

# School News

## German A Level conference in Manchester

Years 11-13 enjoyed an excellent day, focusing on improving their German skills in readiness for their A Level exams. Our Year 11 students found the day challenging and useful, giving them a taste of the demands of the AS course. Year 12 were enthused by the charismatic presenter, Thomas Reimann, who presented relevant topics in a fun and very structured way. Although some of our students were a little apprehensive about going up onto the stage (especially to be interviewed for a job in König Ludwig's magnificent Neuschwanstein castle!), they did the school proud! Thomas was very impressed with the quality of all our students and is looking forward to meeting some of them again next year!

## German GCSE conference in Manchester

Students from years 9 and 10 travelled to Manchester for their annual GCSE conference just before the half-term. 2 of our Gifted and Talented linguists, Phoebe Hendy and Lucy Spink from Year 9, give us their thoughts on the day:

*"The presenters got everyone involved. It was a great opportunity to listen to native German speakers and pick up a few tips on pronunciation! It was challenging – in the right way. It wasn't too difficult and it was great when we understood what was being said and could take part in all the activities. We found the exam tips really helpful. We would recommend this to all German students next time!"*

It was excellent to see our students really involved in all the activities and tasks. Mrs Roe congratulated all who went on their active participation and positive attitude to the day. She added that it had been a pleasure to accompany such a lovely group of pupils. Could I add my own thanks to all involved!

KDH

## Comenius Visit to Spain

On Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, we arrived at school, excited, eager and ready to go but unfortunately we had to spend all day in lessons before setting off at 3 o'clock. It was a tight squeeze but, Miss Morgan, Mr. Walker, Holly and I all fitted snugly into Mr. Walker's car along with our cases and carry-on luggage. On the way to the Travelodge at Heathrow airport we experienced four hours of varied music, suiting to all tastes; as chosen by none other than Phoenix FM's very own DJ.

After a one night stay at Heathrow airport we were making tracks for Galicia, Spain. We boarded the plane with limited trouble, flying was the next obstacle. Unfortunately the co-ordinator of the Comenius project doesn't enjoy flying. Luckily the plane didn't malfunction, and much to Miss Morgan's delight we landed safely at La Coruna.

After a very short check out of about 10 minutes, we made our way to the Spanish school; IES Concepción Arenal. Holly and I headed off to our

The North Halifax  
Grammar School



# NHGS News

NEWSLETTER 6  
MARCH 2010

### Page 1

German A Level  
Conference  
German GCSE  
Conference  
Comenius Visit to Spain

### Page 2

Calderdale Science &  
Maths Quiz

### Page 3

The UKMT Challenge

### Page 4

Politics Visit to  
Westminster  
Halifax Parliamentary  
Candidates Visit

### Page 5

The Value of Languages:  
Year 9

### Page 6

French AS conference  
Polar Bear Adoption

### Page 7

Prize Draw Winners  
Mobile Phones

### Page 8

French Social Night  
London Law Course Trip  
Family Quiz Night  
Forthcoming PA Meetings

respective hosts whilst the teachers headed to their modest accommodation in down-town Ferrol.

The welcome I received was brilliant! I made the mistake of mentioning that I hadn't eaten a great deal and was given a mountain of Spanish food; including tortilla Espanola, chorizo, tuna pie and Tarta de Ferrol. Luckily I already knew my host student and having not seen him for about a year, we had a fair bit to talk about. We met up with some of his friends and went to a local cafe for the afternoon. I was able to recall some of my GCSE Spanish and Gabriel was able to practise his English.

The next day we went to our hosts' lessons; Holly had PE and I had Philosophy. Although it was hard to understand the quick Spanish it was interesting to sit in on a foreign lesson and to learn about the educational differences in Spain. I also found it strangely enjoyable that I sat next to a Spanish boy who began to discuss English football with me; the main topic being, of course, John Terry.

We later visited the centre of Ferrol, the town hall and were given a welcome talk by the mayor. After a traditional lunch of Cabbage and Potato Soup we headed to the site of San Felipe Castle. On arrival at the castle the group met Isabella with her blue umbrella; tour guide for the trip. With Ferrol being an important naval port, San Felipe Castle was one of three defence fortresses used to prevent attack by the French or English. We were painfully told of the obliteration of an English force attempting to take the Castle in 1805. A pleasant but chilly boat ride from the Castle back to Ferrol rounded off the day.

