

Handsworth Grammar School Newsletter



July 2006

A Word from the Headteacher:

A quick glimpse at this Newsletter will tell you that it has been a very busy term and an especially busy final half term. Once the exams were out of the way and even while the teachers were marking papers and writing reports there was an explosion of activity. Education is of course about the academic aspects of a school, but it has to be much more than that and this Newsletter demonstrates how important the broad view of education is at HGS. Even though the Newsletter is twice the usual size, much is missing – the Year 7 French trip, the on-going Creative Partnerships project with the Ikon Gallery, the Year 12 Challenge of Management day, trips to Alton Towers and Drayton Manor, Geography Field Trip, plus several Citizenship activities to name just a few. The teachers and the students certainly deserve their rest!

The end of the academic year brings the sad part of saying good-bye to familiar and much appreciated people. None have been with us long, but all have made their mark. Dr Sagar, Mrs Price, Mr Buxton and Dr Majeed will all move on to pastures new - we wish them well. Indeed there will be many students (mainly from Year 13 going on to university, but also some from other Years) who will also move on and we wish them well and trust they will have some fond memories of us.

I hope that the summer break brings all that you would wish for and that your daughters and sons return in September refreshed and ready for another year of hard work.

R J Shephard

Science Faculty Activities

On Friday 16 June, the vast majority of Year 9 students celebrated the end of their internal examinations by escaping to either Explore at Bristol, the Broadway CLC or Thinktank at Millennium Point. Several Year 12 students (and maybe some staff too) still look rather bleary-eyed after their early morning starts and late night finishes during the two recent weeks of Biology field trips, the first week of which included some Geographers too. These weeks represent an excellent educational experience, including many opportunities to explore and investigate the wonder of the natural world, although **Aftab Hussain and Asim Iqbal**, amongst others, marvelled more at the kebab houses of Cowley! Monday 3 July saw all Year 8 students having an introduction to the Year 9 Forces topic through witnessing a musical and theatrical production entitled 'A Complete Guide to Forces'. On Tuesday 4 July all Year 7 students participated in a Science of Sport workshop, involving activities including reaction-timing, co-ordination, agility and measuring the speed at which a football is kicked. Thanks are due to **Mrs Hurst**, our Science AST, for co-ordinating the activities on 3 and 4 July. Not to be outdone, on Wednesday 5 July, a number of Year 10 students, accompanied by **Mr Keane**, attended a lecture on 'Gravity, gas and stardust' at Birmingham University. Congratulations are due to **Omar Iqbal, Adam Hazel and Amarkumar Rajgor** for obtaining the top and second equal scores respectively in the Year 9 Science 'SAT' tests.

P Jones

Ready Steady NihonGO!!

This term a group of pupils from forms 8.04, 8.22, and 8.D1 (as well as Mrs Adams and Mrs Blewitt) have been enjoying learning Japanese with Mr Bird during Tuesday dinner hours. We have been learning the great language with *Ready Steady NihonGo*, which is a short course in Japanese provided by the *Japanese Foundation*. This is an organisation which encourages inter-cultural and language exchange between Japanese and British schools.

In the five or six lessons we have had so far, we have battled to get our tongues around the unfamiliar sounds of this unique language - and have learned: how to greet each other at different times of the day, how to introduce ourselves, ask and say how old we are, introduce family members, say and ask prices and count up to an amazing 10,000! That was in only 5 lessons! All pupils and teachers found the experience absolutely fascinating although a little difficult!

It was a great opportunity for us to learn an alternative language that is not part of the curriculum. It was a fun and challenging way to learn Japanese, I recommend it to everyone! The 15 pupils who took part all reckon that we should have thought of it before and gave it 10 out of 10. Hopefully there will be another course next year! Let's hope that Japanese pupils have as much fun learning English as we have had learning Japanese. A huge thank you, Mr Bird, for giving up your lunchtimes.

(We enjoyed learning Japanese so much, thankyou. Goodbye)

Danny Hill, 8.04

Maths in Motion – F1 Jaguar Challenge National Finals Gaydon – Motor Heritage Museum: 28th June 2006

As part of our specialist school status the Maths Department support a number of local primary schools. Of the activities we do with the schools we are involved in the Jaguar Maths Challenge. This involves using mathematics to design F1 cars and race them against other schools. The cars are designed and raced using computer simulation. Some of our current Year 9 pupils have taken part in the heats of the national competition, but alas did not manage to make it to the final. We hope next year's Year 9 will fare better.

