

Handsworth Grammar School Newsletter



December 2006

A Word from the Headteacher:

There is so much to report, I have had to leave some items to the next edition and have no space for me to write! The best I can do therefore is to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

R J Shephard

Continuing Education

Congratulations to the Year 11 students who now return from their Work Experience placements, ready for the final push with their studies. We have received many positive comments from their employers who have praised their maturity, enthusiasm, ability and co-operative nature. Mrs Golder and I look forward to reading your Log Books as part of the review process.

Year 11 students will now be able to make informed decisions about their futures. The Action Planning for A levels begins in earnest early next term, with students discussing their A level choices with subject teachers, form tutors and the Continuing Education Department.

The current Year 10 will be going out on their Work Experience placements in the first two weeks of May 2007. The paperwork will be issued immediately after the New Year break, and copies of the information will be posted on the departmental website.

Congratulations to the Year 12 students who gave up their half term break to gain work experience with a variety of professional companies, arranged through CBEB – the Centre for Business Excellence in Birmingham, with whom we have established strong links. More holiday placements are available – speak to Dr Bowen.

A group of aspiring Year 12 lawyers benefited from a one-day placement with Wragge & Co solicitors. Lots of Year 12 & 13 students have been active in preparing for their futures. Dr Marwah of City Hospital and his team gave a well-received talk on careers in Biomedical Sciences; a group of Year 12 students are currently attending a Med-link conference at Nottingham University; and many Year 12 Chemists have been attending sixth form lectures at Birmingham University. Year 13 students have been out and about on University interviews and applicants Open Days, with a significant number having now received all of their offers.

Thanks to Luke Deakin of Year 13, our new website is up and running. There is still much to do and helpful suggestions are always appreciated. It is Mac based, so there is no 'www'. The site can be found at: <http://web.mac.com/hgscareers>

Year 9 students can access the archive of past SATs papers.

Year 9 to 11 students can get quick access to Connexions magazines.

KS4 students will soon be increasing their 'Enterprising' abilities and should 'Aim Higher' to make the most of their opportunities – look at the Masterclass opportunities.

Dr G.M.Bowen

Ski Trip 2007

Alpine scenery there was not, but the experience gained by our 'beginners' at the Ackers Trust in Small Heath during the (16 in total) dry ski lessons will prove invaluable on the real slopes next January/February. Can I please take this opportunity to remind students and parents that passports and confidential forms should be handed to me by Friday 5 January, and that pocket money (in euros) should be given to Mrs Aboutorabi by Friday 12 January? I will be writing to parents in the New Year to confirm final travel arrangements and details. Students: Keep up those exercises – it will mean slightly less aching abroad!

P Jones

Citizenship

The year 9 students had Connexions come in to give a presentation on career choices. The music was loud, the jokes corny but the message was important being start thinking about the future.

Six students who reside in the B19 postcode were invited to a YPP meeting with Clare Short MP. They received information about why it is important to have the House of Commons and its purpose. The students prepared questions for Clare Short who was due to speak in the afternoon but unfortunately she had to cancel the meeting due to her mother falling down and having to go to hospital. The boys were disappointed but these things do happen.

A couple of weeks following this event 20 students from the School Council were taken once again to the YPP for a meeting with Khalid Mahmood MP. Once again information was given on the role of the MP and the House of Commons. The students prepared questions for Khalid Mahmood and they did get to deliver them. Perhaps Mr Mahmood would rather not have faced the questions as some very difficult questions were posed by the council members. Mr Mahmood made a comment about the quality of question being asked. When the session finished some of our sixth Formers had not finished with him and continued when all had left for another 30 minutes.

In the class sessions teachers have been finishing off the block of work on choices in life and our role in these choices.

D Griffiths



(Can you spot Khalid Mahmood? He will be our speaker at the forthcoming Prize Giving in January.)

R J Shephard)

SMIKE is coming next term. Watch out for posters and be sure to get your ticket for the event of the year!

B Minchin

Year 8 “Natural Disasters”, Geography trip to millennium point.

