

# Handsworth Grammar School Newsletter



## October 2007

### **A Word from the Headteacher:**

Most people probably think of the summer as a period when the School is at its calmest and most peaceful - there are no students! But my Bursar and her team would beg to differ, for them the summer is a period of frantic activity, with workmen undertaking many jobs around the site and the caretakers chasing those who have failed to appear. All of our students will have breathed a sigh of relief that the Baker Street playground is open once again. Indeed, it has been resurfaced and the unsightly mud banks have been removed. This was made possible by the completion of almost all of the work on the Sports Hall. Readers will know that we have had moments of heartache during the building of the Sports Hall, with rapidly increasing costs and time overruns. There are still some things to do on the inside. In particular we need the basket ball rings and the cricket nets to be installed. This is all booked for a future date, that will unfortunately mean that the Sports Hall will need to be closed for about three weeks while the work is undertaken.

The building of the Sports Hall could not have been done without the School saving up money over the years. This is something that we and many other schools do when we can, but perhaps not for long. It seems that the Government has decided to penalise schools that are prudent and who save towards a major project. They have decided that 5% of the money a school carries forward from one year to the next, will be taken away for use as the local authority sees fit! It seems that we are to be penalised for wanting to improve the School for your sons and daughters. If we did not save the money from one year to the next, there would be many building projects we could not have done, even though they were needed. One thing we can be sure of is that the projects, such as the Sports Hall, would not have been built for us and the facilities we can offer your children would be much the worse.

New terms bring new faces to the staffroom. We welcome Mr Brough and Mr Anaba, who have joined our Maths department; Ms Brown, who has joined the English department and Dr Hylands who is in charge of the curriculum and teaches Chemistry. I wish them all every success.

### **Governing Body news:**

Congratulations go to Grover Cleveland Reid who was elected as the new parent governor in a very close fought election. The Governing Body has 18 members, many of whom give very generously of their time in order to help the School as it develops to meet the needs of the students in its care. Governors have many onerous duties and responsibilities, with very little recognition for the splendid job they do. I, for one, am grateful for all the support I receive, both personally and professionally, from the Governing Body.

**R J Shephard**

## Germany Trip – 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007

At the end of last term a group of 40 pupils took part in a five day trip to Boppard in Germany. There was a mixture of age groups as pupils from Years 8, 9 and 10 took part. Trips like this are important for students to experience the culture and lifestyle of a foreign country. They are learning the language spoken in that country and so they also get a chance to try out their language skills on “the locals”. This usually gives the students confidence in speaking a foreign language, which helps them in the classroom.

On the morning of the first day we went for a relaxing boat trip down the Rhine river. This is a very picturesque part of Germany and all along the banks were famous vineyards and scenic towns and villages. Dotted along the bank high up on the cliffs were old castles and fortresses, standing overlooking the river. Our destination was Rudesheim. This is a small town which is famous throughout Germany for its narrow streets, attractive old-fashioned buildings and a pleasant atmosphere. It is also quite well known for its wine, as many towns are in that area. The pupils were split into groups and they carried out a treasure hunt. There were directions and questions about the buildings and signs around them and it was designed to draw their attention to the more intricate things around them that they may not have seen on their own. After our evening meal, we went to local sports playing field. As it was a big area there was enough room for a football game and a cricket game at the same time. This was ideal as the boys had a choice.

The second day we went to Phantasialand theme park near Cologne. There are a variety of rides and places to eat. There were even shows on at certain times throughout the day. It was great fun for all! In the evening we played Mini-golf in Boppard. The weather was dry and warm. Everyone had fun trying to beat their friends’ score, including the teachers!

On our final day we travelled to Cologne. First of all we went to the Sport and Olympia Museum. It had interactive exhibits, which the boys enjoyed. Then we walked to the city centre and ate our lunch in front of the Cathedral. The building is very old and steeped in history. It has two large spires that you can go up and get a fantastic view over the city. The majority of people went up to the top (even though there was no lift) and got an incredible sight for their effort. After we all got our breath back the pupils got a chance to buy souvenirs for friends and family. In the evening there was a quiz. Students were sat in friendship groups and had to answer questions on different topic areas, including things they had learnt on the trip.