Friday was spent presenting various pieces of project data such as the Switch it off Campaign and the results of The Great British Menu Competition. We were able to compare with and congratulate our partner schools on the amount of energy saved. It was also culturally enlightening to see and taste the winning dishes from other countries; these included a Spanish rolled cake, Irish bacon and cabbage, and a three cheese tart with rhubarb chutney created by our very own Caitlin O'Connell. The afternoon was spent walking through the valley of the river Eume.

Saturday was spent visiting Santiago and La Coruna. The main attraction of Santiago is the Cathedral. Due to the fact that 2010 is a year in which the feast day of St. James falls on a Sunday we were able to explore the roof of the Cathedral. From here we were given a tour of the



different magnificent pieces of architecture dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A history of the building and the traditional pilgrimage that thousands make each year was also given.

Shopping was the main goal in La Coruna. Everyone scrambled in search of presents to take back to England. The streets were lined with small shops specialising in chocolate, soap, toys, crafts and clothes and after spending what was left of our Euros we headed for our final meal together as a group.

The following morning involved tearful goodbyes to our host families as we boarded the coach taking us to the airport. I made a last minute purchase of some Spanish sausage in duty free, before disappointingly leaving it on the plane.

Arrival at Heathrow took a while longer than it did in La Coruna, the queue was divided into two and was still relatively sizeable. Nonetheless the time taken to get to the front seemed shorter as Miss Morgan and Mr. Walker believed they could get to the front of their queue before Holly and me. We took up their challenge but unfortunately were beaten. Another four hour drive was ahead of us; but yet again this was made to seem shorter. Our group rendition of Susan Boyle's "I Dreamed a Dream" made the time fly by and we were home for a traditional English roast!

**Jacob 12(3)**

---

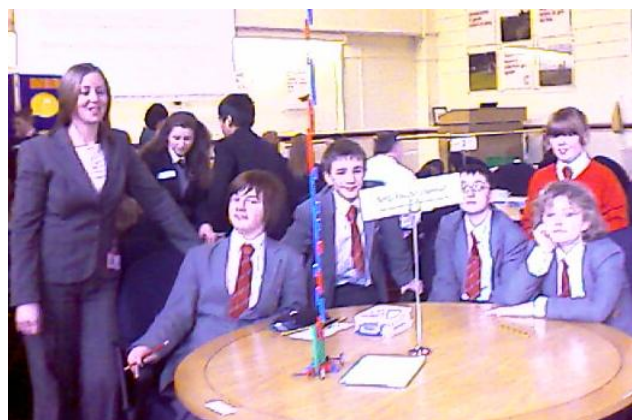
## **Calderdale Science and Maths Quiz**

On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, Tiegan 7.4, Gareth 8.5, Thomas 9.1, James 9.1 and I went with Miss Bouch to the Calderdale Science and Maths Quiz at Heath Training and Development Centre in Halifax. The NHGS team had previously won the quiz for the last two years so we had a lot to live up to, but we did have James on our team, and he had been part of the winning team both years previously.

When we arrived, we handed over the trophy from last year, sat down at our table and looked at the array of Easter eggs and other prizes on the prize table to be won. If we needed extra motivation, that was it. The first activity was the starter quiz that didn't matter to the overall score, but there were prizes for the winners. So we answered the questions, handed them in and got ready for round one.

The eight teams were split into three groups, the best of each group getting a prize. There was 'Darwin', 'Rutherford' and 'Galileo'. We were in the Darwin group with *The Other Place that I will not mention*. Round one turned out to be a sheet of questions and a killer Sudoku (not as dangerous as it sounds!). For this, we decided to split up to solve the quiz and puzzle. After lots of working out, we ended up getting the best score in the room. We were in the lead!

