

School News

7(3) CHARITY COMMITTEE

Just before half term, 7(3) Charity Committee ran two events to raise money for the British Heart Foundation.

The first fundraiser was Guess the Amount of Money in the Jar. Everyone wanted to know who won the prize but, until Mrs Taylor counted it at half term, nobody knew who had won. In fact, there was £115.95 in the jar. Some of the money put in the jar was from a previous event, Year 7 Wrong Tie Day, but the rest was a contribution from the whole form. At the end of our form assembly, we told everyone who had won. For this event, the nearest guess was £79.09, meaning that Thomas Miller, from 7(3) had won the pass for him and a friend to skip the lunch queue and stay inside at break time and lunch time.

The second fundraiser was Guess the Name of the Teddy. Lots of people guessed a name, as the teddy was very cute. The results of this event were also revealed after the form assembly, but nobody, not even Mrs Taylor, knew who the winner was. We asked Miss Allison to pull a name out of the hat. The winning name was Jamie, so the winner of the teddy was Elysia Henry.

As we raised so much in these events, we decided to split the total and donate it to three different charities. We will give £70.00 to the British Heart Foundation £50.00 to Leukaemia Research and £50.00 to Comic Relief.

Rose Anne

7(3) member of Charity Committee

GCSE FRENCH CONFERENCE "LA FRANCE EN DIRECT"

On Monday 2nd March a coach of Year 10 GCSE French students and some students from Year 9 went to Pudsey Civic Hall for a French Conference.

When we got there, the two lecturers told us some information about themselves and we had to answer questions on them as part of an activity. After that we watched a sketch performed by the lecturers. It was about a man who had lost his car. It was really funny. We then had a short break.

We started off the lunchtime session with a memory game; this was the hardest of all. It was hilarious seeing people trying to remember the words. We watched French advertisements and answered questions about them.

At 1.00pm we then had lunch. This was a good time to reflect on the morning's activities and we all concluded it had been very interesting.

The North Halifax
Grammar School



NHGS News

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MARCH 2009

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We started off the afternoon session with revision of the future tense. This was very helpful as some of us had forgotten it. We then played a French version of the game 'Family Fortunes'. We were excellent at this (so we thought). Then came the best bit, going up on stage! Lydia volunteered to go up on stage, I was looking forward to this bit all day! There were three of us on the stage. We had to translate for an English tourist going into a French chemists. It gave us a chance to practise our French. We got chocolates for volunteering. This was the final activity.

Overall we had a great time and we would love to go again!

Lydia Matloob & Aneka Shoukat 10(3)

On 2nd March, a coach load of students from Years 9 and 10 went to a French Conference at Pudsey Civic Hall.

We left school at 9.30am and the conference started at 11.00am. It was run by two Frenchmen

called Régis and Richard, who asked us all questions from our workbooks. We also did activities which included Publicités Télévisées; this involved watching French adverts and answering questions on them.

We had a short break, then did some more activities before lunch. They sold chips and chocolate so everyone stocked up. After a few more activities and a French game of Family Fortunes (which was interrupted by a short power cut), one of our group, Dot Finan, plucked up the courage to go on stage and answer some questions!

At the end of a brilliant day we got on the coach and travelled back to either school or the Laura Mitchell Clinic.

The day was a great success and we all had a very enjoyable experience.

Elizabeth Lamb and Charlotte Greenwood 9(1)

WORLD MATHS DAY 2009

Congratulations to the following students and thanks to all 174 students who participated in World Maths Day 2009.

Top 10 Questions Answered
Matthew Smith
Ryan Sweeney
Jordan Stefanuti
Mollie Shaw
Philippa Gray
Emily Wadden
Alex Bradley
India Hitchen
Hayden Finch
Lauren Rosborough

Top 10 High Scores Answered
Ryan Sweeney
Rebecca Nunn
Isabelle Mooney
Dale Marshall
Sophie Kilby
Emma Shooter
Luke Ward
Georgina McArdle
Chloe Davey
Matthew Beecham

Top 10 Improvers
Laura Drake
Thomas Johnstone
Ilaina Skinner
India Hitchen
Bethany Browne
Luke Ward
Georgina McArdle
Lauren Gordon
Alice Buckle
Alexander Binns

Wednesday 4th March was World Maths Day. All of the Lower School were invited to take part. Year 9 played people from all corners of the world, including Malaysia, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Australia and Spain during their Maths lessons or PSCH EE time. Years 7 and 8 played at home or in their lessons if possible. The games consisted of a

lot of sums to be answered against the clock and your opponents. The game was really intense but was fun when you won! Overall the day was a great success because we managed to break the World Record of 182,445,169 sums solved in that day. The total correct answers were 452,682,682.

Emily Wadden and Rachel Cole 9(1)

COMENIUS VISIT

The days spent with our Comenius Visitors have been the highlight of my time at NHGS. There are three areas I would like to mention:

1. Organisation

A leitmotiv running through the days was the efficiency and organisation of Miss Morgan. Her care and attention to detail and the variety of activities and trips for guests and hosts that she organised were the key factor in the success of the visit. Her hard work and devotion to the project was commented on by all concerned.

2. Language and getting to know each other

What an opportunity for us all to practise our foreign language skills, particularly in German and Spanish of course. I felt proud to see students of German coming up to our guests and having a go at speaking German. It certainly made our guests feel welcome. For me personally, it was great fun to chat in German to teachers from the former GDR whose first foreign language was Russian. And also, to dredge up O level Spanish to chat to the Spanish PE teacher whose English was about on par with my Spanish! It's a feeling of real achievement for us all to understand or say something and be understood. I'm not sure why students wanted to know how to say 'I love you' in German, Spanish, Estonian and Turkish, but it certainly helped break the ice!

3. Warmth

Again, a leitmotiv throughout the visit and I don't mean the weather, which was remarkably typical for an English March (or that's what our guests thought at least). The openness and friendliness of our visitors was apparent to everyone. Likewise, an impression our guests have taken away with them is of the warmth shown to them by everyone they came into contact with.

So, my thanks especially to Miss Morgan but also thanks to the students and families who were such good ambassadors, not only for NHGS, but for Halifax and England in general!

KDH

On 18th March after a long and exhausting journey from their home countries, the visitors from our Comenius partner schools arrived at NHGS. After the visitors had all been introduced to their hosts everyone headed home to get acquainted and finally get some sleep.

The following day we rose bright and early and set off to school for a day in lessons with their hosts.



My partner student from Estonia, Silver Reinhart, seemed to know more about the subjects I was doing than me and had quite an easy day!

The students made everyone feel welcome. After school on Thursday we all went for a trip to Electric Bowl in Halifax. We had a good time apart from the disappointing display by the NHGS staff!



Friday saw our visitors mixing with the "bigwigs" at the Town Hall. Then after lunch the entire group got on a bus and went to Haworth, where we visited the Bronte Parsonage Museum and had a walking tour including a lengthy visit to the sweet shop. Then everyone went home for an early night as we had to get up for York in the morning.



At 8.45am the group met in Halifax and went to York where we visited the Jorvik museum (which the visitors thought was fantastic) and some people visited the York Dungeons. We also had a walking tour of York and its historic city walls and a traditional British carvery at a restaurant.

Then it was time for some serious shopping as the visitors frantically bought gifts to take home to their parents. When we had all spent up we set off back home.

Sunday saw our visitors leave and the conclusion to the Comenius visit. It has seen us learn things about different cultures and different ways of life and we've also made some friends along the way. Thanks very much to the staff for organising it and for the students from across the world who made it a worthwhile experience. It's onwards and upwards for the project from here on in.