On the return journey we stopped off at a Belgian chocolate shop so we could stretch our legs and buy any final souvenirs.

The end of a tiring but enjoyable and worthwhile trip.

**A Kinns**

Parents with concerns should always approach the School, who will do their best to address the issue, but if you feel the need, I as a Parent Governor can always be contacted at [mikejh.net@boltblue.com](mailto:mikejh.net@boltblue.com) .

**Michael Hart**

## Curriculum Changes Are on the Way

This is the year that is leading up to the biggest education changes within the lifetime of many teachers. A national review of the curriculum identified that many students leaving schools did not have the skills or attributes that employers or higher education desired or needed and were not well motivated or engaged by the curriculum. In the modern world in which as a country and as individuals we are competing with many other low cost base economies, our people are our greatest assets and we have to make the most of their talents and skills. It is to this end that we are working towards a curriculum in which students have a more personalised choice, which is most appropriate to them.

In 2008 the KS3 curriculum for Year 7 will undergo what some will see as a radical change, in which the subject content is being reduced and there is a greater focus on the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that students need to become effective learners, self-motivated, creative individuals and effective citizens of the local, national and international community. We are currently considering how to implement these changes through a scheme called Opening Minds and one thing is sure, Year 7 in 2007 will be very different to Year 7 in 2008.... and Year 8 and 9 will follow.

That is not all however. It is also all change in the Sixth Form. All AS-levels and A-levels are being updated and will contain PLTS as from September 2008. There will be more challenging questions at A2 and a new higher A\* grade will be available to distinguish between the brightest students. Furthermore we are considering giving all of our current Year 12 students the option from September 2008 to undertake the new AS-level extended project in a subject of their choice.

The Diploma is an employer-designed qualification available in fourteen subjects by 2010 at a level equivalent to either 5 – 6 GCSEs or 3 A-levels. It will be impossible for any one school or college to offer all of the qualifications and we will be working with other institutions to make some of these available from September 2009.

Not to be left out, GCSEs in KS4 are also all being updated and will be available

### **Ski Trip 2008**

Participating students and their Parents are reminded that the Information Evening for the trip to Kitzbuhel in January/February 2008 will take place on **Wednesday 31 October 2007, starting at 7pm** in the Hall. Coffee and biscuits will be available from 6.45pm. In the meantime, do contact one of us if you have any queries.

**P Jones and A Campbell**

## **2006-2007 SUCCESSES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT HANDSWORTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

### **FOOTBALL**

Year 7 Aston League – WINNERS  
Year 8 Aston League - WINNERS  
Year 9 Aston League - WINNERS  
Year 10 Aston League - WINNERS  
1<sup>ST</sup> XI – 3<sup>rd</sup> in West Midlands Schools. Colleges League

### **CRICKET**

Year 7 SEMI FINALISTS in The Stacey Jackson Bowl  
Year 7 Undefeated in the Aston League  
Year 9 Undefeated in the Aston League  
Year 10 Undefeated in the Aston League

### **RUGBY**

Year 7 FINALISTS in the Birmingham & Black Country  
Emerging Schools Festival  
Year 7 SEMI FINALISTS in the North Midlands  
Regional knockout  
Year 9 Undefeated WINNERS – League

### **HOCKEY**

Year 8 FINALISTS in the Aston League

### **ROWING**

Year 7 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Birmingham Indoor Rowing Championships  
Year 8 5<sup>th</sup> in the Birmingham Indoor Rowing Championships  
Year 9 4<sup>th</sup> in the Birmingham Indoor Rowing Championships