Round two turned out to be much harder though. We had to keep alert watching a slide show while we had to quickly answer questions like 'smallest red number multiplied by the largest blue number' – a bit like the Krypton Factor. But there were others where there were element symbols on the screen and the question might have been 'the compound made from blue metal and the orange non-metal'. In the end, we gained a respectable mark of 17 out of 20, just behind our Darwin competitors.



But there were still two more rounds to go. The next challenge was to build the tallest Lego tower with allocated bricks. It wasn't long before we had a good solid structure that was gradually getting taller. But we couldn't help glancing to our left as the other towers shot up. One of the rules was that the tower had to support a little Lego man. With 5 minutes to go, we had a very wobbly high tower and no one dared to touch it apart from our brave Lego man; if it went any higher it would fall. Then came the measuring. Our tower turned out to be tallest! 136cm! And second place, *The Other Place that I will not mention* with a tower at 135cm! We were now tied in first place with them! But who was to win the Darwin prize? We had to answer a tie break question, which *The Other Place that I will not mention* managed to get right. We didn't win the Darwin prize, but there was still a chance for the overall prize.

For the final round, all previous points were forgotten and the three top teams went into the buzzer round. The buzzer was actually different for each team, just like QI. The questions were asked and answered and it was close – NHGS 5 points, *The Other Place that I will not mention* 4 points, Sowerby Bridge 3 points! That meant we got to go back to school with our trophy for the third year in a row! As overall quiz winner we also received some WHSmiths vouchers and a Calderdale Science and Maths Quiz t-shirts. We had successfully defended our title.

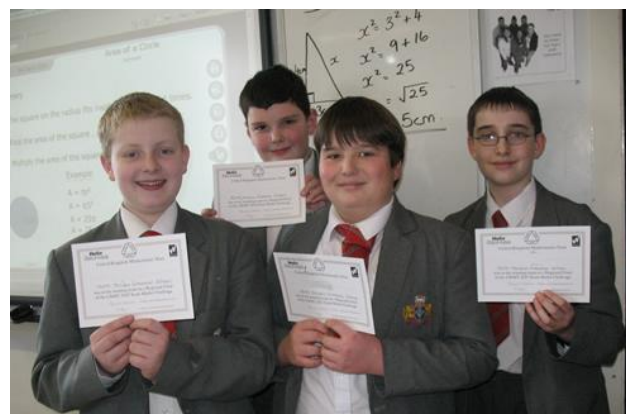
**Alfie 8(3)**

## **The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Challenge**

After several Mathematics trials during school lesson time it was decided by our class that Alfie, Alex, Cameron and I, Daniel would represent the school at the UKMT Team Maths Challenge regional finals to be held at Bradford Grammar school on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010.

We started practising with the materials they gave us until we were confident we had a chance. At the competition, we started with 10 practice questions. These were varied in difficulty, some taking up to 20 minutes to complete. One of the most difficult questions was: 'Find 2 positive integers that have a product of 1,000,000'. These were the types of questions we had throughout the day.

There were 4 rounds. We tackled a number crossword, a group competition, a mini relay and a head to head contest. We were very pleased to achieve 217 out of 240 points and to come in first place in the regional final. We had beaten another school who had been the regional champions for the last five years! We won various prizes including a pencil case, stationary set, bookmark and puzzle.



We have qualified for the National Finals which will be held in London on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June. We hope we're going to do well, but it's still a massive honour to be representing West Yorkshire in the competition. Our teacher, Mrs Ward, is very proud of our achievement and we are now looking at some fundraising opportunities in order to travel to London and compete in the finals.

**Daniel 8(3)**

## **Politics Visit to Westminster**

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March a group of Year 12 and 13 Government & Politics students hit the capital for a day spent in the heart of the Westminster bubble. We had a very early start to meet at Halifax train station to kick off our journey to London for the day's visit; thankfully everyone arrived on time and the journey went according to schedule arriving in London at about 10am. After getting through the stringent security, (who surprisingly and questionably let Mr Saul through) we gathered in the oldest part of our legislature, Westminster Hall. Westminster Hall was where, in the

Middle Ages, the business of government took place and is considered so important architecturally and culturally that the speaker of the House of Commons, during an air raid in WWII, chose to save it over the House of Commons when it was bombed.

