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HeadLines

I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. In these challenging times for the world, I present to you the Christmas message that I wrote for the Carol Service on Tuesday. I wrote it from the heart to reflect my own faith, but I hope that whatever your beliefs, it strikes a chord.

But first of all, may I thank the staff of the school for their hard work and efforts this term. You are all wonderful.

May I congratulate the students on some excellent achievements on the sports field and in the concert hall, in the classroom and in the community. Well done!

I would wish to commend the work of the Head Boy and Head Girl and their deputies, the House captains and the sports teams, with a special end of term congratulations to the Year 8 girls who won the District Netball Shield...again. Brilliant.

I would like to thank the students and staff who sang and performed so beautifully at the Carol Service, and Mrs Bailey who led them... and to congratulate all those students who were presented with prizes on Speech Night.

Congratulations also to a girl who exemplifies all that is best about the school: Fifi Mills who gained a place in the County Youth Orchestra playing the double bass.

I bid a fond farewell to Kevin Norwood who has been an excellent Head of RE and one of the best form tutors on the planet, as well as giving so much of his own time to projects such as the Ecuador link. Sir John Lawes School is gaining a fine Head of Humanities. Thank you to Fiona Dayton for holding the fort while a new Head of RE is appointed.

Next term, we look forward to establishing our second and third specialisms in Science and Mathematics and Gifted and Talented, but the first event to anticipate keenly is 'Anything Goes' the school musical which debuts in late January. I hope to see you there and at many events next term.

Thank you to the keen readers of this column who send in comments and suggestions. I haven't been able to include the words of 'The Little Drummer Boy' as requested but my Christmas message reflects the message of the song, I trust.

Please stay safe and well and warm over Christmas and I look forward to welcoming back the students on 5th January.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Headteacher's Address Carol Service 2008



The late, great Joyce Grenfell came to prominence originally with a monologue entitled 'Useful and acceptable gifts' in which she portrayed a speaker at a Womens' Institute meeting who exhorted us to make our own Christmas presents out of things we might find in the hedgerow.

Now, there are a number of activities that it is unwise to undertake even in the grip of a credit crunch:

- making your own wine from unrecognisable and inedible vegetables and berries you've never heard of is one;
- eating mushrooms you've picked in a field which look like they should have a gnome holding a fishing rod sitting on top of them is another and
- storing up tins minus labels which a certain supermarket is selling for 10p a go and planning to open them at suitable intervals for 'surprise' meals is another.

My mother spent most of the Second World War in Dundee. The shortages and rationing suffered by my paternal grandmother in England were not as prevalent in Scotland. My mother told us tales of the Italians who presided over ice cream parlours or the wonderful bakeries which opened up at 6 am each day with their stock of lustrous pies, pasties and pastries that would not be seen again in England for some years to come. The time of austerity lasted well into the fifties.

I remember a large parcel arriving from the United States, from Chicago to be more precise. In it was a beautiful silk party dress alongside some tinned ham and a gramophone record or '78' on which our cousin Margaret warbled tunelessly accompanied by excessive background hiss.

My maternal grandmother had travelled on the Queen Mary to see her brother Alec in Chicago. He had 'made good' and, as a well paid dentist, lived in the lap of a luxurious existence we could only dream of, fuelled by Granny's tales of excesses, plentiful food and abundance of choice. She had spent a Christmas there and we sat open mouthed at the stories of highly decorated houses, illuminated gardens, Christmas trees as tall as houses, elaborate electric toys and tables groaning under the weight of gigantic turkeys and sufficient mashed potato to feed England, or, at least, to insulate its uncentrally-heated homes.

An English Christmas? Even taking historical factors such as wars and recession into account, there remains a class divide or wealth divide that has probably always existed in one way or other. George II may have kept 3,000 turkeys in Richmond Park to distribute at the allotted time to friends and family and Queen's College Oxford may still, reputedly, serve Wild Boar's Head for Christmas lunch, but many people still identify more profoundly with the fictional Cratchitt family struggling to make the best of very little and counting their blessings in the face of impending tragedy: 'God Bless you, Tiny Tim'.

