

School News

END OF TERM CONCERT 2009

The End of Term Concert took place on Friday 18th of December. Over one hundred students performed in the Concert. There were twenty seven different acts involved. I was very impressed by the standard of the performances and just as impressed by the response of the audience.

Each act brought something different to the concert and I hope I can be forgiven for not naming every student and every act. Instead I will mention a few performers who typified what I think the Concert is about.

We had a first public performance of our recently formed Cheerleading group. Their slick routine was well received by an enthusiastic audience. The really impressive part happened once they had left the stage during the morning show. The group got together and agreed where the performance needed work and took themselves off to the Gym to improve for the afternoon show. That willingness to work to be the best they can is exactly what this school is about.

I was also impressed by the group who played "Never Forget You". This group had tried to get a song together for last year's concert but were honest enough to admit that they weren't ready to perform. There was no such problem this time and they produced a very capable performance despite their nervousness. I was proud of them for their resilience and determination.

Josh Thackray's self-penned "It's Christmas, Come Forth Snow." was another significant moment. Josh is a talented songwriter and it was a delight to watch this song take shape in rehearsal. There was a genuine creative energy in those sessions. Josh also performed the song with his unique style. Remember where you saw him first.

Finally, I'd like to mention the musicians who make so much of this Concert possible. The people who can be given a sheet of music and will produce a professional performance with minimal rehearsal. They know who they are and they have my utmost respect.

OJC

Comenius news

THE GREAT BRITISH MENU COMPETITION

In November we launched a competition to design a recipe that showcased the best of British cooking. From all the entries, seven students were invited to cook their recipes for a panel of judges which comprised of myself, Mrs Hunt and Mr Maslen. The finalists were Caitlin O'Connell, Sophie Coombs, Charlotte Marlor, Jemima Mitchell, Lydia Shoesmith, Luis Bradley and Rose-Anne Evans. The dishes ranged from Bakewell tart to fish stew. The standard was very high and we were very impressed with the way in which the students approached the task. We had a very enjoyable judging session but it was a very difficult choice to make. However, the winner of the

The North Halifax
Grammar School



NHGS News

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competition was Caitlin O’Connell 7(1) who cooked a “Three Cheese Tart with homemade rhubarb chutney”. The runners up were Sophie Coombs 7(5) who prepared “Hot Spiced Fruit and ice cream” and Rose-Anne Evans 8(3) who cooked “Turkey and Cranberry slices with roast potatoes and beans”. I look forward to sharing these recipes with our other partner schools at the project meeting in Spain in March. A recipe book will be produced using these recipes to showcase national dishes from each partner school.

Christmas in the UK

In the last week of term, some members of Year 7 and 8 learnt about Christmas traditions in our partner schools in their Geography lessons. Some students also prepared Christmas cards and poems describing Christmas in the UK to send to each of the partner schools. Last week, we received some photos of our Estonian partner school showing the unusually heavy snow that they have been experiencing and it was interesting to make comparisons with the photos I took at the project meeting last September.

CJM

UK-GERMAN CONNECTION SEMINAR IN BONN

On the 10th of December I was lucky enough to be offered a place to go to Bonn, along with 14 other British students, to produce a new edition of their “*Still and Sparkling*” magazine.

After settling in, we started the project with an introduction to the seminar and then a discussion about what topics we wanted to include in the magazine. We chose the main topics of graffiti culture, the fall of the Berlin Wall, identity, immigration and the recession. We then met with the media experts who would be working with us in each of the workshop groups of journalistic writing, podcasting, photography and graphic design. This was brilliant because it gave us the chance to get help and advice from professionals in these fields. I was part of the journalistic writing group which had a mixture of both British and Germans. We assigned ourselves topics and working in German/UK pairings decided what type of report to write and what to include in them. This went on for the rest of the day, and everybody was very busy in all of the groups, taking pictures, recording interviews, writing reports etc. In the evening we went ice skating at the huge ice rink in Bonn, which was great. The Germans are renowned for their ice skating talent, and it was pretty obvious who was British and who was German (the British were falling over and the Germans were doing jumps and tricks!)

