappropriate in God's house!) and then we hear:

Bravo, Tommy, English carols is very beautiful.

Hey Tommy, present for you coming over.

The British soldiers dive for cover but then cigarettes and chocolate and German sausage and cocoa and Christmas pudding are exchanged.

Soon they meet in the middle of 'no man's land' and drink Schnapps together.

It is a poignant yet funny scene in the first act of a great 60s play.

....continued

A French book: 'Frères des Tranchées' has recently been translated into English and has been retitled 'Meetings in No Man's Land'. It contains many first hand accounts of the truce such as part of the chronicle of Medical Officer, Lieutenant Frederick Chandler.

'In the afternoon (of Christmas Day) the Germans and our men shouted to each other and arranged an unofficial armistice – they got out of the trenches and met halfway and hobnobbed with each other, exchanged souvenirs and had drinks: they rolled a couple of barrels of beer over to the Welsh lines: and in one part two German officers came out with an orderly carrying glasses and two large bottles of lager beer: they met one of our officers, shook hands, drank together and then decided they would have to call their men in: another officer – Stewart, had a box of good cigars given him: about four o'clock whistles blew and the men were called in but in our own lines and with the Germans opposite not a shot was fired the whole evening – everything was perfectly still and it was a bright frosty night – you can't imagine how delicious was that stillness and calm: for two months I have not had a quiet half hour and, oh, one does get sick of the crack of rifles. In other parts of the line they have no peace. They were Saxons opposite us, and they are good sorts I believe, they have no desire to be fighting the English. It is the beastly Prussians who have done all the harm'.

By Christmas 1915, similar scenes occurred but men were court martialled for taking part and by 1916 nothing equivalent happened. By 1917, accounts of the war in Britain and France were censored for their account of the truce of 1914. The Christmas spirit was dead. The unofficial armistice of 1914, when German and English soldiers laid down their weapons for a blessed moment of peace, played football and swapped food, were long gone.

My grandfather spent four Christmases in Oflag XII, an officer's prison camp. He received cards and Red Cross parcels and letters from my grandmother. In a play I wrote in 1995 called 'Letters from Oflag XII', fifty years after the end of the war, I imagined my grandmother reading the letters he had sent her. Never having seen the letters, it was a work of fiction but I had listened intently to 'Nanny's' stories and could hear a voice, a forgotten voice in my head as I wrote.

Christmas is a time of forgotten voices, a time when the voices of Christmas past inform the present and paint a picture of a future. In Advent we look forward to a great event: we see a light: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light". We begin again: "In the beginning was the word" and we celebrate a gift greater than any gift we could buy: "Unto us a boy is born, unto us a child is given". We hear the voices which populated our childhood; we see those scenes – my grandfather, old and frail it seemed to me, but actually only back from the war for twelve years or so, making a theatre for me from the cardboard cut outs in the comic 'Jack and Jill' – and he, born in the 1880s, thinking back to his mother, born in the 1860s. Reaching back into time; my time and your time.

One of the things which touches me most about the story of Cecil Joseph Jacob Samwell is the time he lost with his wife and his sons. He regained his family and he treasured them for the remaining years of his life.

The Christmas bells ring, the Christ child enters in, the angels sing, the shepherds visit, the wise men bring gifts – and we turn away. We do not hear. During Advent, tonight in our Carol Service, we have the chance to hear those forgotten voices, to make peace with ourselves and to remove hatred from our hearts.

In this stille nacht, this silent night of ours, let us listen intently to the voices we fail to hear at any other time.

Year 9 Trip to Tate Modern Art Gallery & Shakespeare Globe Theatre

On 22nd November Year 9 went on a trip to the Tate Modern and the Globe Theatre in London. They spent half of the day in each of them and they were both amazing places.