Ella 11(6) and Mark 11(3)



Two weeks ago we both took part in the Comenius visit to NHGS. We each hosted a student and took part in the various activities throughout the week. Both we and our partners enjoyed the week and got a sample of each other's cultures. It was a great experience and we look forward to doing it more with the Comenius Project in the future.

**James Nevison & Nick Robinson
9(1)**



**TAKE 10 SECONDS TO HELP
RAVENSCLIFFE WIN £20,000**

Can you help Ravenscliffe to win £20,000 this April? Have you voted yet?

Ravenscliffe High School and Sports College in Halifax, a secondary special school, has been nominated as 1 of 5 finalists in with a chance of winning a £20,000 Future Friendly Award.

This is a national award which seeks to find the organisation in Britain that the general public believes takes the most positive action to help make a difference to their environment and community whilst showing a significant commitment to sustainability.

The school featured in the Daily Telegraph newspaper on 28 February and 7 March 2009 and in an online 3 minute DVD which you can view via the link below.

As you have a connection with staff or students at the school we are asking you to consider voting on our behalf. This award would help us to start the refurbishment of our school hydrotherapy pool which is used by many of our students, who have a wide range of special needs and the local community. (The overall cost of this project will be £200,000+)

The winning organisation will be chosen by public vote which is now open until 3 April 2009. You can vote for Ravenscliffe NOW by clicking this link (it will only take you 10 seconds to vote):

<http://www.futurefriendly.co.uk/awards/ravenscliffe.php>

Please consider voting now and forward this email to any of your friends, family or contacts who you think may be willing to support us.

Many thanks for your help. We really appreciate it.

Mike Hirst and Martin Moorman (Head and Partner Head)

RAFFLE PRIZES FOR MUSIC CONCERTS

The Music Department would be grateful for any donations from parents and friends of the school, which can be used for raffle prizes for the various music concerts held at school throughout the year. The next Music concert will take place on Tuesday 28th April. Could donations please be sent into school for Mrs Wharvell in the School Office.

Many thanks.

GJE

TAKING UP MUSIC TUITION?

Full sized, beautifully set-up Stentor violin, about 20 years old, in excellent condition: £300.

Knoll violin bow: £100.

Quality rectangular violin case: £50.

Three-quarter sized German violin, early 20th century, with bow and lined case: £295

Telephone: 01422 885254 or 07791 422024

Peter Rawlings – Exam Invigilator

BIOLOGY OLYMPIAD

Congratulations to all students who took part in the fourteenth Biology Olympiad. This is a competition open to the top A Level Biology students in the country. The performance of our students this year was the best yet, with Richard Cole and Nuthana Prathivadi-Bhayankaram gaining silver medals, Anna Beckwith a bronze medal and Christian Byrne Highly Commended.

The medal winners have been invited to receive their awards at a ceremony at the Imperial College, London, in June.

V INVOLVED

Many of our sixth form students are involved in voluntary activities, for example, helping out in local primary schools, the RSPCA and many charity events. Their contributions to society were recognised this month with 20 students gaining their V50 awards and another 8 students receiving 'V thank yous' for specific events.

The awards were presented at a very entertaining evening ceremony at the Square Chapel, Halifax.

GQ

'A CASE OF IDENTITIY'



On Tuesday 3rd March, Year 7 worked with a forensic scientist from Australia to solve the mystery of the murder of 17 year old Sally. We had to work out who killed Sally by looking at and interpreting lots of different forensic evidence. Witnesses had reported seeing three different men close to where Sally's body was found during the time Sally had been murdered. But who did it?



First of all, we found fingerprints and DNA samples on different items of clothing, drinks cans and the area in which Sally's body was found. From these sources we were able to conclude that Sally had been sharing a can of coke with another person in a changing room at a local park. We then moved on to analyse a sample of Sally's blood. We found that there was a substance in her blood that shouldn't have been there. We concluded that someone had spiked Sally's can of coke, perhaps the person who had been in the park with her. We used a microscope to look at Sally's school skirt and noticed that there were some strands of wool on it that were different from the material that the skirt was made out of. We also found some footprints imprinted in the sand next to where Sally was killed. One footprint was very feint, but another was very easy to see.

Once we had finished collecting and analysing the evidence, we had to piece all our information



together to work out who killed Sally. Was it suspect one, her ex boyfriend, suspect two, a university student Sally had recently met, or suspect three, a man Sally had never met before? The fingerprints and DNA matched with those of suspect two, but the wool from Sally's skirt was the same wool as the wool of suspect one's jumper and the footprint matched with suspect three! We correctly guessed that suspect three had just been walking in the park before Sally got there, so that left suspect one and two. We thought that suspect one, Sally's ex, could have been talking to Sally during the day, and that was how the wool from his jumper got on her skirt. That left suspect two. The Australian forensic scientist told us we had guessed right! Suspect two had met Sally for a drink and wanted to take their new relationship further. He had spiked Sally's drink, but she woke up when he tried to kiss her and she lashed out at him. He panicked and hit her around the head with a broken bottle, killing her.

We all really enjoyed 'A Case of Identity'. We learnt a lot about forensic science techniques, about the different careers that are available and what qualifications you would need to do them.

Caitlin Cody 7(2)

NHGS PARENT PROM

Auction Bids:

Lot 1 Hair & Beauty
Donated by Radiance Beauty & the Nikki Collins Hair Company
Winner: Mr M Bradley
£80.00

Lot 2 Gym Membership
Donated by Queens Club,
Winner: Mrs S Rout
£60.00

Lot 3 McDonald's Vouchers
Donated by Mr P Singh, McDonald's
Winner: Mrs P Sweeney
£50.00

Lot 4 Golfing Day
Donated by Mr Clive McFadzean on behalf of Bradley Hall Golf Club
Winner: Mr R Cooper
£70.00

Lot 5 Curry Buffet
Donated by: Mrs L Maslen
Winners:
Mrs S Payne - £200
Mr S Knellor - £200
Mrs A Siddal - £150 (for 15 people)

Lot 6 Harvey Nichols Shopping Experience
Donated by Mrs P Sweeney/Harvey Nichols/Elemis and Clarins
Winner: Mrs S Knellor
£270.00

Lot 7 Joiner for the Day
Donated by Mr & Mrs M Stott, Visions Interiors, Todmorden
Winner: Mr Paul Unsworth
£90.00

Lot 8 Gardener for the Day
Donated by Mrs R Osborne
Winner: Mrs Helen Mitchell
£150.00

Lot 9 Family Portrait
Donated by Mr D Allen, Head of Photography & Technology, NHGS
Winners:
Mrs Emma Kemp - £140.00
Mrs Lesley Maslen - £140.00
Mrs Sue Kneller - £140.00

Lot 10 Dinner Party for 10 people
Donated by: Mrs L Maslen

Winners:
Mrs S Kneller - £400.00
Mr Rob Cooper - £400.00

Lot 11 Holiday Apartment in Malta
Donated by Mr & Mrs S Pollacco
Winner: Mrs Lilly Lawton
£230.00

The total raised via the Auction is £2770 plus, hopefully, £1500 match funding making a potential total for the auction of £4270.00

The PA would like to say a very big thank you to all the sponsors who donated items for the auction.

2009 CHALLENGE OF MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE AND ENTERPRISE IN ACTION DAY

Would you like to share your knowledge and experience?

Can you be an inspiration to our students?

In order to furnish our students with some of the necessary skills required for today's workplace, we hold two annual events. Our Challenge of Management Conference for our Lower Sixth Form students and the Enterprise in Action Day for our Year 10 students. We are convinced of the value that these events add to our students, in particular in the area of their transferable skills.

