



The Hemel Hempstead School

News

27 March 2009

www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

HeadLines

There is sometimes a thin dividing line between the acquisition of knowledge and the gaining of wisdom. Often, it is summed up in a parallel with tomatoes: to know that a tomato is a fruit is knowledge, to understand that you don't put tomatoes in fruit salads is wisdom. Of course, as with many other definitions, it depends, doesn't it? Heston Blumenthal of the 'Fat Duck' at Bray's signature snail porridge dish leaves a definite opening for tomato trifle and do many of us genuinely feel that our knowledge of the tomato as a fruit is something we can truly justify in botanical terms?

As stated many times between these HeadLines, the world has become a different place in the past forty years and I cease to be amused when kindly friends forward the ubiquitous emails celebrating the fact that children inhabited a world of risk and adventure then and that life is too cosseted and infinitely worse now... and expect me to concur with their nostalgia. I do not wish to return to the fifties (can't stand most of the music) or seventies (except for the shoes that made me much taller) or the eighties (liked the music, found the politics and educational reforms distasteful) although the sixties had much to recommend them (The Beatles, Dr Kildare, Mary Quant dresses) but I can see a few advantages on the 'getting of wisdom'* front.

For example, I remember with some affection the fifteen inch Bush television with its monochrome fare of 'On Safari' with Armand and Michaela Dennis, 'Huckleberry Hound' and 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' amongst many other gems. The vertical and horizontal holds had to be used profusely to control the picture and for most of my childhood, there were only two channels to watch. So, one ended up seeing things that children would never experience today because of their endless digital choice, the multiple screens per household and the online viewing. Without the luxury of channel hopping, I watched 'Tonight' with Cliff Michelmore, hearing the news and musings on British society that helped my own gathering of knowledge and garnering of wisdom to a marked extent. And no, I am not going to make the point that children today have missed out on all that. I think they stand to learn more and be less brainwashed by what is available on the internet if they are wise enough to make the right choices. But how does any school or any parent encourage the transition from knowledge to wisdom without insisting on their own versions of the truth as gospel and leaving no scope for creativity?

In the rightly famous Nursery school sketches by the late, great Joyce Grenfell, she portrays a teacher who tries hard to inculcate creative individuality in her charges. She fails spectacularly. From 'George, don't do that' to 'Susan, we never bite our friends!' to 'Neville, stop being a train and sit down. All right then, get into the station and then sit down' we know that her words 'We like to feel that each little individual has a contribution to make to the world of make believe' don't quite ring true.

A report for the Children's Society entitled 'A Good Childhood' has concluded that 'excessive individualism' is to blame for many of the problems facing children and needs to be replaced with a value system based on helping others: schools should be values-based communities. It recommends abolishing league tables and national testing of children and introducing standard assessments of emotional development. Recent news stories would suggest that Ed Balls has taken the findings on board and that the recently publicised 'report cards' designed to replace SATs will reflect the review. I think they are wrong. Schools should do what they are best at doing: teaching and learning with appropriate assessment, internal and external, to plot progress and improvement. The best schools are places where mutual respect thrives and values flourish. The best schools are often based on values systems built on established faith systems and always have been.

This week, I was delighted to hear that Ehren Mellars and Michael Deane have gained places at the Eton Summer School. With only 200 places offered nationally every year, this is a real achievement and I thank Mr Ross for all he has done to make this happen.

Knowledge and wisdom: I have known people with photographic memories or people who learned strings of historical dates by heart for the fun of it. I stand back in admiration at my friend who performed the vast monologue of the play 'Shirley Valentine' on stage night after night. To stretch my own brain, I recite poems in my head or recall the titles, cast lists, directors and song lists from all the Astaire and Rogers' films. Wisdom is different and it is many things to many people: 'Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification.' as Martin Fischer said. But the last word must surely go to a quotation attributed to Mark Twain which will ring a bell for teacher and parent alike: 'When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.'

* 'The Getting of Wisdom' is a novel by Henry Handel Richardson about an Australian boarding school.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Reminder – Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are banned from use in school. Students should not be carrying them at all. There is a system for handing them in to Student Services. If students are found with mobiles, they will be confiscated. They will be returned to a parent or guardian – not directly to the student.

S J Samwell



ARTS NEWS

Stunning!