The Tate Modern Art Gallery

The main feature at the Tate was a piece called 'Shibboleth' by Doris Salcedo, which was a huge crack in the floor of the Turbine Hall. It stretched from one end of the hall all the way to the other. Some people are said to have fallen down this crack! It was an amazing feature that several students found very strange. The Tate Modern is a unique modern art gallery and gave students the chance to see artwork in real life and get in touch with it. It also helped us with our art projects

Zoe Brook, 9F

Shakespeare Globe Theatre

The trip was a great success as most groups got to walk out onto the stage and pretended they were a Shakespearean actor.

The octagonal theatre had no roof but the stage had two for protecting the actor's make-up and costumes. This was just one of many facts we learnt about on the tour and then we attended a quick drama workshop which was fun. We discovered many interesting facts about the Tempest which we are learning about at school and we were able to perform some drama based on the Tempest.

Thank you to Mrs Lane and Miss Johnson for organising the day and to all the teachers who helped. We all thoroughly enjoyed the day and really benefited from it.

Eloise Phillips 9F, Lizzie Ballard 9A & Priya Oedra 9F

Programming for beginners—Year 7, 8 and 9 Only

Do you want to program your own 3D, loyalty free, computer games and applications? Come to IT5 on Fridays at 13:35 to join. We will be holding these free lessons in IT5 every Friday from 13:35 to 2:10 and possibly on Thursdays too. We will be holding two beginner lessons followed by a project to make a game of your choice. Places are limited so please hurry.

Thomas Clayson 11A & Ben Tam 11L

Eid-UI-Adha

One of the most important Islamic festivals, Eid-UI-Adha is also known as the Day Of Sacrifice or Bakra Eid by Muslims from all over the world. It is the day when the Muslim community completes their journey for the pilgrimage to Mecca. The auspicious day comes to an end with jubilation after a long period of hardship. The festivities of Eid-UI-Adha continue for four consecutive days. Eid-UI-Adha 2007 is going to be celebrated from 20th December and the celebrations will linger on until 24th December.

The legendary story that forms the basis of the festival is linked to the great Prophet Muhammad Ibrahim. He readily offered his beloved son Ismael for the sake of Allah. But God being all benevolent offered lamb for the ritual of sacrifice and his son was spared. Thus, the etymology of the festival is such (Day of Sacrifice). Many people donate money and other necessary items to the underprivileged strata of society on this day.

Mrs Ramnarine

FIXTURES

Mon 17th Dec: U19 Basketball v Sandringham (H)

RESULTS

U12 County Cup Football v Marriotts won 6-4

U18 County Basketball v Longdean lost 70-50

U14 ESBA v County Upper won 80-60

U15 ESBA v Sandringham—Lost by a narrow margin

U18 County Cup Football v Goffs won 2-1 in extra time

HHS Sports Ambassador News

It has been an extremely busy week for the Sports Ambassadors, having to read lots of letters of application for the role of Sports Councillor. The best candidates were then invited for an interview. It was an extremely hard decision to make as all candidates performed brilliantly in both interview and submitted letter of application. Despite it being tough, we had to make our decisions and we would like to send our congratulations to the following students for being selected to represent their year groups.

Year 7:- Ollie Cox, Charlie Ausden and Jodie Hardcastle

Year 8:- Noah Jones and Aaron Lloyd

Year 9:- Becci Armorgie and Sarah Kinley

Year 10:- Max Farrelly and Louise Verroken-Jones


Headteacher's Commendations:

Contribution to Governors' Meeting : Louis Bransgrove 12Ng, Zoe Farrell 11C, Michael Deane 11P, Ryan Bellman-Jeffreys 11C, Caleb Parker 10P, Helena Mansbridge 10C, George Smith 9F, Zack Farrell 8C, Harrison Bassett 7N, Lois Mesenger 7L.

For excellent work in Dance: Matthew Reynolds 10A, Joe Welton 10N, Ben Garner 9A, Courtney Hart 9N, Adam Sibun 9N, Alex Eyklebosch 8F, Louise Donovan 8N, Cauley Woodrow 8L, Rhys Cassidy 8P.