On Friday 13th October, a selection of Mr. Bird’s Year 9 Geography groups were given the chance to represent Handsworth Grammar School at a “Responses to natural disasters” day trip at Millennium Point in Birmingham. There were six other schools including Moseley, Hillcrest, Wheelers Lane and Bournville.

As soon as we got there, the group was invited into the all new-interactive auditorium. This room had over 200 seats, and has interactive voting controls for every person next to every seat. We started the day with a quiz about natural disasters using the interactive system, we all had a control panel from which to select our answers. Did you know that there are, on average, four earthquakes every week in Britain?!

The public relations manager then spoke to us about the importance of managing the flow of information during the aftermath of a disaster: the media want stories and will do anything to get them!

We were then put into groups each responding to a particular disaster. We covered many, some that were quite recent like the Asian Tsunami, the Kashmir earthquake, Shrewsbury floods and hurricanes. Handsworth Grammar School dealt with the Shrewsbury floods. We had to respond to the disaster as if we were the government – dividing actions into short-term, medium-term and long-term responses.

After that there was lunch and then the actual presentations. Each group had five minutes to display their work. This then led to the other schools casting a vote on whether each schools response was satisfactory or not. Handsworth Grammar School were dealt with a little harshly considering ours was the first presentation! All in all, the trip was a success, and our thanks to Mr Bird for organising the trip.

Danny Hill 9.D3 , Amarpreet Doal, 9.22

Geography Fieldwork - September 2006

Year 11 Geography pupils and Messrs Bird and Phillips visited Kidderminster to carry out an urban transect survey as part of GCSE Geography. Pupils had the opportunity to meet the residents and visitors of Kidderminster at various points of the trip, and we are pleased to report pupils left a positive impression of themselves on the locals and vice versa.

Three outings took place in a rather slow temporary minibus which did delay us somewhat in the mornings; some commented on the possibility of pupils getting out and pushing to add a little pace to the journey!

Weather was kind to all but one excursion which can only be described as wet. Four pupils used their initiative and took refuge in the Cheltenham & Gloucester mortgage company to the amusement of staff – and took it in turns to brave the weather and collect details such as the number of storeys and the land use of the surrounding buildings, then report back. We believe that if there were an official record to be broken on the time it takes to carry out fieldwork in Kidderminster, then Mr. Phillips’ group smashed it!

One pupil who shall remain nameless provided his whole group (on the last trip) with a memorable moment. After curiosity had got the better of him, he entered a shop only to be confronted by a canine standing guard. A swift and noisy departure followed, at which point it became apparent that the dog was more knee-height chiwawa than trained killer alsatian!

Despite the minibus delays, most students worked very hard to collect their data. They are now starting to write up their fieldwork which will contribute 25% of their GCSE examination marks. Our thanks to Mr. Pearson for driving the getaway vehicle on the last trip.

Congratulations go to Michael Hart who was voted by the parents on to the Governing Body for a second term of office. During Michael’s first term of office he was invaluable in helping the Governing Body and the School and I am sure he will be so again.

R J Shephard

PE Report

On Saturday 25th November the Year 8 **Inter-Form** Football Tournament was played on the school fields. Despite the rain lashing it down the night and morning before kick off year 8's braved the elements to try and claim for their team either the celebrated Inter-Form Football Shield or the prestigious Fair Play Award. 8:04 showed great maturity and passion to succeed despite having only 10 players; 8:08 showed good football knowledge when implementing Mr Birds tactics; 8:D1 played exceptionally well and achieved the Fair Play Award after one referee commenting that not only were they a pleasure to watch but to ref for as well; 8:02 and 8:14 battled hard through out the competition showing great skill and teamwork and finished joint top of the table. To separate the two they played a final decider that ended goalless leading to sudden death penalties where 8:14 grasped victory 0-1.

Due to a several cancellations by opposition schools the Year 9 **football** team have only played one match which was in the first round of the Aston Schools Cup against King Edwards (Aston). Handsworth dominated the first half with superior passing ability and constant pressure resulting in Tyrell Bailey scoring first then Danny Hill with an excellently struck shot not long after. It looked like another comfortable win for Handsworth until King Edwards (Aston) scored. Handsworth then had to battle hard and several chances were missed by both teams in the second half. Handsworth had done enough when the final whistle was blown for a 2-1 victory and a fixture in February against George Dixon in the next round. Man of the match Josh Pugh after several vital tackles.

