



## **Returned! - The spotlight interviews with the Head of Years!**

### **Back Again - Behind the Scenes of the Head of Years!**

**By Elliot Carpenter**

In a continuation of the two previous interviews with Mrs Hurl & Miss Proctor, this week: Mr Kennedy and Mrs Pegg have agreed to be interviewed about everything, ranging from working with Sixth Form students to Gary Barlow!

### **Mr Kennedy - Head of Year 11 & Upper School Leader**

**Q: Did you struggle fulfilling your role during this year's lockdown as a Head of Year or were you quite happy at home?**

A: Speaking to students was much more difficult as I couldn't just pull them aside during breaktime to have a word. If someone wasn't contactable by phone then speaking to them about their progress or behaviour proved to be quite difficult,

so lockdown was definitely not ideal.

**Q: You're not just a Head of Year, but also the Upper School Leader. What difference does that make to your job?**

A: The main difference is that as Head of Upper School, I am dealing with situations that may involve me speaking to Mr Wood or Mr Fisher a lot more. The Head of Year would usually come to speak to me for advice or support, whereas I go and speak to Mr Wood and Mr Fisher if I need advice or support.

**Q: Where else had you worked before arriving at NHGS, anywhere we could recognise?**

A: My previous position was at Halifax Academy when it used to be called Halifax High and my first teaching job was at a school called Longford Academy in West London. Both schools were very different to NHGS but I enjoyed them both for different reasons.

**Q: What advice would you give to a student looking to work with children in their future career?**

A: It is a very rewarding career, so if you like working with young people then I would go ahead and do it. Get as much experience as you can before committing to something and when you start, don't be discouraged if you find it hard at first as everyone is pretty average when they start teaching.

**Q: What's the first thing you'll be doing on June 21st?**

A: As it is a Monday, probably getting up and heading to work. I may meet friends to watch the England vs Czech Republic game on June 22nd.

**Q: And finally, as I'm asking every Head of Year this one, who's your favourite Beatle?**

A: I don't really like the Beatles so I will say Ringo

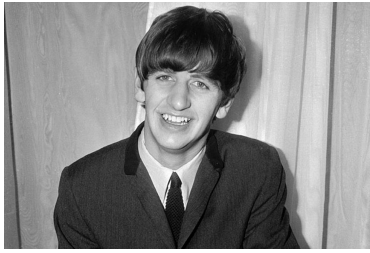


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as he was good on the Skechers adverts.



**He doesn't like the Beatles! He might not want to expect any more interviews now...**

## **Mrs Pegg - Head of Year 13**

**Q: What difficulties - or advantages - did you find from being a Head of Year working from home in the 2021 lockdown?**

A: The sixth form team always has an open door policy where students can drop in at any time if they need help or advice. Being removed from that situation created difficulties in terms of communication and we had to make do with emails and phone calls home which was fine but you can't always have the same sort of conversation when it isn't face to face.

**Q: Do you think that being a Head of a Sixth Form year group is easier or harder than managing a younger year?**

A: I think every year group has its own challenges. (and I have been lucky enough to experience being a head of year to all year groups). Being a HOY of sixth form is easier in some ways as they are more independent and older - however the issues that we deal with are in no way easier. 'Progress issues' are more high stakes as we are supporting them in making decisions that really will change their future, so the responsibility seems a little more.

**Q: Where else had you worked prior to arriving at NHGS? Anywhere we might recognise?**

A: NHGS was the first job I got after completing my teaching degree.

**Q: You're a music teacher, I should be able to trust you on this one - who is your favourite modern musician?**

A: I must confess I don't really have a 'favourite'. I tend to like songs and styles more than particular musicians. If I had to come up with one I think Take That and Gary Barlow never really disappoint - I like his style of songwriting!

**Q: With 35 million vaccines in arms in the UK, COVID=19 travel restrictions will hopefully be a thing of the past soon. Where will your first holiday after the pandemic be?**

A: France with my family - we used to go there every year camping and I just love the fact that we get to relax and eat lots of french pastry and french bread!

**Q: And finally, as I'm asking every Head of Year this one, who's your favourite Beatle?**

A: Probably John Lennon, I think he's the most recognisable and stands out to me more than the others.





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## **The Staff's Stories**

### **By Jasminde Heer**

Ever wondered what it would be like teaching at a secondary school or how you could end up in the place you spend years waiting to graduate in? I got in touch with Mr Wood, a vice principal at NHGS. In this interview, he informed me about his journey, regarding his teaching career. An inspiring story.