Town Junior School, a partner school, managed to get into the national final by being in the top 11 primary schools out of hundreds, no mean feat in itself. Mr. Jones has been working with a group of Year 6 girls at Town School, who have worked hard to get into the national finals.

Thirty three schools took part (eleven primary and twenty-two secondary). The competitors were left to work on their cars for two hours without any help at all from teachers. The teachers had the onerous task of drinking tea and looking at cars such as Aston Martins all day! After lunch the pupils and teachers gathered for the final race. All the pupils' cars were entered for the same race. The girls from Town Primary came overall 21st beating some secondary schools. In their class (primary) they came a commendable 6th, so well done to them.

Everyone had a wonderful day and all the entrants won prizes from Jaguar and were awarded finalists medals. We hope that next year Handsworth will enter a team and give us a good showing in the national finals.

On your starting grids gentlemen.....

R L Jones

Community Report

It has been a busy period. During the Easter holiday, four members of staff (and a daughter), plus thirteen Year Twelve students helped to organise and run a Maths workshop for local Year Five students. About seventy children were expected to take part but 116 arrived on the first day and remained for the whole three days! The event was extremely successful and is likely to continue in the future. Our students were superb and enhanced both their own and the school's reputation. The course was so successful that we have been asked if it would be possible to stage a similar session for science. We are investigating!

Apart from the Town School 'Maths in Motion' project, we are providing support and technical know-how as they refit their IT suite and establish a computer network in their classrooms.

Mrs Walcot has been busy as usual, working with the youngsters at Cherry Orchard School in their Arts week and providing support for their maths lessons. She managed to put a maths slant on their projects and it proved very successful. She also addressed a Consortium of primary school teachers at the conference on a recent training day as well as introducing them to the Maths Fun Roadshow. The Roadshow has also been used for the first time at Matthew Boulton School and a very enjoyable morning was had by all. Similarly, Rookery School used the Roadshow and our staff and students for their maths week. Two schools continue to use our science facilities and are very grateful for the support and excellent teaching given by Dr Wallach. I too am grateful to him for his unstinting support. The Music Department are also offering their expertise and time to help out at Matthew Boulton. French is being taught at one of our partner schools and soon Art and Geography will be on offer. Two primary schools have used our playing fields for their Sports Day, and Welford School have made use of the talents of our Year 12 students to help with their Summer Fair. Our minibus is in great demand from our partners and is used regularly by both schools and our other partners.

The recent non-uniform day raised £900 for Homestart and we continue to help our other non-school partners in a variety of ways. I receive many requests from many people and as a school, we always try to accommodate these requests.

A successful 'Inspire' workshop for Year 7 parents/family members took place in July and was attended by over thirty adults working with their sons.

As usual, 40+ of our Year 10 students acted as stewards for the "Classroom in the Park" event - they were excellent ambassadors for the school, possibly even excelling previous years. I have received an extremely complimentary letter from the organisers, praising our boys. Well done to them.

We are about to embark on a Maths and Art project with Wilkes Green Infant School and there will be many more projects starting in the new academic year. I am sure that it is of great value and benefit to those of our students who are involved and I hope to provide them with even more opportunities in the future.

The School is also negotiating to be involved in an Extended Schools Network with local Primary and Secondary schools and this will involve even more opportunities for community liaison and, perhaps more importantly, for your children at HGS.

Particular thanks are due to Mr Hallbrook for his unstinting hard work and support and to Mrs Walcot for her enthusiasm. My gratitude, as always, goes to all my colleagues and our students.

R Fackrell

Physical Education Report

On the 21st June 6 students from Year 7 represented the school in a short tennis competition at Hamstead Hall. The team consisted of Rajiv Soni Tricker, Jack Baldwin, Aboobakr Khan, Michael Adebayo, Nathan Brookes, Nathan Pitterson. They beat George Dixon to become the INDOOR TENNIS CHAMPIONS within the hamstead hall sports Partnership. By winning this they went through to the Birmingham Finals. At the finals they came across some good tennis players but all of the students performed well – a big well done in our first year of tennis.