The next day we finished off all the work from the day before and planned a competition which could be run with the magazine. In the afternoon we got the tram to the “Haus der Geschichte”; a history museum about life in Germany following WW2 on both sides of the wall. This was also very interesting because

Bonn was the temporary capital city of West Germany during the Cold War. After this we went around the Bonn Christmas markets. This was my highlight of the trip, as I’ve always wanted to see a proper German “Weihnachtsmarkt”. The Christmas markets sell everything from Christmas decorations to the famous German sausages (Think the Manchester Christmas Markets but 10 times better!). A meal at a Turkish restaurant in the city centre was the perfect end to an amazing day.

The next day each group presented the work they had produced and we spent the morning discussing how the magazine would be distributed and what the front cover should look like. The magazine should be available from early this year and I think will be well worth a read, whether you study German or not. The majority of the articles are in English and because they are written by young people aren’t so boring and more relevant to younger people. If you’re interested in reading the magazine then keep checking the UK German Connection website:

www.ukgermanconnection.org where you will be able to download the magazine as a PDF file and download the accompanying podcast. If you would like to know more about the magazine or would like a printed copy then you can ask either myself or Mrs Hoare about it. Please don’t feel that this magazine only applies to people who study German; the whole point of the UK German Connection is to improve understanding between all young people in the UK and Germany.

Lucy J Robinson L6(8)

SOCIOLOGY EVENING CLASS

Over the last few years Sociology has grown as a subject in the Sixth Form at North Halifax Grammar School. The results have consistently been good and students who have been successful in the subject have gone on to do degrees in Criminology, Law, Nursing, International Relations and Sociology itself. As a subject it gives the student an insight into how our society works, why we have things like education and law and how our identities are shaped.

Since taking over as Head of Sociology I’ve been asked by many parents if we would run an evening class for them. In view of this I have decided to look into the possibility of running an AS in Sociology for parents starting next September. If you are interested or have friends who are interested then

please contact me. If there is enough interest then we will look at the practicalities of running the course – which night, cost etc.

The units covered in the AS course involve looking at the role of family and education in modern society and examining their function and purpose. They are interesting areas and help give us a look at how our society works and why we have certain laws and why people behave in certain ways.

If you would be interested in receiving further details about the course or would be interested in attending such a course then please contact me here at school.

Mr M McKay
Head of Sociology

STOP PRESS - FRENCH SOCIAL NIGHT – DATE CHANGE

Due to the temperamental nature of our winter weather, the PA French Night has been postponed from 30 January to Saturday 24 April 2010.

Parent Prom - Tickets Now on Sale

The Parents' Association is pleased to announce full details of the forthcoming **Parent Prom** which promises to be even better than last year's event.

Where: Bradford Bulls Stadium, Odsal
When: 20 March 2010
Time: 7p.m. to 1a.m.
Dress Code: Black Tie (Optional)

Tickets cost £25 per person and include a three course meal followed by music designed to get everyone on the dance floor! Tables seat eight, nine or ten so why not get a group of friends and book your table together?

Don't forget everyone is welcome – staff, parents, friends and family.

See the booking form in this issue for more information or to order your tickets.

Forthcoming PA Meetings

Meetings run from 7.30pm to 9.30pm prompt.

3 February 2010 (AGM)

3 March 2010

14 April 2010

Everyone welcome!

Rockschool Drum Kit Examinations

Congratulations to the following students who achieved success in their Rockscool Drum Kit Examinations:

Gareth Lomax	Grade 1
Joe Ding	Grade 2
Josie Walshaw	Grade 2
Samuel Walker	Grade 2
Alice Whettlock	Grade 2
Anna Ford	Grade 2
Jacob Howard	Grade 3
Adam Trevisani	Grade 4

GJE

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Sure Start in Halifax are providing a 2 ½ hour session to help support parents to support their children through adolescence. It is aimed at parents who have children 9 – 14 years old. 'Challenging Times with Teens' will be led by an independent provider who comes with excellent reviews. There are four opportunities to attend for this support:

Tuesday 9th February 5.30pm – 8.00pm
Innovations Children's Centre

Wednesday 10th February 12.15pm – 2.45pm
Illingworth Community Children's Centre

Wednesday 17th March – 12.15pm – 2.45pm
Ash Green Children's Centre (Upper Site)

Thursday 18th March – 9.15am – 11.45am
Creations Community Children's Centre

If any parent is interested in attending one of these sessions then please contact Sure Start:

Tel: 01422 251090

Email: info@surestartnorthhalifax.org.uk

PAJ

January Prize Draw

And the winners are....