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In recent weeks, BBC Radio has been exhorting us not to ‘cancel Christmas’ and elaborating the plan with guest appearances by Delia Smith instructing us how to feed a family of six for £25 or so. The idea of simplifying Christmas appears to be based wholly and solely on the premise that if you are rich, you can guarantee a happier Christmas for your children than if you are poor. Advertising punches home the message even more emphatically that without a Wii or Xbox or Playstation or multifarious TV channels there is no hope of fulfilment at Christmas.

Every age has its own set of references, its own paradigms. Nostalgically warming though it may be for me to hanker back to a simple and more joyful era where a small orange and a Brazil nut in the toe of a woollen sock was significant, I actually inhabit an era where expectations are very different.

In the traditional Russian story of Baboushka, the old woman is visited by the three wise men. She welcomes them, feeds them wonderful soup and listens to their stories. Despite giving them shelter, she cannot bring herself to open the cupboard where many beautiful toys are hoarded and give them anything to take to the Baby Jesus. Next morning she awakes to find the wise men gone. Regretting her lack of generosity, she pursues the magi with a sack of toys, but wherever she goes, even to the stable in Bethlehem, she has just missed them. Thus her fate is sealed – she is destined to wander the earth in search of the most precious gift of all and whilst she wanders, she distributes presents of wonderful wooden toys to children all over the world.

The tale of Baboushka is one of lost opportunities and the nature of charitable giving at Christmas. It melds the Santa Claus, Three Kings, Nativity stories into a fascinating glimpse at ourselves. What are we prepared to give? Which characteristics of traditional Christmas figures reflect us most closely?

Perhaps you, like me, read of a charity recently called ‘Save the Family’ in which a village of twenty-four cottages give shelter and hope to homeless families in North West England. Movingly and aptly the Nativity play is acted out by homeless people.

Every year at this time we have an opportunity to celebrate Christmas in our own way. School traditions. Family traditions. For many it has become more of a winter solstice than a part of the Christian year but, whatever our starting point, we too can open the windows of the advent calendar and take a look at another world, another scene, another possibility.

In Louis MacNiece’s brilliant poem ‘Christmas Shopping’ he conjures up Oxford Street at Christmas, full of colour and light and materialism: ‘The great windows marshal their troops for assault on the purse...’ His phrase ‘And Christ is Born’ stands out as something lost, ignored by the masses in pursuit of more and more to acquire.

In the midst of greed and desperation and selfishness, the Christmas story stands: simple, clear and true: ‘In the beginning was the word’; ‘the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’, ‘Behold I bring you tidings of great joy...’. We ignore the story and all it stands for at our peril. Times are hard for the world. How much harder without the hope that God’s gift to us brings us peace and hope and love everlasting: “Peace on earth, goodwill to all”.

Dates for Your Diary



Gold Week

5th Jan Term begins – students to be on site 8.30 am
PSHEE Collapsed Timetable day

8th Jan Year 9 Parent Consultation Evening, 4.30 – 7 pm

8th – 23rd Jan Years 12/13 AS/A2 Public Exams and re-sits

8th and 9th Jan Year 11 MFL GCSE Mock Orals

Blue Week

15th Jan Year 10 Parent Consultation Evening, 4.30 – 7 pm

Anonymous Note to Miss Samwell

Thank you to the student who sent a note to me regarding room arrangements for lunch and break times.

I am very happy to respond to any named students.

Miss S Samwell

HEADTEACHER’S COMMENDATIONS

For Excellent Work in Art: Joseph Garner 8L, Daniel Richards 8C.

For Service to the School: Rebecca Turner 8C.

For showing public spirit and pride in the School: Louie Woodham 7A, Joshua Kelly 7A.

For gaining a place in the County Youth Orchestra: Fifi Mills 13L.

For Excellent Work in English: Sophie Kinley 7A, Talisa James 7A, George Nicodimou 7L, Will James 7L, Sam Catt 7L, Andrew Coe 9A.

For Outstanding Work in Dance: Liam Bothwell 8L, Mark Baldwin 8N.