On Monday, a small audience (there's not much room for an audience in PA1!) was lucky enough to see the AS and A2 Dance students perform their exam pieces prior to their practical exams, which are coming up in the Easter holiday. The inventive choreography, dynamic use of space and hugely impressive technical excellence all contributed to the success of the programme.

The AS students could choose from a range of stimuli for their individual choreography, and there were some really interesting interpretations of a poem, a style of architecture, a piece of music and the phrase 'walking in another's shoes'. Their performance piece, which they danced in threes, required them to master some technically difficult sequences while conveying a complex combination of emotion. The energy and control they demonstrated were really impressive.

The A2 solo performance piece made huge demands on the dancers' fitness and stamina, as well as requiring them to interpret a complex idea in movement and expression. Double turns, sudden changes in tempo and mood and technically difficult lunges, extensions and leaps were all executed with style and sensitivity by the dancers. My favourite part of the evening, though, was watching the group choreographies devised by the A2 students and taught by them to other dancers. Using either a Beryl Cook painting or Newton's Laws as a stimulus, the students choreographed exciting, complex pieces with some really imaginative use of dancers and space. Congratulations to them all – and to their teachers!

Ms N Darby, Assistant Headteacher

Library News

A big thank you to Year 7 parents who donated just under £200 worth of books to the Library at Tuesday's parent evening. May I extend that thanks to ALL parents and staff who have supported this initiative at the various parent evenings this year enabling us to put in excess of £1000 worth of new books on the Library shelves for the benefit of our students. Your generosity and support is very much appreciated.

Please continue to send in Times Books for Schools tokens. The current scheme is coming to an end shortly and we will be able to select our first batch of free books. A further twelve weeks in which to collect tokens will begin on 19th April and continue for the summer term.

Attention Year 11 and Year 13 Students - Please be aware that you will not be able to borrow any further books from the Library after 3rd April. There are a number of students in these year groups with overdue books and I would appreciate the return of these books by the end of term. Thank you.

Mrs E Krajewski, Librarian

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.

HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATION

For Participation in Assembly: Callum James 9F, Kieran North 9N, Paul Munjic 9C, Jordan Hobbs 9N, Simon Hutton 9F.

For Excellent Model Making in History: Emily Smith 7L, Emily Stuart 7L, Hayley Scott 7L, Felicity Davis 7N, Frankie Ellis 7N, Elouise Kimmance 7N, Tara Self 7N, Tsungai Lewry 7N, Aidan Smart 7N, Tawny James 7N.

For Excellent Work in History: Zack McCarthy 7L, Mark Whyte 7L, Andrew Long 7L.

For Excellent Work in English: Sophie Vivanti 7A, George Nicodimou 7L, Ethan Mills 7L, Robert Veall 7L, Daisy Bodiam 7L.

Year 10 GCSE Short Course Religious Studies

This is a gentle reminder to Year 10 students that your GCSE in RS is on **Tuesday 12th May** in the afternoon. You will be receiving a revision booklet very soon and should be starting your revision NOW! You will be covering some revision in lessons but you must supplement this with revision at home if you wish to get the best grade you can. If you want any advice on revision then ask your RE teacher.

You have already received a letter detailing your trial exam results at the beginning of March so you know the level you have been working at; this is why no grade was given on the interim reports.

Good luck with your revision and your exam.

Miss F Dayton, Acting Subject Leader: Religious Education

English Department Learning Leader Commendations for March

Christopher Andric 8F

Adam Nayler 8L

Mary Pattinson 8P

Francesca Quinn 8F

Jodie Hardcastle 8C

Science Week Quizzes

Thanks to everyone who took part!

Winners

Students' Quiz: W Stepto and T Lewry 7N

Family Quiz: G Nicodimou 7L

Prizes of £10 Book Tokens will be distributed next week.

Mrs S James, Science Faculty

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 168 Year 12 Interim Report

Letter 169 Year 10 Work Experience (10L, 10N, 10P)

Letter 170 Key Stage 4 Ballet (boys)

Letter 171 Year 9 Functional Skills Exam 2009

Letter 172 Year 9 Young Shakespeare Company Performance

Letter 173 Years 7/8 Fundraising Disco in aid of Honduras

Letter 174 Non-School Uniform Day for Charity

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*

Year 9 visit to the Somme Battlefield

Last Friday Year 9 went to the Somme. The day was really interesting and you got a real feel for what the 1st July 1916 was like.