He studied at Leeds University, where he got a 2:1 honours degree. Having enjoyed his time on the university's football team, he decided to stay there for another year in order to carry on playing football. During this time he did a PGCE, however he couldn't decide whether he wanted to be a teacher or not. After taking a course, he was finally persuaded to become a teacher.

This happened as he applied for the Highlands school in September 1984 then, now recognised as NHGS. He has continued to progress since joining the school, which is how he has attained his current role.

"I have always enjoyed this pastoral role. Initially, I worked in the Sixth Form pastoral team, then became Head of Lower School, then Head of Upper School before becoming Vice Principal (Pastoral). There is enormous satisfaction from helping individual students to fulfil their potential by helping with problems that hinder that."

He knew this was the right job for him as he wanted to help older students with whatever worries they had.

"My advice to someone considering teaching as a career is that it is a very rewarding and fulfilling job, but go into it knowing that it is a hard job, which comes with a lot of pressures. There is always the need to work out of school hours, preparing lessons, marking, reporting, etc. As a young new teacher, it is important to watch and learn from other more experienced teachers in the classroom and in their interactions with students and parents. Prepare thoroughly and work hard to impart your enthusiasm for the subject to the students you teach, keep calm even in the most stressful of situations. Be yourself, be consistent and

honest with the students, and let your personality shine through."

## **Student Spotlight**

### **By Edward Evans**

This week, I interviewed a Year 8 student, asking a range of questions, regarding their opinions and perspectives.

#### **Q: What would you do if you were principal?**

A: I would probably be trying my best to keep things as normal as possible whilst maintaining the social distancing. I think this is a difficult time to be a principal, but Mr Fisher has made things the best they can be around school, so I would too.

#### **Q: Have the changes to do with covid been easy or hard to adapt to?**

A: I think that most people have found the changes quite difficult to adapt to as it was quite sudden at first, but has now been going on for a very long time. However, it is good to be back at school as it adds a sense of normality to everything.

#### **Q: To what degree have the changes been difficult?**

A: The changes have been quite difficult on a rather high degree. Everyone has been affected by Covid-19, but it does mean we all have



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a vague idea of what we are going through. The changes in school are difficult because I do miss the ability to walk freely to lessons and breaks, among other things, but the system we have now is starting to feel more normal and easier to follow.

**Q: Do you think school will return to a slice of normality by summer?**

A: I hope that school returns to some normality by summer, but at the moment it is hard to tell – there have been some easing in restrictions, but we can't know for sure.

## **Get Your Dance Shoes On!**

**By Emily MacNaughtan**

Dancing has always remained a popular pastime, even throughout the pandemic hitting most dance studios. Over 23,500 people are employed dancers or choreographers, and all of them have been hit in some way by the pandemic. Today, I talked to Gail, a local dance teacher regarding her love for dance, and the way it has changed this year.

**How did you become a dance teacher?**

I have always attended regular dance classes, then later I auditioned for the

**Royal Academy of Dance** where I trained to teach.

**How has dance been affected by the pandemic?**

Dance has been very difficult throughout the pandemic, especially affecting the businesses we get. We were fortunate enough to be able to continue on Zoom, but of course, there have been restrictions due to spacing in people's homes- ie. dancing in the kitchen.



**What are the ups and downs of dance?**

When I injured my leg through a non-related dance injury, I had to undergo 18 months of physio, so I guess that was a downside. However, there have been many ups as well: professional dancers working on TV, cruise ships and theatre.

Gail proves that as long as you love dance and never give it up you will get to do something incredible with your talents! She advises budding dancers to 'work hard- it's not easy!' So to anyone out there interested

in tap, ballet, or anything else- go for it!



**Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire' Book Review:**

**By Seamy Colvin-O'Carroll**

I have had a rather tumultuous relationship with the Harry Potter series, as I am sure you are all aware. Just as I start to think Rowling's writing (of both her characters and her plotlines) have improved, she fails me again with yet another trope or (possibly offensive) stereotype. Now here's the part where you are expecting me to say, "Nope! Not this time, Rowling has avoided all of the above and given us a truly perfect book!"

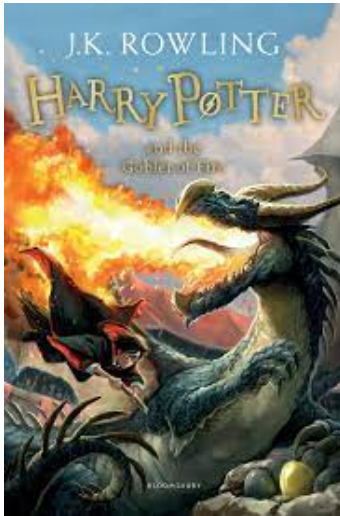
If that is in fact what you were thinking, then I have bad news for you. You are very wrong.