The 1st XI team have had a season of cancellations so far but are 3rd in their league which is extremely positive. They are also still in the West Midlands League Cup and have a good chance of reaching the final.

The Year 8 **hockey** team did not have the ideal preparation against Holte in a friendly fixture as they had to train in the gym during lunchtimes. However this commitment was able to bring together a very strong team who showed great dominance and character against a more established Holte side. Chances went to both teams but our attackers made sure Holte's goal keeper did not have time to relax whilst Handsworth's defence made sure they had no shots on target. After a tireless performance by Handsworth's midfield the game resulted in a goalless draw (0-0). Man of the match Dharam Jheet after controlling the midfield, creating countless opportunities and a match saving tackle at the end.

A core group of Year 10 GCSE PE students have been playing **volleyball** during school lunch times demonstrating a rapid acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for the sport. If this interest continues then we will be looking for school fixtures in the summer term.

The **Table Tennis** team have started their campaign again with a match against Holte the current Champions. The U16 & U14 teams played two matches both won 2 and lost 2. The losses were narrow in margin 6-4 and 6-4. The wins were emphatic 9-1 and 8-2. Nabil Khalfrey continues his unbeaten run.

Following the Warwickshire County **cricket** trials at U15, Marlon Wijendra has been successfully selected for the 'Development of Excellence' squad and Kishan Mehta has been selected for the North Birmingham District squad.

The **Old Boys Water Polo** team are still looking for potential players. Anyone interested can ask Mr Griffiths for details or alternatively approach Akbar Aleem or Omar Iqbal in year 10 who represent the Old Boys team.

In November for our Primary **Sports Partnership** schools we organised a Year 5/6 mixed 7-a-side football festival where nearly 50 students (including two Year 12 A-level P.E. students, D.Cole and A. Aujla who refereed the games) enjoyed an afternoon of sport. This was won by Nelson Primary. In December we followed this with a Year 4 mixed badminton festival at Handsworth Leisure Centre when we were also able to invite our neighbouring Grove Primary School. Weekly visits to St. John's, Ladywood have helped staff with P.E. lessons in Reception and Year 3/4 Dance.

On the **Rugby** field the Year 9/10 team played under Sutton Coldfield R.F.C.s floodlights beating John Wilmott School 40-0. J. Gilchrist top scored with a try and 5 conversions. A. Oliver, S.Hambi, O. Iqbal and S.Islam also scored a try each. We are looking forward to more fixtures next term.

In the swimming pool **STA Personal Survival Awards Seal 1** Personal Survival Awards were achieved by T.Arshad, I. Bassan, R.Ganger, K. Hewitt, A. Khela and G. O'Rafferty of 7.A2. In 7.27 the same awards were achieved by A.Nagra, J. Pugh, K. Jones, A. Parmer and J. Schuppler. **STA Personal Survival Awards Seal 2-** Freddy Porter, Ali Sharif and James Chambers.

D Griffiths

Art and Media Studies London Trip: 14 November 2006

As part of broadening 6th Form experience, Art and Media Studies departments organised a trip to London with the primary intention of seeing the first solo exhibition of James Rosenquist, one of the most important American artists of the past fifty years. In a massive space at the Old Truman Brewery on Birck Lane, we viewed a series of Rosenquist's monumental 'billboard' paintings, such as 'Joystick' (2002) measuring more than 5 x 14 metres. Rosenquist has worked on a large scale throughout his career. One of his best known works remains F-111 (1964-65), a life-size depiction of the fighter bomber that was developed at the time of the Vietnam war, which is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York.

After a brief walk (in the rain!), we arrived at Tate Modern for the afternoon visit. You may have seen the huge 'helter-skelter' sculptures on the news recently and these were installed at TM's Turbine Hall. Again, huge sculpture, they reached from the third floor to the basement, and were a great source of fun to everyone who experienced the 'slide'.