On the 22nd June we took an athletics team to Solihull School. It was a cold evening but the students battled on. Notable success came from Ryan Linton (Yr 7) who won the 100m and also in the hurdles where he competed in a Year 9 race and came 2nd. Joshua Piggott-Smith volunteered to do the hurdles having never done it before (the hurdles were very high!) and came second. As a school we came 3rd overall.

The year 8 cricket team have had some good wins over the last couple of weeks beating Holte and Aston Manor. Manvir Dhanoa particularly has started to improve his batting style which is good to see.

Year 9 performed well in the Aston League, Lords Taverners Trophy and reached the ¼ final of the Willis Cup. Captain Amarkumar Rajgor (top score 61 n.o.vs. Holte) and Kishan Mehta are both members of the Birmingham representative team.

The Year 10 cricket team had a good season, captained by Anuop Bassi (top score 74 n.o. vs. Holte), winning the Aston League and reaching the ¼ final of the Docker Shield.

The Primary Sports Partnership has been working closely with St. Johns, Ladywood, helping to develop Games Activities with Year 1/2 and athletics with Year 6.

D Griffiths

Citizenship Report

On the 19th June the Primary Care Trust came in to do a workshop for all the Year 9 groups on sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy. Some interesting facts were given and it made the students think about choices that they may have to make.

On the 22nd June St Dunstan's World Without Vision came in to deliver a workshop to 3 Year 7 groups. It was delivered by a blind man and an assistant who were extremely honest and answered some very good questions posed by the students. They organized some props which demonstrated what it is like to be blind and how little things that the sighted take for granted can be difficult for those who are blind. It was a fantastic presentation and very thought provoking.

D Griffiths

Summer Soiree

The second running of this event has confirmed its place as a regular in the School calendar, with its winning combination of Summer sun, strawberries and cream, sparkling wine (or orange juice if preferred), a varied programme of musical entertainment and the Quad transformed into a cross between an open-air concert venue and a pavement cafe for the evening. This year's event took place on Wednesday, July 12. The good-sized audience of families, friends and staff was served refreshments thanks to committed members of HGSA and treated to some lovely performances by students and staff of the Music Department, with sound engineered by Mr King.

On a sad note, this was to be the final public appearance of Mr Andy Culshaw, who leaves us after many years' service as an inspiring tutor of brass and conductor/director of various bands and ensembles.

M Bernamont

Maths Days

On July 6th and 7th Years 7 and 8 each had a Maths Day. All students took part and participated in a variety of mathematical activities: the FunMaths Roadshow, a Maths Trail, Kakuro, Origami and a construction challenge. Everyone worked in teams of four, and were able to score bonus points during the day by completing extra puzzles. The winning teams received medals and prizes.

Winning team in year 7: Team 28– Faisal Ahmed, Jagrubal Basatia, Habib-ur Rehman, Shamusrafin Taj. (7.27)

Winning team in year 8: Team 32 – Sam Hodgkinson, Viraj Padhiar, (8.04) Joshua Cheema, Harry Perrins, (8.16)

Inspire Workshop

On July 13th, approximately 40 parents of Year 7 students came in to join their sons and work on a selection of mathematical problems for 2 ½ hours. They started in the Hall, trying out the FunMaths Roadshow puzzles, then split into two groups led by Mr Hallbrook and Mrs Walcot to sample three different challenges which involved different types of mathematical thinking, based on logic, number, and shape. The Workshops are intended to give parents some ideas to help them support their sons and develop their mathematical thinking. The feedback from parents was very positive, and everyone seemed to find the Workshop helpful and stimulating. We hope to hold the next Inspire Workshop in October, and we will be developing the content in lines with suggestions made by those who attended.

E Walcot

GCSE Music Coursework For Real

The 23 boys in our Year 10 set have enjoyed and exploited the opportunity to develop their composing skills with fortnightly sessions throughout the year at the North West City Learning Centre. Our boys make their own way to the CLC every other Thursday morning to work with the Centre's specialist staff in collaboration with their regular HGS teachers. As well as AppleMac equipment compatible with our new ICT Music Suite, the CLC provides a professional sound stage and recording facilities which our boys used to present their recent composing coursework. Performing coursework through Year 10 has also culminated in a 'for real' experience. On two evenings during the School's examination week in June, Mr Minchin organised a recital with performances ranging from rock guitar to classical flute presented to an audience of students, staff and parents in the School Library. The students respond positively to these stimulating opportunities, a few learning to cope better next time, many making exciting progress and some already achieving top grades.