As in previous years, if the 2009 events are to be a success, we need to ask for assistance from partners of the school and local business people. The events cannot be as challenging and worthwhile for the students without the input and expertise given by the advisers. They provide invaluable support to the groups of student delegates, in the form of outside knowledge and expertise, not readily available to students within a normal school day. If you would like to be an adviser, for one or hopefully both of our events, please could you contact me as soon as possible on 01422 244625 or via e-mail at rjfa@nhgs.co.uk. Alternatively, if you are unable to help this year but you know of someone whom you feel would enjoy and benefit from the experience then please let me know.

The 2009 Challenge of Management Conference will be held over 2 days on **Thursday 18th and Friday 19th June** where approximately 150 Lower Sixth Form students will be working intensively through a management related programme in small groups,

each with an adviser. The programme will contain all the highlights of previous Conferences.

The 2009 Enterprise in Action Day will be held on **Wednesday 8th July** for our Year 10 students, who will be working in groups with an adviser. The day will address Enterprise Education through a business simulation based on the Retail Ice Cream Business. There will be a series of decision sheets, negotiation exercises and a product promotion in the form of a TV advert.

Both events are organised by Challenge Training Partners (CTP) who formerly delivered similar conferences with the Industrial Careers Foundation. Andy Clayton and Andy Dixon from CTP will project manage these events on our behalf. I am sure that both events will be as challenging and enjoyable as ever.

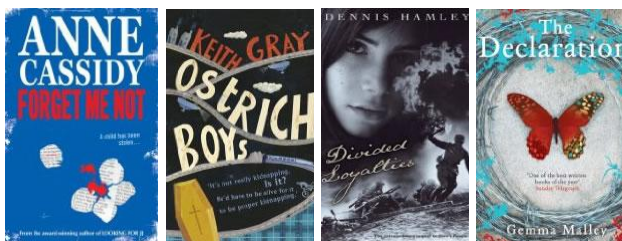
If you require further details of the events, please contact me at school on 01422 244625 or via e-mail at rjfa@nhgs.co.uk. I hope that you feel you are able to support these events and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

RJF

CALDERDALE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2009

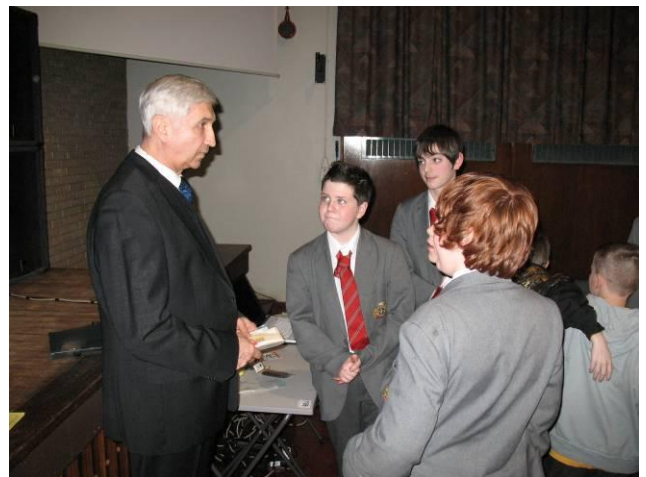
Ten Year 8 students from North Halifax Grammar School are taking part in the Calderdale Children's Book of the Year Award this year. They will read and review the shortlisted books and attend a Literary Lunch held at Halifax Central Library on 17 June when prizes will be given out for the best reviews and students will also have the chance to meet and talk to the authors. They will be asked to vote for the book they would like to win Calderdale Children's Book of the Year 2009.

Selected Books:



VISIT OF DR ALEXANDER MARTYNOV, HEAD OF BALLISTICS AT RUSSIAN MISSION CONTROL, KOROLEV.

On Monday 16th March we were very fortunate to welcome Dr Martynov to NHGS on the last stop of his 2 week tour of the UK, talking at schools, universities and businesses in his role as Head of Foreign Relations for the Russian Space Programme. He did presentations in the school hall to local primary school pupils, our year 7 and 8 students and some of year 9. In the evening he spoke to an audience of students and parents as advertised in the last Newsletter and if you were not there you missed a treat! The evening lecture was called "Manned Mission to Mars" and they really are going!



Although there are lots of spin offs from space exploration the only justification for the planned mission to Mars, he told us, is to investigate whether there really are traces of microscopic life – finding it would give us proof that we are not the only life in the Universe.

The three as yet unsolved problems which he appealed to our young scientists to help solve were:

1. The psychological challenge of being so far away from help. If there is an emergency on board the Space Station presently orbiting the Earth, the escape capsules can return the occupants to Earth in 4 hours. It would take up to 40 minutes for the radio signals to get back from Mars!
2. How to wash the clothes. Water will be in very short supply and effectively recovering and recycling it is difficult.

3. Disposal of waste. Oxygen and water are recycled from urine and solid human waste is ejected from the space station: it burns up on re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. This could not be done on a trip to Mars and disposal of it is a major problem.

The plan, before the credit crunch, was to blast off in 2015 for a two year round trip. It seems that the time frame is not so definite now, but they are working on the propulsion system having 400 individual engines, so that even if 50 of them developed problems they could still get back. They have grown wheat and reared Japanese quail in the orbiting space station to see how they cope with weightlessness. The wheat was more productive than on Earth but the quail in the video looked less than happy and they have struggled to produce healthy chicks. Lots of mutations were possibly produced by the higher levels of radiation in space without the Earth's atmosphere and magnetic field to shield us. They plan to build the new ship in orbit around the Earth and then take it to the moon and back to test it before setting off for Mars.

Perhaps the most interesting part of his talk was the video footage of the astronauts in the Space Station, showing the problems of eating, drinking, washing and doing routine maintenance on board.

It was a fascinating insight into the work of a Space Scientist who was Head of Ballistics in Korolev for 25 years. We also raised £140 for charity from the event. The money will be donated to Comic Relief this year, look out for the next lecture – an event not to be missed!

RFH

CHRISTMAS FAYRE SATURDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2009

The PA is planning a bumper Christmas Fayre for 2009. Moving away from the usual Craft format, the Christmas Fayre will be slightly later this year, on Saturday 28th November.

This event will be just in time for Christmas presents, Christmassy activities and seasonal foods.

We will be having more stalls than ever, so make sure you put this in your diary!

If anybody would like to enquire about having a stall at the Christmas Fayre, please contact Sue Kneller, who is organising this PA event, on 01422 265285.

BATTLEFIELDS TRIP

In true North Halifax style we had to meet at the crack of dawn to set off immediately at 06:30am. The coach ride seemed to fly by with all the excitement buzzing in the air; the ferry over to Calais was on time and to our relief actually quite relaxing. We arrived in France and gradually made our way to our home for 3 days- Chateau d'Eblinghem! Our first day in France was coming to a close.

Bright and early Monday morning, we were on our way for our first day. We spent the day in Belgium visiting a couple of cemeteries along the way so some of us could visit our relations' graves. Our first major stop was in a small town near Ypres, where we visited the death cells. We learnt that 16 men had been shot by their own side; they're buried at that exact place. We then moved on to another cemetery and this is where we were able to see the grave of a 15-year-old boy, who had joined the army at 13! It made us all think of how it must have felt for someone our age to go to war. We also visited a Yorkshire trench and then we went onto our first visit to the Menin Gate in Ypres. We also returned there in the evening.

It was mind blowing to see 55,000 names recorded on the walls of that building. It was hard to get to grips with the vast numbers of people who were reported missing or dead as a result of the Battle of Ypres. Our next stop was the Passchendaele Museum, where we were able to experience life in a trench. The rest of the day consisted of us going round other cemeteries and monuments, taking in even more astonishing facts.