For reading a lesson at the Carol Service: Nicola Kennett 7N, Oliver Gill 8A, Siobhan Elliot 8A, James Price 8A, Jacob Buckley 8C, Philippa Taylor 9L, Katie McDonnell 13A, Sophie Moore 13A.

For helping with the Carol Service: Timothy Moss 7N, Lewis Ashby 7N, Mark Baldwin 7N.

For excellent Board Games made in English: Jake Lampert 7C, Samuel Kirby 7C, Jessica Minter 7C, Chris Mann 7C, Callie Waters 7C, Danny Richards 7C

Excellent work in English: Anna Wales 7C, Jessica Minter 7C, Stanley Critchfield 7C, Bridget Philpot 9P.

Excellent work for Hampton Court Project: Andrew Coe 8P, Chloe Conroy 8L.

Parking and Vehicles around the School Site

I would like to remind parents that when picking up and dropping off students by car they should **NOT** enter the school site (unless the student has a physical disability) and should **NOT STOP** or **PARK** near to either entrance (Heath Lane or Anchor Lane). Recently the situation around these points has become very dangerous, particularly by the Heath Lane gates where cars are often parked opposite, at a point where buses are stopping to collect students at the end of the day. If everybody follows these guidelines then we should be able to ensure that the flow of traffic around the school is reasonable at all times, that all users can access the site effectively and, most importantly, that we are able to keep all our students safe. Many thanks.

Mr G Mullings, Assistant Headteacher

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter No. 85 Year 12 Certificate Presentation Evening

Gold Letters are also available via our website—www.hhs.herts.sch.uk



Asthma

Students who suffer from asthma are advised to carry their inhalers with them at all times.

If you would like an inhaler to be kept in school then please collect a medication form from Matron.

Sickness and Diarrhoea

The recommended time to be kept away from school is 48 hours from the last episode of sickness and diarrhoea.

Exclusion from swimming should be two weeks from the last episode of diarrhoea.

Mrs L Bower, Matron

School answerphone for sickness or absence

Please will all parents contact us **daily** if your child is sick, going to be in late due to a medical appointment, or is absent for any other reason. Please call our school answerphone on **01442 390103 by 9am if possible.**

PTA NEWS

Next meeting: Monday 21st January 2008 in the Library.

Judith Stallworthy, Chair HHSA (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350), Email: s.stallworthy@sky.com



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

*****Blue Week*****

December

Tues 18th	School Concert in School Hall, 7pm
Thurs 20th	Speech Night - School finishes at 1.25pm School Christmas Dinner
Fri 21st	Mistletoe Day - School finishes at 1.20pm

*****Gold Week*****

January

Mon 7th	School re-opens
Thur 10th	Year 12 Certificate Presentation Evening Year 11 Mock Languages Speaking Exams

Last two days of term

School will be finishing early on 20th and 21st December. On 20th December there will be **NO** food in the canteen at break and Christmas lunch will be served at lunchtime.

On 21st December the canteen **WILL NOT** be serving food at break or lunch.

BOVINGDON BUS ARRANGEMENTS

Speech Day and End of Term

Arrangements for the last two days of term have been detailed in Gold Letter 84 distributed to students 7 December. End of school day details are:

Thursday 20th December – School finishes 1.25 pm

Friday 21st December – School finishes 1.20 pm

The Arriva bus 850 will pick up at **1.30 pm** on the above dates. The Centrebus 850 will pick up at the usual time of **3.40 pm**. Students who do not catch the bus at 1.30 pm may wish to catch a bus from the town centre, come back to school to catch the Centrebus at 3.50 pm or make personal transport arrangements.

Library Notice

Please note that the Library will be closed for the first week of the Spring Term to enable us to undertake a major reorganisation. A box will be available at Student Services for returned library books.

Mrs Krajewski—Librarian