### **BADMINTON**

Year 10/11 RUNNERS UP in the Aston League

### **INTER-FORM FOOTBALL**

Year 7 - 7.A2  
Year 8 - 8.14

Year 9 - 9.D3

## **SPORTS DAY – INTER-FORM ATHLETICS**

Year 7 - 7.18

Year 8 - 8.D1

Year 9 - 9.16

Year 10 - 10.09

**PE Department**

### **‘Gifted and Talented’ Initiative**

The following **NAGTY** members enjoyed attending Summer Schools during the holidays:

**David Goodman**

**Classical Studies – The Ancient World      Bristol University**

**Tej Palladino Peters**

**Robotics – Engineering                      Imperial College**

**Sunil Sehdev**

**Health and Illness                              York University**

**Prabhjeet Wilkhu**

**Science & Maths of Food and Colour      Leeds University**

The School was happy to support the attendance of talented thespian **Jamie Hunt** at the 11 day **‘Jesters’** Summer School during August. Drawing on stories from the around the World, this involved students creating new sagas and presenting their own legends. Jamie has been attending the **Birmingham School of Acting** now for a number of years.

On 18 and 19 September 2007, **Ansar Ali, Saharsh Bishnoi, Curtis Donovan, Shivum Kara, Andre Nicholson, Sumandeep Sehmar and Richard Wright**, accompanied by **Mr Webster**, spent two days at the **Land Rover** Plant in Solihull. Activities included designing ‘self-sufficient’ Land Rovers for specific purposes e.g. for use in deserts or the Arctic. Students, as passengers, also enjoyed the ‘Land Rover Experience’ during which a vehicle is tested (almost) to the limit on an assault course.

Congratulations and best wishes to **James Tomlin** who moves from strength to strength in the field of Basketball. On top of his selection to represent the City of Birmingham at the ‘Killester Basketball Club’ Tournament in Dublin at the end of September, he has secured a place in the National Training Squad for England Under 15 Boys. As such, he

## GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK

The Year 11 Geography group have recently visited Kidderminster to investigate land use in the town centre. Despite some cold and windy weather (and a flood on Grove Lane) both visits were very successful, with all the students working very hard and collecting a lot of information. Returning to Kidderminster allows us to examine ways in which the town centre is constantly changing over the years. The Geography staff were particularly impressed with the high standard of work and behaviour demonstrated by the students, who were a credit to the school. Designing a questionnaire and carrying out street interviews can be one of the trickier parts of the day, but the boys rose to the challenge extremely well, and managed to cope with one or two difficult customers. The other tricky part, of course, is writing up the investigation, but the potential is there for some high coursework marks.

**R. Phillips**

### Physical Education

After a successful summer of **cricket** Marlon Wijendra (who played for the County) Kishan Mehta and Amar Rajgor of Year 11, Aaron Oliver of Year 10, Khyaam Saleem and Ali Sharif of Year 8 were all nominated for Warwickshire trials. The year 7 interform football held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September had a close finish with 7.A2 winning the pool league but the overall winners were 7.27 who managed to bring more players and therefore were awarded bonus points which meant that they beat 7.A2 by one point. The year 7 football team have played a few games. They drew their first league game 2-2 against Hamstead Hall but lost to Cardinal Wiseman. The year 9 team beat KEA 2-1 in the Aston Cup and have to play Cardinal Wiseman in the second round. Year 10 have started their league campaign well with a 4-1 win over Holte. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI had an end to end game against King Edwards, Nuneaton, the end score being 6-6. On the **rugby** field we entered the Army Birmingham and Black Country U.16 7-a- side Festival for the first time. We beat four schools in the 'pool' stage, progressed through the semi-final to qualify for the West Midlands Regional stage. We came runners up in an exciting final as Bishop Challoner out scored us 15-10. We play our first league match against Plantsbrook (H) on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. The U.13's are playing a 10-a- side tournament at Moseley R.F.C. on the 17<sup>th</sup> October. The U.14's are in the Birmingham and Black Country Emerging Schools Festival on 8<sup>th</sup> November. Mr Lawrence and Mr Brough have started the year 7 & 8 hockey club. They have hired Laurel Road Sports Centre to practice their hockey skills. They have entered a year 7 & 8 team in a local league which takes place every Tuesday for the next 6 weeks. They played their first practice matches on the 7<sup>th</sup> October and did extremely well. There are lots of lunch time and after school practices taking place. If you are interested in attending any of them see one of the PE staff.