We then got into the evening and we were allowed to explore the town of Ypres before we met up again to go to a fancy restaurant! The restaurant was even better than we expected; it was opened especially for us so it was exclusively ours. It was fantastic. Then the time came for the biggie. It was the Menin Gate ceremony; the ceremony which commemorated the lives of those reported lost during the war. Rosie Moorman spoke the exhortation in front of everyone and she did it extremely well. Then Edward, Natasha, Fay and Sarah laid the wreath for the school at the top of the staircase. It was a great honour to be able to

lay the wreath, and it was something never to forget.

Tuesday consisted of staying in France visiting more cemeteries and monuments, plus the Thiepval Wood and monument, which were very interesting. The Thiepval monument contained 44,000 names on the walls and many of us were able to find our relations here.

The whole trip was enjoyable for all of us and we experienced moments of sadness and also laughter, especially on the coach from Mr Wilson and Mr Jervis with their coach games. None of this could have been possible if wasn't for the teachers: Miss Potkins, Mr Barker, Mr Jervis and Mr Wilson. Thank you for taking us on the trip; it was an experience never to forget.



Sarah 10(4) and Charlotte 10(1)

LEPRA

A representative of the charity LEPRA came into our school on the 28th January 2009. The assembly informed us about the disease of leprosy; where it can be found and what can be done to help. We were all given an envelope to put any donations in and were told that anyone who rose over £21 would get a T-Shirt and that we would all get certificates. On the 11th of February we had a workout session in the morning to raise awareness of the disease! It was good fun and we learnt a lot about the disease.

Eve 7 (4)

PSCHEE event; LEPRA workout

As part of the year 7 PSCHEE curriculum, pupils learn about the work of charities and how to become actively involved in charity work. On 28th January we invited a representative from the charity LEPRA to come in to school to talk to our pupils about the work that LEPRA do.

The students were shown a presentation on the work of the charity and shown examples of how the charity is helping the sufferers of leprosy. The pupils were then asked to raise money on behalf of the charity and as a reward took part in The LEPRA workout; a 30 minute exercise class. The year 7 pupils managed to raise over £1100, an outstanding

achievement. Many thanks and congratulations go to all those involved.



JLJ

NEW YORK VISIT 2009

The A level Photography group made a visit to New York during the February half-term holiday. It was the first time such a trip had taken place and the trip proved to be an excellent location, resulting in over 10,000 photographs being taken. This is no surprise considering that (A) photographers were involved, (B) New York is a visually spectacular place, and (C) we had Sailesh with us, who photographs everything at all times. The following is an account by some members of the party.

DLA

Day 1

Sixteen Photography A Level students plus Mr Allen and Mrs Robbins spent a lovely romantic Valentine's Day on trains and a tube to get to our Heathrow hotel. It was a comfortable Holiday Inn, providing some sleep before flying to New York early the next morning. The highlight of the evening was a certain person, mentioning no names, walking into a glass door upon arriving at the hotel....

Day 2

Up bright and early to get breakfast at the hotel before heading off to Heathrow. Once there it was a bit of a task getting everyone checked-in for our seven-hour flight, which we spent watching films, playing games and getting fed. When we arrived at New York's Newark airport we found that passport control is a much scarier place in America, involving fingerprint scanning and photo taking! We then went to meet our guide Sarah and headed off to the hotel.

After dumping our bags in our cosy hotel rooms we set off on our first excursion of the week, a walking tour of *downtown Manhattan*. We were given our metro swipe cards for the underground, which were to cause many a problem in the coming week, and spent quite a bit of the day skipping on and off the jerky subway trains. We started off at *The Rockefeller Centre*, the home of the ice-skating rink and the setting for the American show *30 Rock*. Next on the tour was *St. Patrick's Cathedral*, an historic and beautiful neo-gothic cathedral, which is surrounded by extremely high skyscrapers. It is over 150 years old and the centre of the St Patrick's Day celebrations. Finally we went by the tube to *Grand Central Station* to have our first proper meal in NYC. Full from our American food we rode back to our hotel and were in bed very early. Before 9pm New York time, to be exact, but well past 1.00 am by our body clocks.



Day 3

First morning in New York! Had a typical breakfast of bagels, after being given our money to feed ourselves, then it was off on a tour of Manhattan with a new guide, Mark. We went to see *Ground Zero*, and to St. Paul's Chapel opposite, which was where aid workers rested while they were working through the wreckage. There are now many tributes there, including messages left at the time of the 9/11 disaster. We then went to *Central Park*, saw the John Lennon memorial at Strawberry Fields, had a geology lesson from our guide, Mark, and had some group photos, including the odd surreal one.

After our tour with Mark we went to MoMA - the *Museum of Modern Art*, which was amazing, and saw some iconic pieces of modern art including

Jasper Johns' *American Flag*. The Architecture and Design section was also really interesting.

Times Square was our next major stop and we were given an hour to shop and wander around. Most of our time was spent in a tourist shop, where Sailesh must have set a world record for money spent in an hour! We then headed off to "Ben's Deli" for tea.

The Empire State Building was the last port of call for the night, where we went up to the viewing platform on the 86th floor! It was pretty cold out on the platform and you could feel the building swaying slightly, but all that was ignored while we attempted to get some photos that weren't blurry! What a view!



View from the 86th floor of the Empire State Building

Day 4

In the morning we got taken for a wander over *The Brooklyn Bridge*, which was cold but spectacular. There were fantastic views of the Manhattan skyscrapers as we walked towards them from the Brooklyn side. Becky Lowry even braved it to the edge of the bridge for the group photo! Once we'd taken the group photo we set off walking again, heading for the Guggenheim Museum.



View of Manhattan from The Brooklyn Bridge

The Guggenheim Museum looked fantastic; the building itself is really impressive, although the artworks inside didn't quite appeal to me as much but they were interesting none the less. The best one was probably a little set of bells put on rails that ran around the inside of the museum. It's hard to describe, but it was really good.

After the Guggenheim we took a group decision to go shopping and to *Bloomingdales*. Sailesh got the most out of Bloomingdales by making a complaint and getting loads of free stuff, including a really nice key ring. When looking round the men's section though, the first thing I came across was a coat, seemingly ordinary, apart from the fact it cost \$1,700. The prices in there didn't stop Mrs Robbins though; she came out with a few hundred dollars' worth of shoes.

For tea that night we got taken to *Little Italy*, which was a really nice place. We were right near where *Gangs of New York* was filmed. The food we got was quite nice, just a huge plate full of pasta. We played a cruel joke on Josh, convincing him that he hadn't ordered any food and he had to go fill in a form in the front of the restaurant in order to get his meal. Then Mr Allen joined in with it - so he really thought he wasn't having any food.

After tea we were taken out for a bit more shopping in *SoHo* (which stands for South of Houston, a neighbourhood in Lower Manhattan). When we were done we went off to another odd bit of NY, the kind of punky area, but no one dared go into the shops so we all went into Starbucks instead, but at least we were warm.

Day 5

After a bright and early breakfast at a genuine American Deli near Wall Street we wandered down to the harbour to await the first ferry of the day to take us to two of the most famous places in New York, *Liberty Island* and *Ellis Island*. Once we got off the rather cold and quite choppy ferry we spent our time on the island posing in front of the statue and looking like right tourists. After another quick, yet cold boat trip, we landed on Ellis Island. This was where all the early immigrants to New York arrived.

Wandering through the museum showed us just what those thousands of immigrants had to go through to have a better life in America. Hope, Ben and Becky took a virtual citizenship test, similar to what the immigrants would have had to take, and failed miserably. Once we landed back in Manhattan it was time to go to *China Town* for our last meal in NYC. In China Town we got a real feel for the neighbourhood by walking around the side streets and going to a Buddhist Temple, which housed a huge, gold statue of The Buddha. Once we had filled up on Chinese we had some last minute tourist shopping in Times Square before being dragged away to the airport.