1 st	£150	Alan Heiley, Shibden
2 nd	£75	Mrs Sutcliffe, Ripponden
3 rd	£25	A Hamilton, Illingworth

PA Election of Officers

The AGM takes place during the PA meeting on 3 February 2010. Business includes presentation of the accounts and election of the following officers:

Chair
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary

Nominations are welcome for any of the above posts and can be made in advance to pa@nhgs.co.uk or at the AGM itself. We really encourage anyone who is interested to get involved.

put at risk, especially at the start and finish of the school day, when parents have been driving vehicles into the staff car park.

Your child's safety is paramount to us.

HAITI EARTHQUAKE SUPPORT

During recent assemblies, students were asked for ways in which they would like to organise support for those affected by the Haiti Earthquake. Here are a number of ways in which parents, guardians and students can support the Haiti Earthquake appeal through NHGS.

Bring and Buy Sale

Fellow students, parents and guardians

You will all have listened to, seen or read about the devastating earthquake that struck the island of Haiti on January 12th 2010. Whilst the immediate search and rescue activities are scaled down, there will be a need to re-develop infrastructure, housing and public facilities over the coming months and years.

We would like to organise a bring and buy sale to raise funds for the victims of the Haiti Earthquake. We would like any of the following items to be donated:

- Teenagers' clothes – new or good condition (washed/unused)
- CDs (good condition)
- DVDs (please no VHS)
- Computer/video games
- Books (likely to appeal to teenagers)
- Make-up (new)
- Other items such as posters, stationery, knick-knacks that are likely to appeal to teenagers

Items can be brought to school by students and left in the room by the Deputies office. If parents want to bring in items they can be brought in on Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday February 4th or Year 7 Parents' Evening on Tuesday February 9th and left in the Lower Foyer outside the Hall.

STUDENT SAFETY



A reminder to parents to please NOT drive your vehicles in to the staff car park, at any time, in order to drop students off. Students' safety is being

The sale will take place in the Sixth Form Quiet Learning Zone Area on Thursday February 11th and Friday February 12th 2010 at lunchtime.

**Rose Allcock & Eleanor Rose
Interact Charity Group Haiti Appeal**

The school's Interact charity group is taking part in the Haiti Aquabox Appeal which is sending equipment to Haiti to help people produce fresh water. These boxes also contain vital supplies. We need your help to collect these.

We need students to bring in:

- Unbreakable cups
- Metal cutlery
- Small torches
- Batteries
- Cotton sheets
- Balls of strong string
- Plastic sacks
- Kitchen rolls
- Small children's toys
- Safety pins
- Pencils, crayons and paper
- Baby/children's clothes

Year 11 Students

- Gaffer/parcel tape
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Hairbrushes and combs
- Solid soap (please no bottles)
- Cotton wool
- Plasters and bandages

There will be a box in the Lower Foyer until Friday 5th February, where items can be left.

Thank you in advance of your support.

**Bethany Megson & Lizzie Hollwey
Year 13**

Lunchtime Concert

The school is also organising a lunchtime concert on Thursday February 11th in order to raise funds for the Haiti Earthquake Appeal.

IS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE DEAD?

In an article in 'Intelligent Life' last summer, Brian Cathcart, Professor of Journalism at Kingston University asked the question, 'Is Google Killing General Knowledge?' The 'wired' younger generation have grown up in a 'connected' world in which it has become 'second nature' to use google or other search engines to find factual answers so that general knowledge, which you keep in your individual mind, has been rendered redundant.

'The average student, though better-informed . . . seems not to value general knowledge. If asked a factual question, they will usually click on a search engine without a second thought. Actually knowing the fact, committing it to memory, does not seem to be a consideration'.

We have moved a long way from the schooling of Thomas Gradgrind in Charles Dickens' 'Hard Times'

'NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'

This simplistic conception of schooling and education is a very long way away from the sophisticated secondary curriculum that schools are responsible for delivering today. Currently the aims of the curriculum are to develop successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens through enabling young people to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a contribution and achieve economic well-being. There are fourteen subjects in the National Curriculum: Art & Design, Citizenship, Design & Technology, English, Geography, History, ICT,