Here we met up with Lord Shutt of Greetland, the ex Leader of Calderdale Council and a friend of Mr Saul's, (does his influence reach no bounds!). He seemed a very nice chap who took half of us on a tour of the gothic splendour of the Houses of Parliament while the others in the group were taken around by Linda Riordan's staff. On our rounds we saw Lord Douglas Hurd, Government Minister Peter Hain and the Conservative Oliver Letwin MP, a big-wig in the Tory party. I also said hello to Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, the Shadow Communities Minister, who was lingering in the central lobby. She seemed very friendly and interested in us, but she is a prospective cabinet minister so it's only to be expected! Lord Shutt had booked a grand committee room in parliament and talked to us about the work of the House of Lords before we had lunch. After lunch we were in another committee room for a meeting with Halifax MP Linda Riordan. We had a chance to hear about the hectic life of an MP and had a quiz on current political affairs. Mrs Riordan took us onto the terrace of the Houses of Parliament where we had our photograph taken against the backdrop of the River Thames and the London Eye. As the public gallery of the House of Commons was packed we took the opportunity to look at the House of Lords in session.



We left the Palace of Westminster and went up Whitehall to see all the government departments and two of the great offices of state, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Treasury. We then peered down Downing Street to catch a glimpse of Number 10 but, because of 'heightened security', we weren't allowed to walk down that famous street. Moving on from Whitehall we proceeded to the Mall, which was draped in Union Flags and the South African flag, probably for the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma who had been visiting the previous week. Buckingham Palace then surfaced at the end of the Mall and was surprisingly less imposing than I had imagined. Reaching those famous front gates I organised a rendition of "God Save the Queen" in case Her Majesty happened to be having tea on the terrace. Unfortunately, this was ill fated and only lasted two lines before the excitement of Princess Anne driving out of the Palace got to everyone and it collapsed. At least the sentiment was there!



Travelling back on the train that evening it felt like we'd been somewhere completely different to the rest of the country; Westminster is almost like a parallel universe, different but certainly brilliant.

**Mark (L6)**

## **Halifax Parliamentary Candidates vs NHG\$ Politics Students**

As the time approaches for the nation to make its choices about who will form the next government, it seems only right and fair that the people who are standing for the Halifax constituency come under scrutiny from some pretty tough opponents and I think that the AS Politics group definitely fulfilled those criteria!

### **Linda Riordan MP (Labour)**

We kicked off 3 weeks ago with the incumbent MP for Halifax, Linda Riordan. We had certainly been anticipating the chance to put her on the spot about national and party political issues but also issues of concern to people in Halifax. She kicked off with some pleasantries, the usual 'how do you dos' before talking a little about her job, her party and what happens in parliament. The standard of questioning was certainly very good and really was a credit to our group. We asked her a few questions on Labour policy and the divides in the party over Gordon Brown's leadership. On a local level, she spoke about the situation with HBOS and also with the Broad Street development and how she had contributed to its success. We ended the session with a group photo with Mrs Riordan, taken by her photographer: obviously she was so keen on us she wanted a personal memento, we would like to think.

### **Phillip Allott (Conservative PC)**

The second of our 3 candidates for the Halifax constituency was Mr Phillip Allott from the Conservative party. Mr Allot arrived for his hour of scrutiny from the group at his allotted time [sic. Ed] and gave a short introduction about himself, his party and what he wants for Halifax. We then had lots of time to get down to the

nitty gritty of his and his party's beliefs and policies for Halifax and the country. He had supporters in the room but they certainly didn't set him up for any easy answers. He spoke rather similarly about how he and the Calderdale Conservatives had been involved in the Broad Street development. Mr Allott also spoke about how he and his team had canvassed over 50% of the households in Halifax gathering opinions and providing information. He went on to speak about what would be the main issues the Conservative party would be standing on at this election and took questions about where the Tories stand on particular issues. These sort of profile raising events are quite crucial for somebody in Mr Allott's position as Halifax is a seat that needs to be won if the Conservatives are to form the next government.