Day 6

Following our overnight return flight we landed back at Heathrow Airport. Tired or jetlagged, we managed to catch the tube to King's Cross, at rush hour, causing problems with our large suitcases and the little available room on a tube train. On the train home to Halifax we contemplated the fact that less than a day ago we were at the Statue of Liberty.

Arriving at Halifax was a sad and tiring end to an amazing photography trip, and we all would like to thank Mr Allen and Mrs Robbins for organising a pretty amazing visit to one of the most desirable destinations ever. So thanks!



Hope U6 (1), Becca U6 (7) and Ben U6 (5)

We have always enjoyed curries, so when we saw the Big Curry Night advertised we thought it would be an enjoyable way for us to support the school. As it was a new event, we didn't know what to expect. We arrived to find the drama room beautifully decorated with richly coloured fabrics. The bar and Mumtaz stall were given the appearance of a bazaar.

There was a picture quiz, with an Asian theme, to start the evening. We enjoyed having a go at that with the other family on our table. A selection of starters (such as popadoms and samosas) was brought to us. There was a good variety of food and drinks and a lovely relaxed atmosphere.

Once the starters had been served, Nuthana Prathivadi-Bhyankaram performed four Indian dances for us. She was beautifully dressed and a pleasure to watch. We were particularly intrigued by her eye and head movements. She then gave a brief lesson in some of the hand movements.

Our table did well enough in the picture quiz to be allowed up to the serving hatches first to get our main courses. Again, there was plenty of choice, even for us vegetarians.

Then we had a general knowledge quiz, again with an Indian theme. We worked in teams on our tables and had fun trying to remember or guess appropriate answers. Tables marked each other's answers and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves.

It was a lovely evening and was obviously the result of a lot of hard work. So thank you to the organisers, the chefs, the waiters, the bar staff, the interior designers, the quizmasters and Nuthana.

Karol and Phil Whettlock

THE BIG CURRY NIGHT - REPORT

THE PA MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

The winners for January 2009 are:

Prize	No	Name	
1st £150	139	Howard J Naylor	Lightcliffe
2nd £75	62	R N & Mrs J E Beall	Shibden
3rd £25	176	Mark Knowles	Sowood

The winners for February 2009 are

Prize	No	Name	
1st £150	142	T Gray	Shelf
2nd £75	4	Mr & Mrs P Anderson	Saville Park
3rd £25	158	David Beecham	Fixby

Cheques in the post! Congratulations!

If you didn't win anything – it may be because you haven't signed up for this? Just [download a form](http://www.nhgs.co.uk/pa/prizedraw.pdf) (<http://www.nhgs.co.uk/pa/prizedraw.pdf>) or get one from the school office – commit to a £5.00 direct debit each month, and you could be one of our winners. Each month we give away £250 – **it could be you!** Contact Linda Saunders at linda_c_saunders@yahoo.co.uk if you want to know more.

AS MUSIC RECITAL

On the evening of Monday 9th March the AS Music candidates performed a recital for parents and friends. Everyone agreed it was a very pleasant evening's entertainment and provided good performing experience for the students. Performers were: Charlotte Ackroyd-Swayne, guitar; Miriam Hollis, piano; Thomas Kaye, piano and drums; Thomas Key, piano and euphonium, Kate Rosborough, piano; Matthew Shaw, cornet and James Unsworth, clarinet. We would like to thank the following students who played in some of the ensemble work: Jonathan Perry, Jack Gardner and Huw Goodall.

STRING PLAYERS HELP PARALYMPIC BID

On Friday 20th March, the NHGS String Orchestra, directed by Mrs Grahame, gave a concert at Mount Tabor Methodist Church to raise money towards buying a racing wheelchair for paralympic hopeful Hannah Cockroft who is also a string player. They performed a mix of popular classical pieces to a very high standard and there were some superb solo performances from Rosalie Newton, Georges Moss, Jonathan Gumery, Victoria Mulley and Lucy Robinson.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Many students stayed after school on Friday 27th March to watch the Battle of the Bands. For weeks, the school had been throbbing to the rock beat of all the bands practising in a bid to impress the X-factor style judges and on the night they all did themselves justice with exciting performances. The judges, Miss Hemmingway, Mr McKay and Mr Wilson were full of praise for the groups and offered some constructive comments. They had some difficult decisions to make before finally choosing the winners. Congratulations to Battle of the Bands Champions 2009: The Frontier Psychiatrists (Freddy Vinehill-Cliffe, Tom Billson, James Green, Sinead Carroll).

GJE

PA DIARY DATES 2009

Wednesday 29 th April	Pamper Day
Thursday 30 th April	Pamper Day
Friday 1 st May	Pamper Day
Saturday 2 nd May	Pamper Day
May 6 th	PA Meeting
May 14 th	Quiz night
June 3 rd	PA Meeting
June/July	French evening
November 28 th	Christmas Fayre

Any offers of help greatly appreciated, please get in touch.

BEAUTY & PAMPERING DAYS

Wednesday 29th April - **SOLD OUT**
Thursday 30th April 2009 - **FEW PLACES REMAINING**
Friday 1st May 2009 - **SOLD OUT**
Saturday 2nd May 2009 - **SOLD OUT**

Time: 09.30 – 16.30
Venue: Glen Royd, Stocks Lane, Luddenden, HX2 6PR
Price: £99
Phone: 01422 885365 or 07961 006023
Contact: Petra Sweeney

This event is **SOLD OUT** for the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. There are still a few places left for Thursday. You can call Petra and put your name on the **reserve list** - just in case a place becomes available.

We are still looking for 2 extra Therapists to work on Friday & Saturday. If you know any freelance/mobile therapists, would you call Petra with phone number/details?

NHGS PARENT PROM

Saturday 21st March 2009 saw the 2nd NHGS Parent Prom take place at The Rock Hotel, Holywell Green. The 118 guests were entertained by the fabulous SPG trio (all students at NHGS) during their meal.

Mr Allen took photos of couples and friends in their finery and also snapshots during the evening. There was an auction with fabulous lots, a balloon raffle with some super prizes and Heads & Tails games. The evening was rounded off with dancing to music from DJ Tim of The Rock.



The evening was enjoyed by all and made over £1600 (without the auction, see later, and any match funding). The Grand Total will be announced later.



Thank You to everyone who supported this event by buying tickets, donating auction lots, or giving prizes, time and effort.

NHGS FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT

Date: Thursday 14th May 2009
Venue: NHGS Canteen
Time: 7.30pm – 10.00pm
Tickets: Adults £5.00
Children £3.00
Family Ticket (2 A + up to 3 C under 16yrs) £15.00
Supper: A light snack and drink is included in the ticket price
Teams: Maximum 8

For some years now, even though he has retired from NHGS Mike Hill has been hosting the Family Quiz Night for us. It has always been a well attended event, and something that families have enjoyed - although there are some families who are definitely more competitive than others! This year Mike Hill is **definitely** retiring, and we are delighted to announce that Richard Frost (parent) has offered to step in to organise the NHGS Family Quiz Night on Thursday 14th May. However Mike and Jean say that, as they are not hosting the Quiz, they may come along as ordinary punters - so you haven't seen the last of them!

Richard is taking us well and truly into the 21st century with music, pictures and video rounds. For reasons to be revealed on the night, you may find it useful to swot up on your knowledge of New Zealand! The pace of the rounds will require team efforts, and some lateral thinking, and also some current affairs knowledge.

A fun evening - suitable for children and adults. Maximum 8 to a team. Prize for the winning team (but of course, we don't do it for the wonderful deluxe, stupendous prize - do we?). Come along and join in - it promises to be a fun evening.