PSHEE Day, Monday 5th January

We return to school on Monday, 5th January and have an organised programme for the whole school of Personal, Social and Health Education with elements of Economic well-being (see programme overleaf).

Also included in this collapsed timetable day are vital sessions on helping your son/daughter make some informed choices for their future.

Year 9 will have the opportunity to find out more about subjects on their pathways from Learning Leaders so that they can make the best choices for their future.

Year 11 – We are delighted to have Michele Miller (Motivational Sports Psychologist) to deliver a programme on revision techniques and planning so that your son/daughter can achieve at the highest level.

Year 13 – We have skilled trainers from the world of business ('Inside Knowledge') to deliver a selection of Careers workshops and a session on memory and study skills.

Every year group have programmes which will be delivered by outside agencies with expertise in specific areas.

Year 7

'Movie Maker' Speak Easy for Schools (social issues)

Year 8

NatWest Bank June Wilkinson

E-Safety Mrs Head, Subject Leader ICT

Personal Safety Gemma Ling, Police School Liaison Officer

'Bullying' Lesley Williams, Basildon Youth Theatre

Year 9

Contraception/STIs Sally Dussek, School Nurse

Drugs/Alcohol Bud Windeler, Druglink

Year 10

Knife Crime ADAD Theatre Company

Speed Dragon Speak Easy for Schools

(Enterprise and Financial Planning)

Year 11

Revision Techniques Michele Miller, Motivational Sports Psychologist

Year 12

Beacon Life Wenta Business College

(Financial Planning)

Driving Standards Agency

Gap Year

Year 13

'Inside Knowledge' Andrew Wright

(Careers Workshop) Ben Levine

Mark Channon

Year 10 Catering

On 21st November we went to RAF Halton in Wendover to compete in the final of the Young Chef of the Year competition. There were ten students from five local schools. All Year 10 students (38) sent off a menu, which they had created. We (Hannah and Keith) were the two students chosen from our school to compete in the final. Keith made turkey breast layered with home made stuffing, vegetables, bacon and gravy, followed by chocolate mousse served with whipped cream and grated chocolate. Hannah made chicken stuffed with a herby marscapone served with green beans and potatoes, followed by pecan tart. We had half an hour to prepare and two hours to cook. We were very nervous whilst waiting for the results. The RAF chefs were very helpful during the competition giving advice and support. When the results were announced Hannah had won 1st prize! The prize was a meal for four at The Boxmoor Lodge. Both of us really enjoyed the experience and although nervous at the beginning had a great evening and have really learnt a lot from entering the competition.

Hannah Gulley 10L and Keith Johnson 10A

PTA News

Summer Fair

The event has been arranged for Saturday May 16th.

If you would like to run your own stall, or know someone who would, please get in touch.

We have lots of things planned already including Hemel's Got Talent, which Miss Samwell will be hosting.

Also our Sports Leaders are putting together a tournament for our linked Primary schools' Year 6 students.

Next meeting is on Tuesday 20th January 2009 at 7pm in the Library.

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

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 89 Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening

All Gold Letters can be viewed on our website: www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

School policies can be viewed on our website under 'about HHS/School Policies'. If you require a hard copy of any of the policies please get in touch with the School Office.

S J Samwell

Cycling to school



If you wish your child to cycle to school please request the appropriate application form from Student Services. On production of the completed form and sight of a Herts Road Safety/Cycling Proficiency Certificate a cycle permit will be issued. Students who do not have a permit should not be cycling to school.

