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A Message from the Head

Dear Parents

I do hope you had a good summer holiday and that you managed to find some sunshine, whether at home or abroad. I was right in the north of Scotland where the weather was very pleasant.

We have, as usual, had builders in during the holiday. The Sixth Form common room has been decorated, has a new floor and new tables and chairs to improve the dining facility. The classrooms in the main building have been decorated and have new tables and chairs and look very bright and cheerful. Each girl now has two lockers in the cloakroom, a large one for her PE bag and coat and a small one for her books. Mobile phones *must* be left in lockers while girls are in school. Finally, we are all wearing ID; the card will act as a library and lunch

card and operate the security system.

A Level and GCSE results arrive in the middle of the holiday and this year brought smiles to our faces once again. A Levels were the second best ever with 85.6% grades at A and B (53.5% at A grade) and 97.7% at A-C. At GCSE 69.3% results were at A*/A grade, 92.34% at A*-B and 98.8 at A*-C. Congratulations to the girls and their teachers!

AIP, our catering managers, have asked me to encourage you to pay for your daughters' lunches by *Parentpay*. This means that you can guarantee that your money is secure and is being spent as you intend. We have been very pleased by the response so far. If you are sending in a cheque, please ensure that it is for more

than £20. We strongly advise you not to send cash into school.

Finally, we are very pleased to welcome some new staff. Four new Heads of Departments have been appointed: Dr Crampton (Geography), Miss Harbutt (RS), Mr Trotter (Physics), Mr Pomeroy (English). We also have new teachers into a number of departments: Mathematics – Mr Coates, History – Mr Shanks, English – Miss Parker, PE – Miss Chapman and Miss Foley, Music – Miss Wood. Miss Ong has resigned her post as Examinations Officer and Miss Rogers has assumed this role. We wish them all very happy and successful careers at Handsworth.

Yours sincerely

Elsbeth V Insch

Cross-Country - Niamh Gent, 8A

Earlier in the year, a group of girls travelled to Hamstead Hall School for the Aston Schools' Cross-Country competition. They consisted of year 7, 8 and 9 girls. There was a junior and a senior competition. However, we all raced together. The course was around their school building twice and then around a very muddy school field. All the girls ran excellently and we won the overall trophy. Vicky Greenwood won the senior competition and Niamh Gent won the



junior competition. All the girls performed exceptionally. We hope to be able to enter some more competitions next year!

Work Experience - Katie Reeves U6.12

On 9th February 2008, French AS-Level students Katie Reeves, Emma Best, Joanna Spiers and Francesca Mitchell joined eleven other students from all over England at East Midlands airport in order to participate in an Acorn Educational Exchanges' Work Experience Programme in Limoges, France. Placements varied from restaurants, department stores and music shops to the more adventurous radio stations, pharmacies and florists, and we all settled into them almost immediately. Over the course of the week, although challenging, we all managed to achieve the main goal that we had hoped for: to improve the quality of our French. In addition, we also gained confidence in our abilities and found that chatting to the locals was an excellent way to broaden our vocabulary. Despite the hard work, all placements were thoroughly enjoyed, and the evenings were spent in restaurants and cafés once again developing our understanding of spoken French.

Easter Concerts

Two very successful concerts were held in March. Concert 1 on March 6th opened with a theme set presentation of music from the movies, including the rousing theme from 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' played by the Training Wind Band. Later in the evening came a poignant time when the Swing Band played 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy': chosen by the Year 13 members who were participating in their last school performance. The evening was rounded off by stunning playing from the Chamber Orchestra in a very moving rendition of 'Chanson de Matin' by Edward Elgar, followed by the return of Louise Randhawa (who led the Chamber Orchestra last year) playing as violin soloist in a very sensitive performance of 'Liebesleid' by Kriesler. This was greatly appreciated by both audience and orchestra and there were a few tearful moments at the end of the concert from the leavers.

Concert 2 on March 11th once again provided the audience with a varied programme of high standard playing. Symphony Orchestra opened the evening with 'The Entertainer (Joplin) and 'Minuet from Berenice' (Handel). A number of smaller ensembles followed:

Clarinet Ensemble

Four Quarters String Quartet

Cello Ensemble

Guitar Quartet

who all performed with real quality and musicality.