There will be a bar serving beer, wine and soft drinks. The ticket price will include a snack supper and one drink.

Please complete the tear off slip at the end of the newsletter if you require tickets.

Parents' Association Meetings

Wednesday 6 May 2009

The meetings start at 7.45pm and all parents are welcome.

Come in through the main entrance of NHGS.

Well done to everyone who supported this year's event – from non-uniform and fancy dress to face painting and guessing the red-nosed teacher! The winner of this competition was Saul Rigg 8(2).



Many students showed great initiative, organising their own sponsored activities. Particularly impressive was the contribution of James Allen 9(4) who raised £172.52 having his head shaved.

Sam Rowntree 9(3), Adam Trevisani 9(3), Ben Roberts 9(3), Robert Murray 9(5) and Elliott Bamford 9(5) raised an impressive £350 through a sponsored cycle from Hebden Bridge to Manchester in fancy dress.

The grand total raised was approximately £1,500. This year Comic Relief has asked schools to decide how they want the money they raised to be spent. We have decided to share the money between helping kids get into school in Africa and helping people in the UK.

GQ

WORLD BOOK DAY 5TH MARCH 2009

This was celebrated throughout the school in three ways this year. A key stage 3 competition was run by Mrs Ransome comprising pupils researching authors and book titles as identified from teachers' badges. Many staff took the opportunity to share with pupils of all ages books important in their lives. These ranged from Mr Mackay's exploration of the hey days of Huddersfield as the 'Athens Of The North' (in sociological terms at least) to Mr Holt's more contemporary discussion of American dialect in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country For Old Men*. Other books discussed ranged from Mr Grant and *Waiting For Godot*, via Mrs Hoare and *The Reader* (the original, pre-Winslett, German version), to Mr Wilson's hallucinogenic *Money* by Martin Amis. In Geography Miss Morgan discussed, aptly, Bill Bryson's *Notes From A Small Island*. A slightly more random celebration of books was evident in the three boxes of books emptied on to the floor of M14 for the day, suggesting, as always, that there is a book

somewhere, for everyone. We may be in a multimedia age, but perhaps Groucho Marx had a valid point, even if it was delivered in his usual facetious manner - "I find television very educational. Every time someone turns it on, I go in the other room and read a book." Accounts of his life regularly highlight a heated exchange with the Warner Brothers when they threatened to sue over his making of *A Night In Casablanca*. He was no mean writer himself, and wrote back threatening to sue Warner Brothers for using the word brothers.

SR

VACANCY FOR PARENT GOVERNOR

We currently have a vacancy on the Governing Body for the position of Parent Governor. If any parent is interested in applying then please contact the Clerk to Governors, Ms Robbins, at the school on 01422 244625 to obtain a nomination form and details of the "disqualifications" which prevent people from holding governorships. Alternatively, you can request details by email paula.robbins@nhgs.co.uk

The closing date for nominations is Friday 1st May 2009.

U13 CALDERDALE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT 2009

The girls' U13 hockey team went to Park Lane school to take part in their annual hockey tournament on Thursday 12th March. They were in a pool of 5 and played incredibly well to win their group. Highlights were the beating of Rishworth B 1-0 with an outstanding goal from Phoebe Hornsby in the first 10 seconds, and a 3-0 drubbing of Hipperholme Grammar school with two more goals from Hornsby and one from Ellen (Y7).



In the semi finals NHGS played Sowerby Bridge who were a strong side, coming through as runners-up in their pool. Sowerby had a lot of the play and just couldn't seem to find the net. However NHGS hit Sowerby on the counter attack on two separate occasions to secure their place in the final. Phoebe was on target again to put the NHGS team in front, with Ellen adding to the tally with a fearsome strike from the top D.

The final saw NHGS up against Rishworth who had been unbeaten in their pool and progressed through from the other semi final. NHGS were under great amounts of pressure from the start and excellent performances from defenders Jade and Emily ably assisted by Afiya in goal managed to keep the ball out. Eventually however, Rishworth managed to break the deadlock from a rebound after a fine save from Afiya. NHGS continued to try to hit their opponents on the break as they had done so effectively in previous matches.

Once again Phoebe came to the rescue with a brilliant reverse stick sweep to bring the scores level. It was end-to-end action throughout the remaining minutes but ended with neither side being able to score the decisive goal. 5 minutes golden-goal (first to score wins the match) followed but still the teams were tied.

A penalty stroke competition was to decide the Calderdale champions for 2009. 3 players from each team stepped up to try and secure their team the win in very nerve wracking circumstances. Afiya in goal for NHGS saved two of the Rishworth penalties in dramatic style, the third being scored by the

Rishworth player. Ellen managed to slot her penalty away to tie the game again at 1-1. Another set of three penalties were taken and this time Rishworth were too strong scoring 2 out of the 3, with NHGS unable to register a goal.

It was a fantastic performance by the girls and Ellen, playing "a year young" was named player of the tournament as voted by all the other schools in the competition!

The team were:

Afiya	Emily (Capt)
Jade	Francesca
Maddy	Phoebe
Ellen	Josie
Rachel	Sally

Congratulations to all those involved.

CT

U14 CALDERDALE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT 2009

The girls' U14 hockey team went to Park Lane school to take part in their annual hockey tournament on Thursday 17th March. They were in a pool of 5 and were to play 4x15 minute matches in close succession – a test of fitness as well as skill!



The first game against Rishworth B was a close affair with NHGS edging out their opponents for a 1-0 win. Charlie Moss scored the only goal of the game with a straight strike at a penalty corner. In the second match NHGS played Holy Trinity; again Charlie was on form to secure the 3 points with two goals, the second being of note, beating the last defender and striking the ball hard from the top D leaving the goalkeeper helpless. Next were big rivals Crossley Heath who were beaten convincingly 3-0, with a brace of goals, yet again from Charlie and a cheeky rebound from Luan. There was defensive brilliance from Ella who showed real aggression in her tackles and a forthright desire to defend her goal at all costs! The final game was against Hipperholme and

Lightcliffe who were crushed 4-0, with two goals from Swainbank. The girls had been unbeaten up to this point and had not conceded a goal; Alice (NHGS goalkeeper) kept her composure well and organised her back four admirably. The NHGS team progressed to the semi-finals as unbeaten winners of their pool.

In the semi-finals the girls played Ryburn, who had finished runners-up in their pool. It was a close match but again the NHGS team asserted themselves. Swainbank popped up on cue in an excellent position on the back post and was picked out by Charlie; Luan swept the ball home with conviction to put NHGS ahead. Charlie followed this up with another powerful strike from the top D to secure the girls' place in the final – 2-0 NHGS.

The final was against Rishworth who are always NHGS' closest rivals in these tournaments. From the start NHGS were pegged back in their own half under great amounts of pressure. The defence worked hard with notable performances from Charlotte and Rachel. Rishworth eventually broke through however and managed to score after a double save from Alice Buckle in goal. NHGS pushed to hit their opponents on the break and did so with only a few minutes remaining. Charlie came to the rescue with a fantastic dribble and shot to bring the scores level. The final whistle blew with the scores tied at 1-1. 5 minutes extra time and 5 minutes golden goal (first team to score wins) followed still with no outcome. However NHGS really hung on in the last few minutes with a barrage of shots from the Rishworth forwards. So the tournament was to be decided on penalty flicks.

Three players from each team stepped up to try and beat the keeper from the penalty spot. Alice came into her own in this encounter, saving all three Rishworth penalties! NHGS were unable to convert the first two penalties so it rested on Charlie Moss to take the third and final penalty under great pressure. Charlie coolly stepped up and roofed her penalty securing the win for NHGS. Calderdale champions 2009 – NHGS!