Mathematics, MFL, Music, PE, PSHEE, RE and Science. Each of these has programmes of study which specify knowledge, understanding and skills. In addition there are attitudes and attributes, skills and knowledge and understanding which go across the whole curriculum. There are also seven cross-curriculum dimensions that provide important unifying areas of learning that help young people make sense of the world and give education relevance and authenticity. They include; Identity and cultural diversity, healthy lifestyles, community participation, enterprise, global dimension and sustainable development, technology and the media and creativity and critical thinking. (The big picture of the curriculum can be found at <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/5856.aspx>). Facts which at one time, not only underpinned the curriculum it was the curriculum, are now show-horned in only when absolutely necessary. Cathcart states,

‘So facts are in retreat in our education system. I could find no one to dispute the proposition that young people generally learn fewer of them at school than their parents would have, and those they do learn, they may well learn in ways that mean they do not remain so long in the memory. Facts have certainly not been removed from the curriculum altogether, but they compete with a lot of other stuff and many of that earlier generation’s facts have had to give way’.

The increasing accessibility and portability of technology means there is no need to carry around a lot of factual baggage in your head. David Fann of the National Association of Headteachers states,

“The primary-school curriculum we are now rewriting will be taught to children who will be leaving school in 2024. The world will be very different then. Technology is already making a real impact on the way children learn and communicate. They will soon all have hand-held computers in the classroom, with e-mail and Google, and we need to make use of that.”

If you watch what Pranav Mistry is developing with his ‘Sixth Sense’ device then this scenario does not seem far-fetched even with the current global financial crisis and economic recession (http://www.ted.com/talks/pranav_mistry_the_thrilling_potential_of_sixthsense_technology.html)

There are historical precedents. In ancient Egypt the God of learning and wisdom Thoth is attributed with the invention of writing. This is the King of Egypt’s response,

“This invention will induce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it, because they will not need to exercise their memories, being able to rely on what is written...rather than, from within, their own unaided powers to call things to mind. And as for wisdom, you are equipping your pupils with only a semblance of it, not with truth.”

There was a similar reaction to the invention of movable type and the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the fifteenth century. The vested interests of the established church and ruling aristocracies tried to control and limit its impact. (<http://www.nme.com/video/id/qexDBgWM2X8/search/The%20Printing%20Press>)

The notion that British people are becoming dumber has been given popular support by commentators such as Jeremy Clarkson and the feature ‘Dumb Britain’ in the satirical magazine Private Eye that showcases ‘dumb’ answers to questions on quiz shows. Here are some examples:

LATE SHOW, BBC MIDLANDS

Alex Trelinski: What is the capital of Italy?

Contestant: France.

Alex: France is another country. Try again.

Contestant: Oh, um, Benidorm.

Alex: Wrong, sorry.

CELEBRITY MASTERMIND, BBC1

John Humphrys: Which popular pizza, that shares its name with a famous work by Vivaldi, is normally divided into four sections, each containing different toppings?

Snooker’s John Higgins: Four cheeses.

THE WEAKEST LINK, BBC1

Anne Robinson: The small primates called lemurs are native to which large island off the coast of Africa?

Contestant: Argentina.

However quiz competitions remain very popular. University Challenge has been on the television from 1962 to 1987 on ITV under the chairmanship of Bamber Gascoigne and from 1994 on BBC 2 under Jeremy Paxman. ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ has sustained very high ratings on ITV since 1998 under the control of Chris Tarrant. Q I (Quite Interesting) has become increasingly popular, transferring to BBC1, it is now in its eighth series (G) under the chair of polymath Stephen Fry. The quintessential general knowledge quiz competition, ‘Mastermind’, was chaired famously by Magnus Magnusson from 1972 to 1997 and returned in 2003 under the chair of John Humphrys. The continuing popularity of these programmes on television and others on radio together with the large number of pub quiz competitions suggests that general knowledge remains an important part of our culture.

There is a wider debate about the impact of the widespread use of new technologies on young people. Nicholas Carr has written about the negative impact of the ubiquitous use of the internet on our ability to sustain concentration and engage in deep, meaningful learning (<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google>) . Whereas Jamais Cascio is much more optimistic:

‘We swim in an ocean of data, accessible from nearly anywhere, generated by billions of devices. We’re only beginning to explore what we can do with this knowledge-at-a-touch.

The trouble isn’t that we have too much information at our fingertips, but that our tools for managing it are still in their infancy.

Google isn’t the problem; it’s the beginning of a solution.’

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200907/intelligence>).