**Elizabeth Wilson (Liberal Democrat PC)**

The third and final person to enter the Dragon's Den was the candidate standing for the Liberal Democrats, Dr Elizabeth Wilson. Dr Wilson arrived earlier than anticipated and was all ready to hit us with election material as soon as we came through the door. She talked about a subject that people often fail to put their finger on, Liberal ideology, and how this has made her a member of the party today. She continued with this presentation throughout her hour, moving on to talk about the failure of the other two main parties to be democratic and taking questions as and when they arose. As we tried our best to do with all the candidates, we got her to justify the policies of her party and why she would be right for Halifax. Dr Wilson was certainly very well informed and a master of her party's policies.



Although, sadly, none of our group are eligible to vote at the General Election, the votes cast in Halifax for our MP could mean, effectively, the difference between a Conservative and Labour government.

**Mark Holmes (L6)**

**The Value of Languages: Year 9 Language afternoon**

Friday afternoon, 5th March, we invited a range of linguists to share their experience of learning languages with our Year 9 students. Back from a year in Vienna, the former NHGS student Tom Ellis, intrigued students with his tales of Zoology with German and another former student, Paul Hickey, impressed us all with his knowledge of Mandarin. Other guest speakers were Graham Green, a Russian and French graduate, now working for the energy company, Exxon Mobil and our very own Miss Robson, who Year 9 students were amazed to discover had enjoyed a life before teaching. Thank you too to our fantastic A level French students, Natalie Noble, Thomas Kaye, Georgina Rimmer, Kate Rosborough, Paul Rogers and Robyn Sweeney who all gave presentations about their experiences of learning languages.



Here is some of the feedback Year 9 students wrote about the afternoon.

- Engaging and fun. Found the information useful and was very positive about it.
- It was good because he talked a lot about university.
- I thought it was good how he said you should combine language skills with something else you enjoy.
- I now know German and French can be used in many different ways, especially science.
- He was excellent and it showed me exactly how important languages can be in future careers.

- It was good to hear from somebody who was doing what we might be doing in a few years time.
- It was fun to see that languages help in social life as much as work life.
- I thought the sixth formers were really nice and gave us a lot of information
- It was really interesting to hear Miss Robson; she has done much more than I thought she had.



RCB

## French AS conference

On 16th March, the AS French class went to the University of Salford for a one day course, aimed towards our exam this summer. We arrived by train and had a brief walk around the campus before the day kicked off at 10.45. It consisted of two native speakers of French who gave talks on a range of topics which we'd learnt about this school year; for example, education and the media. I especially enjoyed the section about French music as it included tunes by the DJ, David Guetta who I really like. We didn't expect there to be any audience participation; however we were very much mistaken. The two presenters walked around the auditorium asking students to read out their answers from the booklets we'd been writing in. I was unlucky enough to be picked on three times but I think managed to impress by the third time with my use of the subjunctive.

I really enjoyed the day and I've definitely learnt a lot.

**Danielle Levin L6.5**

## Polar Bear Adoption

Shortly after Christmas the Eco-Committee decided to run an animal adoption project for Year 7. We thought this would be an excellent way to help the

planet, and to offer a new opportunity to Year 7 students. We decided to adopt a polar bear with the WWF. We created a presentation, which was then shown to each of the Year 7 forms, asking them to contribute to the adoption with a prize going to the form raising the most money. Year 7 gave a fantastic response and raised over £70!

We would like to thank everyone who contributed and congratulate 7(5), who raised the most money of all the forms. In the picture here, members of 7(5) are holding their certificate of adoption and toy polar bear.

We hope to run more excellent projects like this in the future, with thanks again to all contributors.