Due to her formidable performance Charlie Moss was voted player of the tournament by all the other teams!

The team were:

Alice	Ella	
Rachel	Charlotte	
Sophie (capt)	Luan	
Charlie	Emily (Y8)	Francesca (Y8)

Congratulations to all the girls – an outstanding effort!

CT

U15 GIRLS CALDERDALE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT – THURSDAY 5TH MARCH – RYBURN

The U15 girls' hockey team played in their annual hockey tournament on Thursday 5th March at Ryburn Valley High school. The girls got off to a great start with a 3-0 win over old rivals Crossley Heath. Two Goals came from Fiona; steering the ball home from close range on both occasions. The third was scored by Emily who rounded off a great team move to sweep the ball into the goal having received an accurate pass from Fiona.

The second pool game was against Rastrick. The girls weren't quite as prolific as in the first game but played solidly to run out 2-0 winners, again showing some good rebounding skills to score in the 12 minute match.



The third and final pool game was against a strong Holy Trinity team who had won and drawn their two games up to this point. NHGS needed to win this game to ensure finishing top of their group. The girls were caught napping in the first few minutes and conceded a sloppy goal from close range. However after this shock the NHGS team really dug in and started to play well with strong performances coming from Alice and Emily. Alice in goal made a few key saves to turn the game in NHGS' favour. The girls scored three quick goals to ensure the top spot in Pool 1.

Onto the semi finals – NHGS met the runners up from Pool 2 – Hipperholme and Lightcliffe. This team proved very tricky and they had a number of quality players. The NHGS girls closed these players down well and were able to hit Hipperholme on the break. The "Duracell Bunny" Alice was tireless in her pursuit

of a goal to separate the two teams but to no avail. After 12 minutes neither team had scored. Therefore 5 minutes of golden goal hockey was to be played (first team to score wins the match). This clash continued to be very tight with both teams going close. NHGS' defence stood firm with Sarah orchestrating things from the back. It took 4 minutes and 45 seconds for, you've guessed it, captain Alice Young to break the deadlock and advance NHGS into the final with an incisive run and shot, burying the ball past the stranded Hipperholme goalkeeper.

In the other semi final Holy Trinity controversially but deservedly defeated Rishworth in a penalty shoot-out and would once again stand in the way of the NHGS team, this time in the final to decide the Calderdale Champions for 2009.

The final proved somewhat of an anticlimax after the excitement of the two previous semi finals. NHGS took control from the start and looked the more goal-hungry. It was Charlie who scored first with a mean strike from the top of the D. Strong attacking work from Amy at Right defender helped to overload that side of the pitch and cause problems for the fellow Illingworth team. Substitute Sammy came on in the last few minutes to make a great contribution to the second and decisive goal of the match. Sammy picked up the ball, pushing forward at speed drawing the Trinity defence across to then play Charlie in for another formidable strike. Final score 2-0 – **U15 Calderdale champions 2009 – The North Halifax Grammar School.**

The team were:

Alice (Y9)	Sammy
Fiona	Celia
Sarah	Amy
Emily	Alice (captain)
Harriet	Charlie (Y9)

CONGRATULATIONS GIRLS!

CT

CHARLES DARWIN AND THE SIXTH FORM LEARNING CENTRE

The subject for my assembly on February 12th was Charles Robert Darwin. This was apposite as it was 200 years to the day that he was born in 1809 in Shrewsbury in Shropshire. He was born into a privileged family. His father was a physician and mortgage lender and his mother was the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood. In 1876, in response to an enquiry from a German publisher, Darwin began an autobiography which he entitled, 'Recollections of the Development of my Mind and Character'. He did not write it for publication but for his children. After his death, his son, Francis, collated the extant materials

into an autobiography. This fascinating book provides an insight into how he developed as a learner. This for me is crucial to how Darwin became one of the greatest scientists of all time as well as one of the greatest Britons who has ever lived. Darwin was affected by the premature death of his mother.

“My mother died in July 1817, when I was a little over eight years old, and it is odd that I can remember hardly anything about her except her death-bed, her black velvet gown, her curiously constructed work-table and one or two walks with her. I have no distinct remembrances of any conversations, and those only of very trivial nature”.

He started his formal education a little after his mother's death.

“In 1817, when I was 8½ years old, I attended Mr. Case's School. I remember how very much I was afraid of meeting the dogs in Baker St. and how at school I could not get up my courage to fight. I was very timid by nature. I stayed a year. I have been told that I was much slower in learning than my younger sister Catherine, and I believe that I was in many ways a naughty boy”.

Whilst he may have been a slow learner in the schoolroom he was developing a passion for collecting and a profound interest in natural history which would prove crucial to his later work.

“My taste for natural history, and more especially for collecting, was well developed. I tried to make out the names of plants and collected all sorts of things, shells, seals, franks, coins, and minerals. The passion for collecting which leads a man to be a systematic naturalist, a virtuoso, or a miser, was very strong in me, and was clearly innate, as none of my sisters or brother ever had this taste. I remember I took great delight at school in fishing for newts in the quarry pool”.

He was also playful and fond of pranks.

“I told another little boy (I believe it was Leighton, who afterwards became a well-known botanist) that I could produce variously coloured Polyanthus and Primroses by watering them with certain coloured fluids, which was of course a monstrous fable, and had never been tried by me”.

At the age of nine Darwin transferred to the famous Shrewsbury school. However rather than relish the opportunity, he hated every minute of the seven years he attended the school because he was instructed in a very narrow classical curriculum.

“In the summer of 1818 I went to Dr. Butler’s great school in Shrewsbury, and remained there for seven years till mid-summer 1825, when I was sixteen years old. Nothing could have been worse for the development of my mind than Dr. Butler’s school, as it was strictly classical, nothing else being taught except a little ancient geography and history. The school as a means of education to me was simply a blank.

Darwin is modest and self-deprecating about his development as a learner, as a result of his schooling, but he continued to pursue his interests which were increasingly focused on science. He began to appreciate the benefits and value of an experimental approach to science which influenced his approach to his studies for the rest of his life.

“When I left the school I was for my age neither high nor low in it; and I believe that I was considered by all my masters and by my father as a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect. To my deep mortification my father once said to me, ‘You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family’. Towards the close of my school life, my brother worked hard at chemistry, and made a fair laboratory with proper apparatus in the tool-house in the garden, and I was allowed to aid him as a servant in most of his experiments. He made all the gases and many compounds, and I read with great care several books on chemistry. The subject interested me greatly, and we often used to go on working till rather late at night. This was the best part of my education at school, for it showed me practically the meaning of experimental science. The fact that we worked at chemistry somehow got known at school, and as it was an unprecedented fact, I was nicknamed “Gas.” I was also once publicly rebuked by the head-master, Dr. Butler, for thus wasting my time on such useless subjects; and he called me very unjustly a “pocourante,” and as I did not understand what he meant, it seemed to me a fearful reproach”.

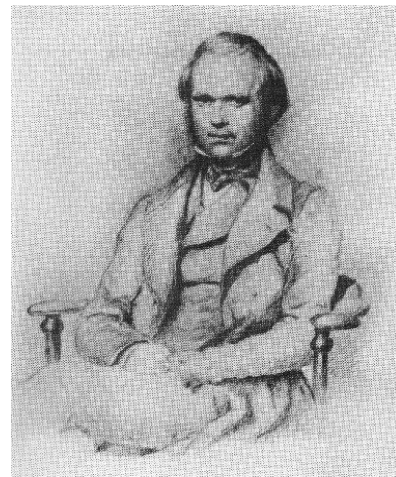
If you want your criticism of a student to be effective then it is generally advisable to use a vocabulary that the student understands. However, like Dr Butler, I sometimes use words that a student may not have come across because they are the most appropriate or accurate. The key is not to use an informed vocabulary to condescend but to cultivate. A pocourante is someone who is indifferent or apathetic – probably a very appropriate description of the way Darwin may have been perceived at school.