M Bernamont

Sex Education:

On the 27th June we had the Year 10 health day which is starting to become a yearly event. This involved the whole of Year 10 and it was enjoyed by all the students. Topics covered by the Primary Care Trust involved Contraception, STI, Smoking, Testicular Cancer and HIV. The students asked some very good questions which the staff dealt with in a professional manner.

D Griffiths

Wimbledon

On the 6th July 12 budding tennis fans rose at the crack of dawn in hope of seeing this decades best players. It looked as though we were out of luck, as it started very drearily because it had started to rain so play was delayed till 1 o'clock, which saw Rafael Nadal v's Nieminen on court one. Meanwhile Justine Henin-Hardenne battled with Kim Clijsters on centre court.

Yet the weather then started to flourish as did the tennis as Nadal won his match and Maria Sharapova played her match against Amelie Mauresmo on centre court. For some reason everyone wanted to see that match, can't think why though!!

There were then various other doubles matches taking place but one of the popular ones was the over 40's doubles match between McNamara and McNamee versus Bahrami and Mayer, which was a highly entertaining contest.

As the sun started to set, the day was coming to a close and we made our journey back to school. I am sure though that Rajiv Soni-Tricker, James Hill, Gary Boughan, Ben Campbell, Omar Iqbal, Jack Bridgewater, Jonathan Campbell, Damilare Tanimowo and Zain Ahmed will not forget it for a while.

Ed Mott 1003

Uniform

Too many boys are trying to avoid wearing the correct uniform. I remind you that the uniform for the School is:

Black Blazer

- White or Grey Shirt
- Dark Grey Trousers (not jeans or jeans type material)
- Dark Grey Socks (not white socks)
- **Plain** Black Shoes (no white edgings or markings and **not** boots or trainers)
- Grey 'V' Neck Sweater (with or without School colour in 'V')
- School Badge (other badges are not permissible unless presented by the School)
- School Tie
- Hair - should be neat and tidy. Extremes of fashion are not allowed.
- Overcoats - should be of a sensible and sober design.
- Appearance - should not invite adverse comment nor be detrimental to the reputation of the school.
- Wearing of earrings and other jewellery is not allowed.

Shoes must be plain black – there may be no white edging or lettering. Black trainers that are made to be similar to shoes are not permitted – these are easily identified by the tongue and the laces. Boys who break the uniform requirements may be sent home to get changed. Boys whose ears are pierced will be told to remove the studs even if they have only just been pierced.

T Maw

Classroom In The Park 2006

On Friday, July 7 Mr Minchin took three Year 7 dhol players to perform at this annual event, when local primary schoolchildren enjoy a day in Handsworth Park. Simarjit, Rajeev and Syan have dhol lessons on Thursday lunchtime with Mr H Singh, Head of Asian Percussion with Birmingham Music Service. Their contribution was much appreciated, playing with a mature mix of control and style. We look forward to many more opportunities for them to perform, now that we have a showcase dhol group at HGS again.

M Bernamont

Creative Partnerships Youth Panel

Shaun Broomes and Daniel Evans are handing over as HGS representatives on the Birmingham Youth Panel as they are about to move into the crucial Year 11 stage of their GCSE studies. They have met regularly over the past 1½ years, experiencing some of the varied arts events that Birmingham has to offer and contributing towards the city-wide student voice that is helping to inform planning for the future. Taking over are two Year 9 boys, Krishan Chauhan and Omar Iqbal, who have already shown their worth on the Youth Steering Group for the recent MyGRATIONS Exhibition at The Drum.

M Bernamont

School Food

In line with the Government aim of bringing about healthier eating and encouraging more healthy lifestyles, a number of items are being removed from sale or have reduced availability in the Dining Hall.

- Sweetened fizzy drinks are no longer available
- Confectionary such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets are no longer available
- Savoury snacks such as crisps are no longer available
- Salt is no longer available
- Deep-fried food such as chips have reduced availability
- Manufactured meat products, such as chicken nuggets, burgers and sausage rolls have reduced availability and must meet minimum meat content.