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Now do not mistake my disappointment as me disliking the book. No, in fact in the 'Goblet of Fire' Rowling expanded the wizarding world of Harry Potter, making any reader feel like they really know the fictional environment, and the plot was impeccable. The decision to expand upon world building was a brilliant decision, making her world seem all the more realistic.

However, this book has also left a bad taste in my mouth. Rowling's apparent refusal to change the way she writes characters, into a form where not every 'representative' character is born out of ignorance to a point where certain characters cause controversy. The worst bit is that it isn't even just that these characters are written awfully, but nearly all of the

main characters fit into one literature stereotype or another.

So as not to seem too pessimistic, let us start out with the positive aspects of this book.

The biggest of which is probably the world expansion that takes place in this novel. While before the Harry Potter universe only really consisted of Hogwarts and a small, relatively unexplored world around it, in this book Rowling made it so much more. We got to see the introduction of other magical schools, new characters, and a tournament that allows exploration of the two. Now, while I am aware that this is not groundbreaking it does help to make the book enjoyable. It makes the world seem new and fresh, something that is necessary after readers would have read 3 books set in the same world. This expansion made me feel like I was reading the debut novel all over again (I enjoyed it much more than the 'Philosopher's Stone, which can only be described as bland), and really immersed me into the environment. Overall, this made the book a much better

read, and really contributed to its final rating.

Another positive aspect to this book is its plot. Thus far, it has been one of the most enjoyable plots in the series, and one which I believed was executed rather well. I believe the reason for this is that while not the most unpredictable plot ever, Rowling kept a good balance between simplicity and excitement. While her debut novel was so simple it was boring, the third instalment in the series felt like there was too much going on for it to reach its potential. 'Goblet of Fire' has reached a good middle ground, which I felt worked in its favour and made it an enjoyable read. One capable of being understood by readers of all ages.



Now onto the negative aspects of this novel.



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While there are quite a few little issues which there is not enough time to cover in this review, I do not believe, they harm the reading experience overall anyways.

There are two main issues that must be addressed in this book.

First of all, the lack of depth given to the aforementioned new characters that help expand the world of Harry Potter. I found one of the most interesting elements of this book to be the students from schools such as 'Beauxbatons' who came to Hogwarts to compete in the 'Triwizard Tournament'. While I was reading, I was constantly waiting for something to happen that would thrust these characters to the forefront of the plot and give them some dimension, something that characters that were given such a big introduction can only be expected to have. I think this would have really helped make the fantastical world seem real to the reader, rather than making these characters feel like they are just part of the story for continuity reasons.

My next issue is the more upsetting of the two, purely because it is very similar to

the issue I had with 'the Prisoner of Azkaban', and I really was not expecting such a groundbreaking issue to happen again in this series so quickly after the Cho Chang debacle.

But here we are.

Rowling has managed yet again to take representation in her book series and make it toxic, this time in the form of twins Padma and Parvati Patil.



These characters, who had so much potential, were forced into the background with lacklustre personalities and completely supportive storylines. Whilst Cho Chang was built off of stereotypes, these characters are slightly different. Instead they are given so little depth and exposure within the books that we don't know all that much about them. But there is one representative trope that Rowling made sure to stick with for the Patil twins.

She made sure that her 'representation' had absolutely no role in her novel other than giving support to the 'hero' in the story. This leads to her novels doing nowhere near enough on the representation side of things and really sours the reading experience once you realise the minimal role Rowling forces all of her non-white British characters to play.

To conclude, I did enjoy this book, and honestly think it might have been the best book in the series thus far. The plot was excellent and Rowling's expansion of the fictional world she has created really made the book stand out in comparison to its predecessors.

Where the book falls short is yet again its characters, who even when you ignore the trope-filled personalities of the main protagonists in the novel, are two-dimensional and play a supportive role to the point where it is dehumanising. While I hope this issue is solved in the later books in the series, I must admit that I am not confident in that fact.

Overall, I would say this book is definitely worth a read though! It is, in my





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opinion, the best installment in the series yet!

Overall Rating: 3.8/5 stars

## Film Review

### By Isabel Johnstone

Do you know those films that you just want to give a massive hug to? And then wrap them up in bubble wrap and keep them in your room forever? Well, *Instant Family* is one of those films, and it's one that I can never get enough of. It's the perfect mix of comedy and wonderful crush-your-heart-to-pieces moments. There really is no other word to describe it than brilliant.