At that time young people did not generally make an independent choice about their future career but were directed by their fathers. This was the case with Charles Darwin. His father took him out of Shrewsbury School and sent him to Edinburgh University to train to be a Physician or doctor like him. Darwin was not impressed.

“As I was doing no good at school, my father wisely took me away at a rather earlier age than usual, and sent me (Oct. 1825) to Edinburgh University to commence medical studies. The instruction at Edinburgh was altogether by lectures, and these were intolerably dull, with the exception of those on chemistry.

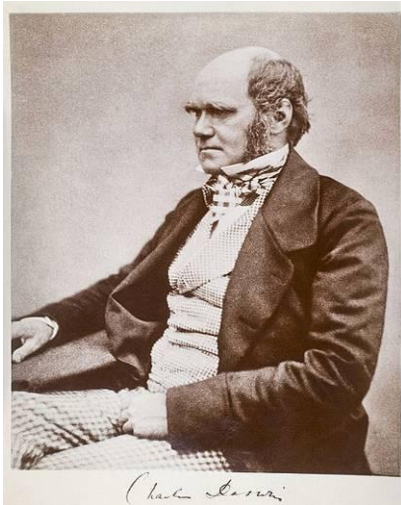
Although he was not stimulated by the medical lectures Darwin continued to foster his interest in science befriending several young men who were ‘fond of natural science’, joining a group which met regularly to discuss scientific papers and further indulging his interest in natural history through long walks and expeditions into the countryside. Determined that he should place his son in a secure and respectable profession, Robert Darwin took Charles out of Edinburgh and sent him to Cambridge University to study to become a clergyman.

“After having spent two sessions in Edinburgh, my father perceived, or he heard from my sisters, that I did not like the thought of being a physician, so he proposed that I should become a clergyman. During the three years which I spent at Cambridge my time was wasted, as far as the academical studies were concerned, as completely as at Edinburgh and at school”.



Although he continued to struggle with the classical studies which underpinned the religious training at Cambridge, Darwin did enjoy attending science lectures and developed interests in art and music. He also became acquainted with a don who had the single greatest influence on his career, Professor Henslow,

“His knowledge was great in botany, entomology, chemistry, mineralogy, and geology. His strongest taste was to draw conclusions from long- continued minute observations”.



After Charles completed his degree at Cambridge in 1831, he and Adam Sedgwick spent some time working on a geological map and studying rock formations in northern Wales. On his return he was offered the post of unpaid naturalist to go on a trip around the world on the *HMS Beagle*. When he returned in 1836 he moved to London where he married his cousin Emma in 1839. They moved to the Down House in Kent in 1842, where they raised a family of ten children and Darwin devoted his time to his scientific studies. This eventually resulted in the publication of the *‘Origin of Species’* in 1859. In this book Darwin suggested that organisms change over time, usually very slowly, sometimes extremely slowly. Darwin wrote of “descent with modification” but the modern term is “evolution.” All organisms – animals, plants, fungi, – are descended from a remote common ancestor. The main (but not only) driving force for evolutionary change is natural selection, the survival of certain traits because they better adapt the organism for its survival. This profound insight has been generally confirmed by subsequent scientific investigations in the 150 years since its publication.

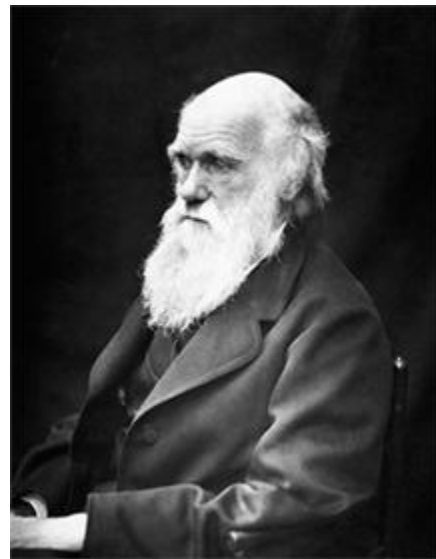
For me Darwin embodies all that is essential in becoming a lifelong learner. Even though he considered his formal education at Shrewsbury, Edinburgh and Cambridge a waste of time he was, throughout, developing the habits of mind and skills that made him such a splendid student and scientist. Littered through his autobiography are the clues to his success as a learner; **‘strong taste for music’; ‘much zeal for whatever interested me’; ‘keen pleasure in understanding**

any complex subject or thing’; ‘worked conscientiously’; ‘association with older and distinguished men’; ‘strong and diversified tastes’; ‘often became quite absorbed’ ; ‘taste for pictures’; ‘acquainted with several young men fond of natural science’; ‘I was fond of reading various books.’

in enjoying natural history;
‘pleasure in watching’; ‘my visits to Maer’; ‘delight in scenery’; ‘passion for collecting’
‘wish to travel in remote countries.’
 and in scientific methods;
‘observed. . with some little care’; ‘showed me practically.’

The concluding paragraph of his autobiography is characteristically insightful and modest :

“My success as a man of science has been determined by complex and diversified mental qualities and conditions. Of these, the most important have been--the love of science--unbounded patience in long reflecting over any subject--industry in observing and collecting facts--and a fair share of invention as well as of common sense. With such moderate abilities as I possess, it is truly surprising that I should have influenced to a considerable extent the belief of scientific men on some important points”.



For all these qualities as a student, lifelong learner and pre-eminent scientist we have decided to name the new Sixth Form Learning Centre after Charles Darwin in the anniversary year of both his birth and the publication of the *Origin of Species*. The Darwin Sixth Form Learning Centre will be formally opened on Wednesday April 22nd 2009 at 12.30.

GPM

NHGS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

At The North Halifax Grammar School, over half of our parents have signed up to receive the Monthly Newsletter via email. This has had a considerable impact of the amount of paper we save. The Newsletter typically has between 15 and 20 pages: with over 1,000 students on roll, this makes a big difference, not only in terms of cost savings, but more importantly, to the environment.

If you would like us to send you the Newsletter via e-mail, you need to access the following web page on the internet: <http://vle.nhgs.co.uk> and complete the details on the relevant form. You will need: username: **parentemail** and the password: **485ri95**. If you prefer you may complete the form at the end of this Newsletter and return it to your child's Form Teacher.

It is a large undertaking setting up a data base for all our parents, but it should be worthwhile in the long run. The issue will be about keeping it up to date but I am sure this will be overcome. We will update this at least annually.

Thank you once again for your support.

The North Halifax Grammar School Parents' Association

Family Quiz

Thursday 14 May 2009

7.30pm till 10.00pm



Tickets £5 Adults and £3 children (under 16).

Family Ticket £15 (2A + 3C)

Tickets include a light supper and 1 drink

I require ticket(s) at £5.00ticket(s) at £3family ticket(s) at £15

I enclose £..... (please make cheques payable to NHGS Parents' Association)

I have made a Parent Pay payment of £.....

Signed Tel No:.....

Name of student contact..... Form

Please return to the Finance Office, marked "P A Quiz"



The North Halifax Grammar School

Electronic Newsletter

Student's Name: Reg Group:

I would like to receive the newsletter electronically and have completed the details on-line

or

I would like to receive the newsletter electronically and have completed the form below

Parental email address:

Please print clearly – thank you.

Signed:..... Parent or Guardian

Date:

Please return to Mrs Varley in the School Office