The weather did not dampen the spirit of the day's experiences and my thanks are for help, direction and assistance from Ms R Miles, Mr N Duck and the group of students taken who represented the School with the usual maturity and responsibility.

B Lynch

Water Polo

Most of you will know the School, in the form of the Old Boys', runs a water polo team. Over the last few months we have struggled to find form, but recent improvements have started to see us start winning. The HGS boys in the team included: Akbar Aleem, Scott Ginder, Thomas Kafafiasz, Sahil Thaper, Omar Iqbal and our newest recruit, Josh Pugh. Recently we played in an under-16 tournament and came 2nd, thanks to Omar's skilful shot and a superb goal from the half way line by Akbar. We are currently looking for more players – details from Mr Griffiths or Mr Cross.

Akbar Aleem, 10.D4

Sports Hall

The Sports Hall finally has some walls! The recent wet weather and high winds has not helped the project, with work having to be stopped more than once. But rumour has it that soon the roof will be put in place and once the walls are up and the roof is on, it will not matter what the wind and the rain provide, the work can continue with impunity! Our builders, Wygar, have not found it the easiest of projects with the site being highly confined and access to the builder's yard (our Baker Street play-ground) being via a winding path through a car park, but they have made good progress. We do have one worry, namely that because of the requirements of Severn Trent Water to provide surface water attenuation, the cost of the project is now £70,000 greater than had been expected! There goes the equipment budget. That is why we need your help to enable us to put the equipment into the Sports Hall that your sons and daughters deserve. So far we have received generous help from some parents, old boys and Governors, but much more is needed. I send my thanks to those who have helped and ask that any who may yet do so, consider Gift Aiding their donation, using the Gift Aid form at the end of this Newsletter.

R J Shephard

Community Report

During this term we have continued to work with our partners especially the primary school sector. The major development has been the installation of a video conferencing system which will enable staff at Handsworth Grammar School to teach four primary schools simultaneously. This work will start in the New Year, mostly in maths but also in science and possibly other subjects. The maths department has been supporting Cherry Orchard, Birchfield and Town Schools in particular with a small input into several other schools through the 'Maths Fun Roadshow'.

Music is being offered through the use of ICT to youngsters from Matthew Boulton School and French to Benson and Cherry Orchard Schools.

We are still loaning equipment, for example the minibus, to many of our partners and there are still schools which are seeking to work with us.

We will soon be starting work with our secondary partners and have recently become members of an Extended Schools partnership.

As usual I am very grateful to all those staff and students who continue to support our work in the community.

I am pleased to say that on Friday 15 December, with the help of the Maths Department, we ran a successful Inspire Workshop for parents and students. Feedback from the parents was very positive indeed and they asked for more such events to be held. My thanks to my colleagues from the Maths Department for all their work in making it the success it was.

R Fackrell

Thank you! £1362.87 was raised in one day for 'Breakthrough Breast Cancer' in the non-uniform day on Friday 15 December - that was even though we were missing Year 11. Many thanks to students, parents and staff for making that happen.

R J Shephard

Music

A Chief Examiner Called

Most terms some of our talented musicians enter for public examinations. This Autumn the Music Department played host to the Trinity College Board's chief examiner. During his visit he commented to Mr Knight, our guitar tutor, on the quality of his students' preparation. We have just received the results: a 100% pass rate. Meanwhile, candidates on other instruments were entered as usual for examinations with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, all passing with merit or distinction.

M Bernamont

Music for a Winter's Evening

This annual event took place on Wednesday, December 13 at the Adrian Boult Hall in the centre of the city. Seventy-five performers shared their love of music with a good sized audience. However, this stylishly refurbished concert hall could accommodate many more and it would be very pleasing if the number of tickets sold would increase to match the many favourable comments made regarding the year-on year improvement in depth of the standard achieved by our young musicians.

The enthusiasm, commitment and talent on display also depends on the encouragement, organisation and tuition provided week in week out by the tutors and teachers of the Music Department team. We also appreciate the support of the colleagues and teams of students who take on at this busy time of year the essential jobs of publicity and ticket sales, front of house and raffle, logistics and sound engineer without which this concert just would not happen.