As we were in the coach driving to all the different places we could see various cemeteries scattered across the fields. One of the places we visited on the day was the Thiepval memorial. It was shocking to see the names of all the people who died and how many were never found. The names on the monument were in alphabetical order, but they were also in regiments as well.

We went to the Lochnagar Crater which was the biggest explosion site at the Somme. It was huge and we couldn't get over how big it actually was. Apparently the Prime Minister could hear the explosion in 10 Downing Street. We also went to a second trench site at Beaumont Hamel; it gave us an idea of what it was like to be in the trenches and we could see how close the allied trenches were to the Germans. In no man's land there is a tree, still there today, called the danger tree and hardly any soldiers got past it and if they did they probably wouldn't survive.

Overall I learnt quite a lot. Thanks to all the staff for their help on the day.

Ellie Pinnock and Chelsea Gray 9C

Y12 visit to Parliament

On Thursday evening, 19th March, we embarked on an epic journey to Westminster. At the entrance was a security point where we had to get our bags scanned and a photo taken of each of us. While waiting for our meeting with Mike Penning MP, Miss Akeroyd spotted Lembit Opik MP who came over and introduced himself. Miss Akeroyd made sure the conversation stayed clear of his previous engagement to a pop star. We then met Mr Penning who took us to a conference room to answer some of our questions. We discussed many issues surrounding Hemel Hempstead, such as the traveller site and the future of Jarmans Park. He then took us on a tour around Westminster, including the famous hall where Charles I was tried and a small chapel where MPs can get married. It was amazingly beautiful. He also showed us the cupboard where Suffragette Emily Davison hid on census night in 1911 so that she could say her address was the House of Commons. Then we went to the House of Commons, which was much smaller than we expected, then the House of Lords where we were not allowed past a barrier. At that point Grace Alexander, being the rebel she is, dropped her security pass on the other side and had to have it retrieved by a police officer. Our final leg took us to the terrace overlooking the Thames where we had a great view of the London Eye. We sang Happy Birthday to Duncan and we said thanks and goodbye to Mr Penning. On the way home we bumped into Mr Opik again who was surprisingly happy to talk to us again. We got home just in time for Rory Fraser's favourite TV programme. Our thanks to Miss Akeroyd, Mr Chappelow and Mrs Coe for organising such an interesting and informative trip.

Lewis Atkins 12L, Ben Walsh 12P and a little help from Amrit Walia 12P

PTA News

JUMBLE SALE

The Jumble Sale raised £550. Many thanks to everyone who contributed jumble or helped on the day!

Fundraising

Please see our entry on the school website under 'News and Events'.

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



Dates for Your Diary

Blue Week

30th Mar – 3 Apr House Chess Challenge Week 2

30th Mar Year 7 (7L, 7N, 7P) visit to National Maritime Museum
Year 11 Music GCSE Practical Exam

31st Mar Year 11 Dance Practical Exam 3.30 pm
Year 12 Drama Exam

Peripatetic Music Teachers Parent Evening, 4 pm

1st Apr Year 8 Maths Set 1 visit to Watford FC
Year 12 Biology Field Trip meeting, Library, 6 pm
Year 10 German Exchange Parents Information

Evening, Sixth Form Study Centre, 7 pm

2nd – 8th Apr Year 12 D of E Gold Practice Expedition

2nd Apr Peripatetic Music Teachers Parent Evening, 4 pm
Variety Show, fundraiser for Year 11 Prom, 7 pm

3rd Apr Years 7/8 Disco, fundraiser for Honduras
Last day of term

4th Apr Years 12/13 Dance Practical Exams

Easter Holiday

Gold Week

20th Apr INSET Day (school closed to students apart from those invited in to complete work or to attend 'catch up' lesson)

20th - 28th Apr Year 10 German Exchange students here

22nd Apr Year 10 Catering Exam

23rd Apr Year 13 Drama Exam

Year 10 D of E Bronze Parents Information

Evening, Sixth Form Study Centre, 6 pm

Years 12/13 Honduras training, 3.30 – 6.30 pm

26th Apr Year 10 D of E Bronze Competency, 10 am – 4 pm

Please do not drive onto the site!

Yet again we are repeating our request to parents not to drive onto the site at the start or end of the school day to drop off or pick up their children.