Sickness/absence line

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

SPORT



FIXTURES

Thurs 8th Jan

U14 County Cup Soccer v Mount Grace (A) 2 – 4 pm

RESULTS

U13 Girls District Cup Soccer v Adeyfield won 19-1

U14 District Cup Soccer v JFK lost 7-5

U15 District Cup Soccer v JFK, (1-1 aet) won 4-3 on penalties

U19 English Schools Basketball v KES, Kings Lynn won 63-62

Mr P Bryson, PE Department

SPORTS NEWS

It has been a very long and a very busy term here in the PE Department. Teams have been competing in a variety of competitions and there have been many successes already. The Year 8 Girls won the District competition for a second year in a row, the Year 7, 9 and 10 teams reached the semi finals. In Football, staff and students alike have been busy with a programme of District Cup, English Schools Cup and Saturday morning fixtures. Many teams have progressed successfully through the rounds and I look forward to hearing of more successes next term as they progress further in their respective competitions. The school Basketball teams continue to be successful, with a Year 7/8 girls team progressing well. Many of the boys teams will be in action in the County Cup over the next term and I would like to wish them good luck. District Cross Country was a success once again for HHS with Ross Taylor and Christian Schramm coming 1st and 3rd respectively in the Year 9 race. The Year 9 Girls team won gold in the team event with a HHS clean sweep - Alex Eykelbosch winning gold, Sarah Grover the silver and Lois Moore the bronze. A fantastic achievement. In the Senior race Rebecca Armorgie retained her District title winning gold again this year. Well done to all the runners who competed.

With the Talented Athlete programme up and running, our talented athletes have been busy meeting their mentors and continuing with their hard work outside of school. Some of our athletes have already had major successes in their fields. Hockey players Charlotte Bartlett (Year 8) and Georgina Bartlett (Year 7) have been busy representing the county at Under 13 level this term, playing against Norfolk, Cambridge, Suffolk and Essex to name but a few. Footballers Max Farrelly (Year 11) and Courtney Hart (Year 10) have also represented the county this term. Netballer Shona Berloth (Year 9) has been progressing well at the County Academy. Congratulations to them on their achievements so far this year. I am sure that there are many other talented athletes at school who achieved success this year; remember it is always good for the Department to recognise those achievements, come and let me know what you are doing!

It just remains for me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Miss E Bevan, Learning Leader: PE Department

Girls Football News

Wednesday 10th December: The first game of the year for the Under 13 Girls Football team. The girls started very strong scoring after the first five minutes, the goals continuing to flow after the opener, being scored by Ellen Rogers, Millie Gulley (Captain), Holly Towse, Mia Hickey and Ellie Wilson. The girls stayed focused throughout the first half, with an impressive 9-0 score line. The second half displayed a replication of the first, with goals being scored early on. The defence (Callie Waters, Olivia Wright, Sophie Kinley, Lauren Suzmeyan-Raine and Zoe Bothwell) demonstrated some outstanding tackles and teamwork to keep the opposition at bay. The goals continued to surge, with Kira Deacon scoring her first goal of the season. Changes were made to the attacking line up, Kinley making an appearance in the forward line, having a shot on goal after her first touch. Waters (player of the match) also pressed forward, demonstrating excellent team support, hard work and determination. Just before the final whistle, a long ball was fired over the top of the defending back line. The players chased the ball, trying to catch the opposing team; the shot was placed in the corner and there was nothing Jess Minter (goalkeeper) could do. The final score 19-1 to The Hemel Hempstead School.

6 – a - side Tournament:

The team conceded an early goal in their first game against Watford Girls, closely losing 1-0; this was to be the only goal conceded throughout the first round of the tournament. The girls stayed focused and did not let the first defeat affect their performance, fighting back to win with impressive goals from Millie Gulley and outstanding teamwork and support. The girls continued to play well throughout the tournament, with Minter having little if anything to do. Due to the players' outstanding performance the team reached the semi finals against Queens School. During the group stage Hemel were unfortunate not to score against Queens, once again Minter having little to do. The players showed determination to score in the semi final, having shot after shot on goal, only to be denied by the outstanding performance of the Queens' goalkeeper. The final whistle came and penalties were to decide the outcome of the game. Players stepped up to take their shots. However, the only two players to score during the first round of penalties were both goalkeepers. This led to sudden death. With an exciting first round the teams could not be divided, with shots saved and missed. Sudden death again, still both teams could not be separated. With sixteen teams at the tournament, The Hemel Hempstead School narrowly missed out on the finals, losing to Queens in the third round of sudden death penalties. They showed outstanding teamwork, support, encouragement and sportsmanship from both sides; all players surpassed expectations and demonstrated some outstanding football.

Miss K Garman