Ellen, Hannah, Caitlin, and Liberty 9(1)

## Prize Draw –winnings increased!!!

With effect from the April draw, which takes place on the 12<sup>th</sup>, prizes will be getting a huge boost. Cash available goes up to £250 for 1<sup>st</sup> prize, £100 for 2<sup>nd</sup> and £50 for 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**You've got to be in it to win it though!**

If you haven't already signed up, it's really easy to download forms from the PA page on the school web site, ask at the office or contact the prize draw treasurer, Linda Saunders at [linda\\_c\\_saunders@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:linda_c_saunders@yahoo.co.uk)

### March winners are:

1 <sup>st</sup>	£150	Neil Battye	Halifax
2 <sup>nd</sup>	£75	Andrew Sykes	Bradshaw
3 <sup>rd</sup>	£25	A & M Moore	Halifax

## Mobile Phones

Readers may be aware of a current television advertisement campaign from T Mobile involving longbows. It seems that there remains on the statute books a law from another era, requiring all males over the age of 14yrs to engage in two hours' longbow practice under the supervision of the local clergy every Sunday. I suspect that many of us have fallen foul of this law and will continue to do so. Clearly this law was instigated at a time when the context made it desirable for England and Wales to have access to a large pool of young men with the ability to use the longbow with a degree of expertise. The importance of the weapon in a number of conflicts during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, such as Agincourt, suggests that this law was both appropriate and effective.

Contexts change over time and this law is no longer enforced in order to reflect those changes. Changes in society, science and technology all play a part in bringing about changes to the laws and rules by which we live. Schools reflect the changes in society as a whole and at times we need to reflect upon the relevance of the rules we have which affect students. For example we have recently made online safety and use of social networks a priority and Mr Fisher ran assemblies with all students to introduce the Report-it button on the school website. Recent tragic stories in the news indicate how important it is for all of us to be alert to these changes in technology and to alter our behaviour accordingly. My focus in this newsletter is linked to this, as it deals with another technological advance; mobile phones.

As you will no doubt be aware, currently students face having their phones confiscated for two weeks if they use them during school session times ( i.e. 8.25 – 11.59am and 12.59-3.00pm). This has kept disruption to learning to a minimum for a number of years, but has also led to a degree of conflict between students, parents and staff. We are aware that mobile phones play an increasingly important part in the everyday lives of young people and for parents they often represent a key point of contact with children who can have long and sometimes complicated journeys to and from school. Student Councils have raised this issue on a number of

occasions and Governors have discussed the sanction several times.

In order to reflect the opinions of parents and carers and to show that we take student voice seriously, we have decided to amend the current sanction system. The rules regarding usage have not significantly changed and these can be found in the relevant Student Handbooks. The only alteration is that mobiles may be used in a classroom at lunchtime if it is a wet lunch, but nowhere else inside the building. The significant change, due to come into effect after Easter, is that the sanction of two weeks' confiscation has been dropped and replaced with a pastoral comment as a part of the Behaviour for Learning Policy. This will contribute to pastoral detentions just as a uniform or late comment would. This is a significant shift in the system. The hope is that students will take on board the responsibility to act sensibly and will continue to follow the rules. We will monitor the situation closely, however, and if it becomes clear that students are disrupting learning with an increased incidence of phone use in session times, the level of sanction will be increased to an immediate detention and beyond if necessary. This information has been passed to students through assemblies in the penultimate week of term.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support in the introduction of this change. If you have any questions about this, please contact me.

PEB

## French Social Night – Date confirmed

You are invited to join the PA in celebrating all things Gallic on the evening of 24 April when we will be holding a social event at school. Delicious cross channel food and wine will be on offer as well as an amazing dance display, straight from the Moulin Rouge.

Visit the PA web site or Facebook page for more information.

## London Law Course Trip to London

On the weekend of the 6<sup>th</sup> March, we travelled to London to attend a Law Seminar. The seminar consisted of many speakers from all areas of the legal profession. It was helpful as it gave us a broad overview of the different aspects of legal work. We met current undergraduate law students from the London area who gave us honest answers to our questions. We also had the chance to talk to solicitors and barristers from many areas of the profession. There were admission tutors there from the local law schools such as Queen Mary's and Kings College which was also beneficial as it gave us an inside view about the decision making process for applicants as well as giving us lots of ways in which we can improve our chances.

**Matthew Wood 12(2)**

---

### **Family Quiz night**

Thursday 13 May sees the return of the PA quiz night. Last year's event was brilliant and saw some serious competition amongst parents and students.

Tickets on sale after Easter.

### **Forthcoming PA Meetings**

Meetings run from 7.30pm to 9.30pm prompt.

14 April

5 May

2 June

Everyone welcome.

---