The Junior Choir presentation was as enthusiastically

received as usual and had the added extra of 3 separate conductors! Two year 12 students had asked Mr Parry earlier in the year if they could work with him and the choir. He was very pleased to have their involvement and Lucy Hutchinson conducted 'Good Morning Baltimore', Anna Murray conducted 'City People', and Mr Parry finished with 'Hallelujah'. Congratulations to the girls for their hard work and achievement. The whole evening was rounded off by The Wind Band presenting a splendid performance of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' (Lloyd Webber arr. Sweeney)



Mr. Parry, Head of Instrumental Music

GCSE Dance Showcase

The dance showcase amazed everyone that came along to watch. It gave a selection of students in years 10 and 11 an opportunity to show off their talents to friends and family. The evening began with a gym display from students in years seven and eight that caused the audience to stare in awe. They were not however, given the chance to rest as the dances that followed dazzled them into a frenzy of over excitement.

From dances on pirates to an eerie dance on good and evil magic. I began to feel the butterflies in my stomach is my tank him to dance. As I walked off stage, her father and

an sleep road, adjust and myself, but for the girls at participated in the show and made it a great night.

Kanar Talabani, 11Q

KE Lions Cheerleading Team

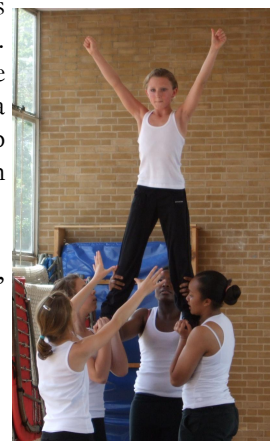
We were very lucky to be offered a coach for a weeks taster on cheerleading and of COURSE we snapped it up!

The team of 12 was chosen to work really hard every day for a week. A fantastic routine with lifts, jumps and gymnastic moves was put together.

The routine was meant to be showcased on the 7th of July at the "street athletics" with Linford Christie and

Mark Lewis-Francis but due to the continuous rainfall we couldn't do it. Disappointing! But we did manage to perform at the start of the Aston partnership rounders tournament in front of five teams of boys and girl rounders players. We'll be having a regular club starting in September.

Mrs Brown, PE Department



Cello Trip

An invitation from Miss Gubbins, one of cello teachers at school, led to four members of the cello section and Miss Mold taking the bus into town to the Birmingham and Midland institute for an hour of spectacular music, all played by members of the Birmingham Junior Conservatoire.

Six items were played in all by students at a range of ages: Mozart's piano trio in B flat (allegro) began the concert, followed by a stunning rendition of parts three and four of Dvorak's "American" string quartet in F. A slightly longer piece, Beethoven's string quartet in F, followed, played to an immaculate standard and obviously enjoyed by the performers. Two pieces for flute and strings came next, Haydn's Andante quartet and another Mozart piece, this time in D. The combination of flute, violin, viola and cello was one I hadn't heard before, but the sheer elegance of the performance was enough for me to realise that such a mixture of instruments should be heard together more often in small chamber ensembles. The final and longest piece of the repertoire was John Ireland's Fantasy Trio in A minor. It was evident that the piece, though incredibly beautiful, was a complete test of the three performers' skills, highly difficult, but also marvellously played.

Arriving back at school to get the bus home, I was able to spend some time reflecting on how much work the performers put in to create such an amazing sounds, and, and realizing that - although it sad to say this - despite the music department's hours of effort put into creating the concerts, all the performers still have a long way to go before we can achieve the same high standards of playing.

Taking into consideration that Miss Gubbins organises a similar concert regularly, it should be fully understood that she still probably puts from far more effort into this than anything else. Such pure dedication to music truly is astounding.

All five of us thoroughly enjoyed the performance, and if other such opportunities arrive for us to go to another of the concerts I doubt we will say 'no'.