Some of this we already do, others will be introduced in September 2006. In the interests of the health of your children, we ask that you do not send them to School with these items. They can help bring about obesity and impact upon a child's ability to learn.

A McGoldrick

Water Polo – match report

Against the U16 Walsall 'army' our U16 team seemed like a group of inferior beginners, but that didn't put our hopes down. With only one sub we had to try our best against Walsall, who had brought two teams worth of players. As the first quarter began, we took possession and put the ball in the net twice against Walsall's once. As the next two quarters went on, the score reached 8-7 to HGS with the help of Scott Ginder's (9.09) brilliant saves, Sahil Thaper's (9.12) great deflections and Akbar Aleem's (9.14) brilliant set-ups as well as the captain's beautiful shot. The fourth quarter was the most worrying, with goals being scored by both teams one after the other. As the last minute bell struck, Walsall took their chance to score against our tired players, and pulled ahead. In the last 30 seconds it was 10 all, when I managed to score 2 goals for the team. Walsall attacked hard from then onwards but in true HGS spirit we stuck to it and eventually the game ended 12-10 to HGS U16 water polo team.

Omar Iqbal 9.12

Sparx: On June 29th the whole of Year 8 went to the Crescent Theatre to watch a play called 'Sparx'. It was a play organized in conjunction with the West Midlands Arson Taskforce. It was a well produced play with a strong message. The students were exemplary and benefited from the visit. A follow up visit was organized by the West Midlands Fire Service and some students were questioned about the play. A worthwhile trip.

D Griffiths

Diary dates:

21 July	Last Day of Term	23-27 Oct.	Half Term
17 August	GCE Results	20 Dec.	End of Term
24 August	GCSE Results	3 Jan.	Start of Term
		12-16 Feb	Half term
4 Sept.	Staff Training Day	30 April	End of Term
5 Sept.	Yrs. 7, 12 and 13 only	16 April	Start of Term
6 Sept.	All students in School	28 May-1 June	Half Term
		20 July	End of Term

MyGRATIONS Project with SAMPAD

There have been two very different opportunities this term for our Year 8s to get involved in this year-long project. The three Forms taught by Messrs Townend and Graham worked in their Art lessons on a design brief for the postcard-style invitation to the project's final exhibition at The Drum. Congratulations to Joshua Gripton, whose design was chosen for the professional print-run.

The remaining two Forms spent three days in June supported by their Art teacher, Mr Lynch, working with a professional *rangoli* artist, Ashok Mistry. They created traditional Indian designs as well as a world map, reflecting the journey to Birmingham made by many of our families. Our boys really appreciated the opportunity to work in this beautiful, colourful and detailed medium, as evidenced by the quite magical mood of tranquillity and focused application that emanated from their classroom.

During the final week in June which Ashok Mistry spent as artist-in-residence at HGS, he demonstrated his versatility by alternating his *rangoli* workshops with the creation of an electronic journal in DVD format. The boys of 9.08 had spent initial sessions during their Geography and History lessons preparing for a full day in our Wolfson ICT Room. This became a pressroom for the day, with the boys as reporters researching websites and writing a series of illustrated articles. Supported by Messrs Bird, King and Bernamont, they worked in editorial teams each under a sub-editor responsible to Ashok for his team's investigation of the events and issues that have triggered migration from a particular area of the world. Between them they covered the ethnic origins identified in data collated from the Year 7 "cultural roots" work with which this project had begun.

M Bernamont**MyGRATIONS Final Exhibition**

On Friday, July 7 a coach load of Year 8 and 9 boys left HGS to see their creative work on display at The Drum, alongside contributions from three other schools who had also been involved with SAMPAD in the year-long MyGRATIONS project. The electronic journal written by 9.08 was running constantly on a monitor screen, while the *rangoli* designs of 8.16 and 8.22 had been captured on photographs that formed part of our "MyGRATIONS at HGS" display* on a large perspex panel. In addition, one of their designs showing the Earth was recreated above a lightbox as the centrepiece for the exhibition. This had been completed the previous day by Krishan Chauhan and Joshua Gripton. During the final evening session of the exhibition, Krishan was chosen to introduce the Director of Birmingham Creative Partnerships, a measure of the respect our young students earn at School and beyond. (*This display can now be seen on the Creative Partnerships notice board outside the Music Department.)

M Bernamont