Starring Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne, *Instant Family* is about a couple who decide that they want to foster children to add a little bit of excitement to their lives... but end up with much more

than they bargained for. The foster kids, (played by Julliana Gamiz, Gustavo Escobar and Isabela Mercad), are an adorable handful, and one of them is a- drumroll please...

Teenager. Now, Ellie and Pete (our first time parents) have to learn how to parent a teenager as well as another two small children. Their dreams of a cute little toddler have been turned completely on its head, especially when they went from no children, to three overnight!

This heartfelt film will leave you laughing until your sides hurt and then make you cry your heart out. The wider family members, like the fabulous Grandma Sandy will make you adore this crazy family all the more. You truly do fall in love with everything about this film.

*When Pete and Ellie decide to start a family, they stumble into the world of foster care adoption. They hope to take in one small child, but when they meet three siblings, including a rebellious 15-year-old girl, they find themselves speeding from zero to three*

*kids overnight. Now, Pete and Ellie must try to learn the ropes of instant parenthood in the hope of becoming a family.*

Age Rating: 12

Where to find: Netflix, Sky, Amazon Prime

## Grace Allsop

### Movie Review

#### Blackfish

Currently on Netflix, *Blackfish* is a spectacular movie, which was released in 2013.

Surrounding the storyline of an orca named Tilikum, *Blackfish* explores the reality behind captivity by Seaworld.

This documentary also exposed the other lies and abuse that Seaworld is involved in including lying about whales' lifespan in order to hide that they die dramatically earlier in captivity.



It has a main focus on the trainer Dawn Brancheau's death who was killed by the whale and how the blame was put on that she was



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“wearing a ponytail” but there is clearly more to the story.

It also argues with the innocence of the trainers who are just there to help the whales and giving the whales the best life they can while living their worst lives while both are trapped in a cycle of money hungry business men.

It got 98% on Rotten Tomatoes with critics saying things like “Blackfish is an aggressively impassioned documentary that will change the way you will look at performance whales.”

What I loved about this film was how it focused on the innocence of the whale, pointing things out like how no orca has ever been on record killing a human in the wild. I also loved how it didn't really put its blame anywhere so as to not make it an argument and people wouldn't lose focus on the real issue and point of the film being that whales are held in captivity and it needs to stop.

However, I do wish it told us more ways to help these whales and what the root of this issue is.

Overall, I would 100% recommend this to anyone. It is incredibly enlightening and makes you think twice about many things, not just whales but all other animals used for inhumane purposes. It is an important issue that needs to be spoken about a lot more and this film is a very good place to start.

## **School events**

### **By Shruti Hadimani**

#### **Drama/singing & acting club**

After having been in hibernation for so long, there are thoughts of having an interactive singing/acting and dancing club following the COVID-19 safe rules.

This will finally give a chance for the newcomers of NHGS a sense of "normal" after a really long time of stillness.

This club is for years 7 and 8. This is an after school club with a time period of 1 hour. This club will start at 3:15 and will end at 4:15. Currently the days and when this club will take place are unconfirmed.

This club will give the students a chance to do some practical work and also an opportunity to meet new people from different forms or even years.

#### **Chess club**

Mr Riley (form tutor of 7.6) has recently made plans of starting a chess club, allowing students to interact with others whilst having fun.

This club allows students to express their talents in this quite challenging game or discover unknown talents.

So far, Mr. Riley is still unsure on when this club will start and the timings but is quite pleased with the idea.

If you have any thoughts of joining this club please feel free to contact [i.riley@nhgs.co.uk](mailto:i.riley@nhgs.co.uk)



#### **Basketball club**

Mr. Webb has hopes of beginning a basketball club for years 7-9 & 10-13. This club will be taking place at lunch-time and it is accessible to all students.





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If this plan goes through, then competitions could proceed. Perhaps an event containing teachers versus students could take place for charity.

**Editor - Momnah Shahnaz**

**Managing Editor - Valeria**

**Wilding**

## **Year 11 Prom**

**By Haniyah Asad**

The Year 11 Prom is taking place on the 23rd of June and although the times have not yet been finalised, the rough times are from 7:30pm -11:30pm. Set at The Venue in Barkisland, the night will hopefully be a night to remember. There is a formal dress code to complete the ideal of prom. With a DJ and a buffet, it is clear that the Year 11s will heavily enjoy themselves.

It was organised in order to celebrate the end of the two difficult years, in which the year worked extremely hard. It was a tradition at NHGS and they didn't want to miss out. In addition, some people will be leaving next year and this will be a nice gathering in order for the year to say their final goodbyes.