Victoria Shipway, 11Q

CSI

Visitors to the school on June 20th may have been somewhat alarmed by the sight of up to 80 scene-of-crime investigators crawling all over the gym. Closer inspection would have revealed the white-suited sleuths to be no more than 14 years old, and it was in fact part of a CSI workshop funded by performing arts to promote knowledge of forensic science techniques. The pupils learned about how investigators analyse samples of hair, fibre and blood and how to draw inferences from them. They then had a murder to solve using this knowledge, and the vast majority if not all the groups of investigators came up with the right answer. Feedback from the girls was extremely positive, and all of them could identify new scientific learning gained during the day the day.

Mr Heppel, Head of Performing Arts



Celebration of the Arts

On Thursday 3rd July I think we created some sort of record... We managed to squeeze an enormous and rather intimate (!) audience into the Drama Studio for some rather startlingly good performances.

First up were the AS Theatre Studies group and while small in number (a mere 3 students) they were large in talent and entertainment value. They wrote their own script based on misunderstandings, using the idea that in the Personal advertisements in the local newspaper GSOH may not just stand for 'good sense of humour', but could also mean 'Got Sheep On Head'.

Let's just say that it all finished with Anna Murray 'walking like the Mafia' 'in red lycra' when her unsuspecting date thought she just 'would like to meet' 'in real life'.



JUNK'D

In November 2007, through Young Enterprise, 18 students decided to join the task of a lifetime – to solve the problem of recycling!

We came up with a fantastic concept of using a plethora of recycled materials ('junk') and then crafting them into innovative products. So that products then earned the title of having been Junk'd. Hence our company name!

As a company of high spirited individuals, we aimed to reach out to other young people and emphasise the importance of the environment.

Competing in several trade fairs and Young Enterprise finals, we have certainly made our city and school proud by representing Birmingham and Solihull at the Regional Finals. Although we were not the overall West Midland Winners, we did win two awards - 'Most Innovative Company' and an 'Environmental Award.' From this tremendous opportunity, we have all had a great insight into the business world and Young Enterprise has enabled us to have a memorable and enjoyable experience.

So, to all you budding young entrepreneurs, this is a great chance to broaden your horizons through this programme!

Rowing Club

This year we have really enjoyed going to Rowing club with Miss Bolton, it was on every Thursday lunchtime. We have also been entering the Concept 2 indoor rowing league and completed different races in groups of four. Our times were entered on the internet and we got our result against other schools.

We have also competed in an indoor rowing event racing against other Birmingham schools at Nechell's sports centre where we had to row 2000m in 30 second intervals. One team came overall 4th out of the 20 girls teams.

Over the year we have had lots of fun, especially racing against Miss Bolton (and beating her!). We would like to give a huge thank you to Miss Bolton for organising the club and arranging for us to go to the competition, also a big thank you to Miss Middlehurst for driving us to Nechell's and well done to all the girls that have taken part. For full results and pictures see the Sports Hall notice board.



Battlefields Trip

Two weeks before the end of term, a group of 34 girls from Years 9 and 10 visited the First World War battlefields of Northern France and Belgium. We stayed at Messines Peace Village, just outside Ypres, where we were treated to very smart, chalet-style accommodation. We arrived in Belgium on the afternoon of Friday 4th July, our first stop Lijssenthoek cemetery where one of our number was able to find the grave of a relative. After visiting some preserved trenches at Bayernwald, we headed into Ypres itself and, after a hearty meal, attended the remembrance ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. Saturday was spent on the Somme, where highlights included Lochnagar Crater, the Thiepval Memorial and the discovery of some unexploded shells on the fields at Serre. Our last day was once again based around Ypres and perhaps the most moving experience of all was at Tyne Cot – the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world. Everyone was struck by how beautifully tended the graves were - colourful roses made for a striking contrast to the pure white headstones, quite different to the much darker German cemetery at Langemarck. The weekend also included the all-important chocolate shopping and a visit to the interactive In Flanders Fields Museum. We are particularly grateful to our guide, Ian Coyne of Anglia Battlefield Tours, who was able to bring every place we visited to life. Here is one of the very many positive feedback comments from students themselves:

'The whole trip was completely amazing and it really opened my eyes. I now see that behind the rows of white graves and endless lists of names there were real men, many of whom never left Flanders' fields and I will always remember them.' Rachel Argyle, 10F