At NHGS we confidently embrace new technologies for the advantages that they bring to inform and support learning but also celebrate general knowledge. Since 1986, the year after the foundation of this school on its current site we have organized an annual house general knowledge competition. This year it was organised by Mrs Gibbons and we thank her for undertaking this task in her first year at the school. The overall winners were announced in assemblies this week.

Overall winners Year 7

1st	Peter Ashton (7.4):	34
2nd	Alexander Nunn(7.4)	32
3rd=	Jack Booth (7.1)	30
	Joseph Thompson(7.4)	30
	Zachary Edwards(7.5)	30
	Reece Howarth(7.5)	30
	Fraser Parnell(7.5)	30

Overall winners Year 8

1 st	Alfred Finan(8.3)	42
2 nd =	Nicholas Galvin(8.3)	39
	Luis North(8.3)	39

Overall winners Year 9

1st	Liam Johnston(9.2)	36
2nd=	Hadley Greenwood Brown(9.1)	35

Matthew Court(9.2) 35

Overall winners Year 10

1st Thomas Garratt(10.3) 43
2nd= Bradley Marshall(10.5) 35
Matthew Stephens(10.5) 35

Overall winners Year 11

1st Chloe Farrar(11.5) 41
2nd Connor Barker(11.3) 40
3rd= Siarlot Lloyd(11.3) 39
Richard Nelson(11.3) 39
Natasha Loft(11.5) 39

Overall winners Year 12

1st Thomas Allen(12.1) 39
2nd= Sarah Payne(12.1) 38
Craig Holroyd(12.5) 38
Megan Scholefield(12.6) 38

Overall winners Year 13

1st Ben Hampson(13.3) 44
2nd Konrad Hepworth(13.9) 41
3rd= Sam Gregson(13.2) 40
Nicholas Sweeney(13.2) 40

The average scores per house were extremely close. They are as follows:

1st Waterhouse 21.6
2nd Akroyd 21.13
3rd Lister 21.08

Interestingly looking at the list of winners you might be struck by the number of high scoring boys. Whilst we are used to girls outperforming boys in formal qualifications, in terms of general knowledge at NHGS the boys performed much better than the girls averaging 22.5 to the girls 20.2. Congratulations to all the winners who will receive stamps and to everyone in Waterhouse this year's house winner.

GPM

The North Halifax Grammar School



Presents a



Musical Evening

on

Tuesday 23rd February 2010 at 7.30pm
in the School Hall

A Selection from ABBA's 'Mamma Mia'
sung by the Mixed Voice Choir
plus items from the:
Concert Band,
Orchestra
Swing Band
Soul Band
Senior Choir
and more...

Tickets are available from Mr Ellin, Mrs Pegg and Mrs Wharvell in the
School Office

Adults £3 Concessions £2

The North Halifax Grammar School Parents' Association

Parent Prom

Saturday 20th March 2010

The Legends Suite, Coral Stand, Odsal Stadium, Bradford BD6 1BS

7.00pm for 7.30pm till 1am

Parents, friends and staff are all welcome.

I would like:-tickets at £25 each
I would like a table forguests @ £25 per guest
(Tables can be booked for 8, 9 or 10 people if you so wish).

I enclose £..... cash / cheque **OR** paid £.....on Parent Pay
(please make cheques payable to NHGS Parents' Association)

Names of those attending (to help with seating plan) or **table name** (ie Linda's table).

.....
.....

Special requests (*please tick*)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singles table | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 7 parents' table | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 8 parents' table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Year 9 parents' table | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 10 parents' table | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 11 parents' table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Form parents' table | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Name and address:.....
.....
.....

Telephone..... **E-mail address**.....

Name of student (if applicable)..... **Form**.....

**Please return to the Finance Office, NHGS for the attention of Mrs Simpson NHGS,
Moorbottom Road, Illingworth, Halifax, HX2 9SU or email to angela.cowton@virgin.net
Bookings will be acknowledged so please chase up if nothing is heard within a week.**

Menu - to be chosen in advance - please indicate choices below (or leave till later)

To Start

- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Smoked Haddock Pate

To Follow

- Roast Spring Chicken Supreme Served with Yorkshire Pudding
 - Braised Beef in Ale with Herb Dumplings
 - Mediterranean Vegetable Risotto (V)
- Served with selection of fresh vegetables and baby new potatoes*

To Finish

- Sticky Toffee Pudding with an English Custard Sauce
- Chocolate and Hazelnut Meringue