The programme, timed to perfection this year, offered a wide variety of classical, popular and world music with a good balance of seasonal numbers. The pleasure shared by everyone present was assured by the congenial touch of the evening's master of ceremonies, Mr Paul Blewitt.

Mr Bernamont

'Gifted and Talented' Initiative

Congratulations to the students in Years 7, 10 and 12 who have qualified for membership of The National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) on the basis of their CATs, SATs and GCSEs respectively. I have processed and forwarded enrolment forms to the Academy and students should be receiving further information soon. Many of our student members have benefited from their involvement with NAGTY such as **Adam Goodkin** and **Chris Williams** who, during the summer holidays, attended Summer Schools on Media Studies (at Warwick University) and British and American History (at Durham University) respectively. More recently (18 November), **Jack Baldwin**, **Onik Chowdhory**, **Josh Gripton**, **Vijay Masaun** and **Ashish Sehdeva** attended a one-day sculpture masterclass at the Botanical Gardens. The school was very happy to support talented pianist **James Salmon** of Year 13 who, accompanied by his father and piano teacher **Mr Czepiel**, visited the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, Poland, for a piano masterclass with **Professor Maria Schreiber**. The experience was invaluable in helping James's preparation for his audition at the Royal College of Music in London. As you read this, Year 12 students **Wasim Asif Ahmed**, **Soheel Ellahi**, **Jagdeep Gill**, **Abdul Hoque**, **Sandeep Jassi**, **Mohib Khan**, **Mubashir Mahmood**, **Dean Malik**, **Talha Malik**, **Hussain Quraishi**, **Ismail Qureshi**, **Mizanoor Rahman** and **Samiur Rashid** are at Nottingham University and Medical School for a 4 day residential 'Medlink' Conference which introduces students to various aspects of this in-demand career path. I am sure that they will also be finding time to enjoy this taster of university life.

P Jones

Friends of Handsworth Grammar School

The logo for Gift Aid, featuring the words "giftaid it" in a cursive, handwritten-style font.

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we can get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further. For example, £10 can be turned into £12.80. If you want your donation to go further, Gift Aid it using this form.

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To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year.

Diary dates:

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 20 Dec. | Last Day of term | 27 Jan. | Ski trip departs |
| 3 Jan. | Staff Training Day | 3 Feb. | Ski trip returns |
| 4 Jan. | Students return to School | 5 Feb. | Yr. 13 reports issued |
| 5 Jan. | Prizegiving (Morning School only) | 8 Feb. | Yr. 7 Parents' Evening |
| 8 Jan. | HGSA (provisional date) | 9 Feb. | Training Day - no students in |
| 12 Jan. | Yr. 11 reports issued | 12 - 16 Feb | Half Term |
| 25 Jan. | Prospective 6th Form Open Eve. | 19 Feb. | School restarts |
| | | 20 Feb. | Yr. 12 Parents' Evening |

Science Faculty Activities

On Tuesday 21 November, Year 12 Biology and Chemistry students enjoyed an informative talk on Biomedical Sciences given by **Dr Marwah** from City Hospital. Likewise, on Tuesday 5 December, Year 12 Physicists were entertained by **Lynne Long** from Birmingham University Physics Department, who gave an interesting presentation on current research and career opportunities in this area. Lynne was kept busy as she then gave a very entertaining presentation to two Year 10 Science sets entitled 'Physics: Hot and Cold', which included some impressive demonstrations with liquid nitrogen. Two classes (7.18 and 7.27) will be enjoying the Year 7 Christmas Lecture 'Cool Stuff: What are superconductors and how do they help us to understand how the body works?' at Birmingham University on Tuesday 19 December. Year 9 students who think that they have a good Physics knowledge should approach **Mr Hubbard**; he is recruiting team members for the 'Physics Big Quiz' event at Birmingham University on 31 January 2007.

P Jones

Help!

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed towards our Sports Hall appeal, helping us to equip it with the best we can afford. Please consider completing the Gift Aid form and giving to this project - your children deserve it!

giftaid it

Please consider completing the Gift Aid form on the other side of this page. The form should then be sent to Handsworth Grammar School, with any cheque made payable to 'Friends of Handsworth Grammar School'.