In our **Sports Partnership** we have been working with Brookfield's Primary School with Years' 5/6 rowing/fitness and Year 3 Games. At Nelson we are working with the Year 5's football. At St. Johns' we have helped Year 2 with Dance and Year 3/4 Orienteering.

We have organised a Year 3/4 Rounder's Festival at Nelson Primary on 18<sup>th</sup> October and we have also calendared an Indoor Football Festival for Year 5 and a Basket Ball Festival for Year 6 in November in our Sports Hall.

**D Griffiths**

## Science Faculty Activities

Thanks are due to Year 11 students **Ansar Ali, Manpreet Barham, Adam Hazel, Kishan Mehta, Amarkumar Rajgor and Joshua Randhawa**, and Year 13 students **Wasim Ahmed, Abbas Al-Jabari, Edward Ejiofor, Ased-Ul Islam, Talha Malik, Hussain Quraishi and Sunil Sehdev** for taking the time on 10 October to meet up with **Mr Stan Hurst** from the **National Secondary Strategy**. Mr Hurst is involved with a project to investigate why some schools with Sixth Forms, including our own, have significantly higher than average take-ups for A level Science Subjects. Findings and Case Studies will be shared with other schools through the Local Authority.

We have developed productive links with Birmingham University over recent years, with University Staff and Students visiting us, and we them. The programme of 'West Midlands Physics Teachers' Centre' lectures is already underway, with a number of students having enjoyed '**Nuclear Power: Facts, Fiction and the Battle against Climate Change**'. Programmes for the free evening lectures are on display in the Science Block and all are welcome. Tickets are required only for the 'Christmas' Lecture on Tuesday 27 November; **Mr Jones** has a limited number and the lecture is titled '**Can IPODs Grow on Trees?**'

**P Jones**

### Friends of Handsworth Grammar School

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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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## Diary dates:

19 Oct.	Prize Giving *	6 Dec.	Y12 Parents' Evening
22-26 October	Half Term	7 Dec.	Concert rehearsals HGSA Christmas Fayre
29 Oct.	Issue Y12 Progress Reports *	10 Dec.	Y11 Mock Exams start
30 Oct.	HGSA meeting (prov.)	11 Dec.	School Concert (CBSO centre) (Rehearsals all day)
31 Oct.	Ski trip Information Evening	14 Dec.	Issue Progress Reports to Y7-11 and 13
2 Nov.	Issue Progress Reports to Y7-11 and 13		Y12/13 BNFL Trip
7 Nov.	Governors' Annual Meeting with Parents	20 Dec.	Y11 Mock exams end
9 Nov.	Remembrance Assembly	21 Dec.	Last Day of Term
10 Nov.	HGS 11+ Test	7 Jan.	First Day of Term - Training Day HGSA meeting (prov.)
19 Nov.	Review Day 1	8 Jan.	Students return to School
24 Nov.	Y8 inter-form football		
4 Dec.	Issue Y12 Progress Reports Hall decoration (HGSA)		

\* Please note the date changes.

## 'Sci-Tech' Club

The 'Sci-Tech' Club continues to meet on Wednesdays after school, themes this term being environmentally friendly vehicles and Materials Science in Sport. We are planning a visit related to the first topic on **Saturday 17 November 2007**. This will be to the Centre for Alternative Technology in mid-Wales; club members and their parents have been invited but there may be places for other students too. You should see Mr P Jones or Mr Keane if you are interested in coming along. *Any parent, governor or friend of the school who has some relevant experience of any aspect of Science or Engineering which they feel could be used to enhance future club activities are implored to get in touch with one of us - an important part of the club's ethos is appreciating the role of 'real-life' scientists and engineers.*

**P Jones and M Keane**

## 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'.