The pedestrian walkways at the entrance are very narrow and when students are entering and leaving school in numbers there is a real danger that some will be on the roadways on our site. All car movement **must** therefore be at an absolute minimum at these times, restricted only to those parents whose children are ill or disabled.

Students can otherwise be picked up or dropped off in Beechfield Road or near the Sports Centre in Heath Lane.

Ms N Darby, Assistant Headteacher

SPORT



FIXTURES

Monday 30th March Year 8 Boys County Basketball Rally 2 pm

Tuesday 31st March Year 7 District Cup Final @ Kings Langley (tbc)

Year 8 Girls Basketball @ Tring 3.30 – 5 pm

Wednesday 1st April Year 7 Girls Football Mini League @ Cavendish 3.30 – 5 pm

1st XI District Cup Football Semi Final v Kings Langley (A) 4 pm kick off

SPORTS NEWS

It has certainly been a very busy week for the PE Department with the culmination of many District and County competitions.

On Monday the Under 13 Girls Basketball squad played in their very first County Final. The match versus Bridgewater was exceptional; exciting, hard fought and close. Everything you could want in a final. Having started playing in September, I never dreamed the girls would have taken to the game as they have. I couldn't fault their commitment and enthusiasm all season. The final unfortunately finished 34 -35 in Bridgewater's favour, the narrowest of margins to lose by. I am absolutely sure that next year we have the ability to go one step further. Well done girls.

On Monday night at St Columba's College the Under 14 Boys Basketball squad had the difficult task of taking on St Columba's College on their home court. Another hard fought match which resulted in our boys being runners up in the County. Wednesday evening saw the Under 13 Boys Basketball Final. The game turned out to be as exciting as it promised to be. Mr Cracknell's side played some exceptional Basketball and won by 11 points. This is a fantastic 52nd County sports title achieved over the past 35 years by Mr Cracknell, but the first of many for the Year 8 boys involved.

Next week sees the culmination of the football competitions, with the Year 7 squad playing in the District Final, the Seniors playing their Semi Final and many more.

Best of luck to all those squads with semis and finals to play over the next week or so.

Miss E Bevan, Learning Leader: PE

The Crushing of St Columba's College

How often do sides arrive at St Columba's College for the County Basketball finals proud to have achieved the fact that they are in the final but very intimidated by the whole St Columba's College ethos; the huge Sports Hall, the mass of Columba's spectators, the reputation that precedes them? So it was that on Wednesday last our Year 8 boys travelled to their County finals.

In the past season the score had been 1-1, when they had met. We had beaten them on their own court and they had beaten us on our own court, so I am sure our Year 8s arrived feeling that there was some hope of a victory.

Early on in the first quarter HHS were behind by 12 points but by the end of the first quarter were in the lead. This lead was extended by the end of the first half.

During the third quarter Columba's began to claw their way back and narrowed the gap considerably; at one point they scored nine points with no reply from HHS. Going into the last quarter HHS were still in the lead and St Columba's lost their coach for abuse of the referee. Although their assistant coach, Mark Swales, an ex-pupil of HHS, took over their team, they did not look like catching up.

The last quarter proved to be a really tense and exciting time. Baskets were traded, fouls accumulated, players fouled out, fitness counted. Time seemed to stand still but eventually the final whistle sounded and HHS had won by 11 points!

A truly well deserved win and an excellent achievement from a large squad of boys who have worked tremendously hard over the season. This is a team effort and relies on the whole squad's efforts throughout the season. There have been great developments and progress in all the team members but I do feel that praise should go to Elliot Beardsworth and Tim Wright for their energy, vision and tenacity and to George McCausland for his defence and consistent rebounding.

Well done to everyone. A great result!!

Mrs G Cracknell, PE Department

Shelley Netball News

A successful day for the Shelley Netball teams at the Watford Sunday League. In glorious sunshine, the only team not to win their game was Shelley 5 against a strong Flamstead Green. Shelley 6 had a convincing win against Flamstead Blacks, with a score of 31-28, whilst Shelley 4 had a good win against Gadeside 5. At the same time Shelley Juniors overwhelmed Parkstreet Blue with a score that quadrupled Parkstreet's goals scored.

At the St Albans Junior League, the Year 7 side continued their winning success with a score of 26-4 against Dacorum Youth.

Well played everybody.

Mrs K Worrell, MBE