

# Let's Communicate

Newsletter of the Hinchingsbrooke School  
Association (HSA) in partnership with the School



February 2010

## WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE HSA

*hsa.comms@btinternet.com*

In writing c/o Reception marked for 'attn HSA  
Communications'

## CONTACTING YOU

We would urge those parents who have not yet done so to register free with ParentMail™ ([www.parentmail.co.uk](http://www.parentmail.co.uk)) to view our messages and to receive them by email. Contact Jackie Moore at school by email [jm@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:jm@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk) and she will register you with Parentmail.

## UNIFORM SHOP/SECOND HAND SHOP

For opening times go to:  
<http://www.hinchingbrookeschool.net/HSA/UniformShop.htm>  
Maths equipment is also available  
Payment is via cash or cheque at present

## TERM DATES

Staff Training Day : Monday 4 January  
Spring Term opens : Tuesday 5 January  
Half Term : 15 – 19 February (inclusive)  
Spring Term closes : Thursday 1 April

Staff Training Day : Monday 19 April  
Summer Term opens : Tuesday 20 April  
May Day Holiday : 3 May  
Half Term : 31 May – 4 June (inclusive)  
Staff Training Day : Friday 2 July  
Summer Term closes : Thursday 22 July

For more details see the School website under  
'School Diary'.

## **HBK Sport in Brief**

Now available to view on the school website

<http://www.hinchingbrookeschool.net/>

Sport in brief is the title of Hinchingsbrooke's Sport Specialism newsletter. Click on specialist status to find information about the variety of activities available in school, the success of Hinchingsbrooke students participating in sport in the local community and special events that have taken place during the previous half term.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER**

Dear Parent

The weather has given us a challenging start to 2010. The Hinchingsbrooke site is difficult to manage in icy conditions. Sloping surfaces provide a large number of potential slip hazards. The site team did an excellent job in salting key movement areas and, in general, I was impressed with the mature conduct of most students. A small number of younger boys found the ice on the Japanese Garden pond irresistibly fascinating. This pond is only a foot deep. However, Hinchingsbrooke Park lake is a much more serious hazard. It was horrifying to learn that students had walked and even cycled across it. Please reinforce our message about the dangers.

If the school has to be closed for safety reasons, this will be announced on the school website and Radio Cambridge. Please use the 'Refresh' button to obtain the latest news when looking at the web site.

Otherwise it has been a good start to the new year. Attendance at the Sixth Form Open Evening numbered around 600, with a lot of interest from external students attracted by good reports from those in their communities who are already here. In the performance tables published by the government this month it is good to see that rising Sixth Form enrolment has been accompanied by rising achievement.

During this year we will be experimenting with new ways to seek your views. This is likely to include some online surveys and we will also be looking at ways in which the internet can be used to keep you better informed and to manage some school business. In September we hope that you will be able to access more information concerning your child as it becomes available online.

Meanwhile, the HSA has reached a decision point. It has been increasingly difficult to engage sufficient parents in committing time to organising its activities. The school will be able to continue the HSA programme: the Insight events, school shop and even some social events. However, volunteers can make a difference. If you want the HSA to continue, we need more parents to join its organising committee and accept officer roles. The HSA will write to you with an invitation to a meeting for this purpose.

We are looking forward to 2010. The prospects are very good for Hinchingsbrooke.

Best wishes

**Keith Nancekievill**

*Stop Press: We have just heard from Peter Brennan, Director of Specialism, that Hinchingsbrooke won the national Youth Sport Trust Award for Innovative Practice in Core Physical Education at KS4. Judges found that out of all the sports colleges in the country Hinchingsbrooke practises a curriculum which, "supports, challenges and includes every young person."*

## HINCHINGBROOKE'S SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

In spite of extreme weather conditions, Hinchingsbrooke School managed to celebrate several special events over the Christmas and New Year period.



### KS4 CELEBRATION EVENING

An evening of celebrating success was held in the Performing Arts Centre at Hinchingsbrooke School on Monday 30 November. As well as receiving prizes and sharing their pride at their excellent GCSE results, groups of students also shared their happy experiences and memories of sporting and musical and party moments. The trip to Malawi last Summer was clearly a highlight for many. Dr Caroline Gill, who left Hinchingsbrooke 12 years ago, inspired all by talking about her amazing success with Shell UK whilst enjoying a very active and action packed sporting and musical life. Her motto of encouraging all to work hard and play hard fitted in very well with the ethos that is promoted at Hinchingsbrooke.



*Photo from left to right: George Gabriel, Thibault Jeangout, Natasha Darlow, Dr Caroline Gill, Keith Nancekievill, Nick Clarke*

### SIXTH FORM CELEBRATION EVENING

The Sixth Form Presentation Evening was also held in the Performing Arts Centre on Monday 14 December. The Headteacher, Mr Nancekievill praised the returning students for their exceptional academic performance and for the quality of their contributions to school and community life. The main address was given by Mike Thorne, the Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University.

### SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

The School's Annual Sixth Form Open Evening on Tuesday 5 January in the Performing Arts Centre was an excellent event, with an attendance of over 600; students and parents were introduced to the Sixth Form by senior members of staff and sixth form students. They were also given the opportunity to discuss subject choices with teachers and to visit departmental displays.

### AUTUMN CONCERT

Hinchingsbrooke upheld its outstanding musical tradition as students from the school performed in the Autumn Concert on Thursday 19 November. Students of all ages participated in the concert, from the brand new Junior Choir; made up largely of new, year seven pupils, to the long established Chamber Choir. Highlights of the evening included a superb Jazz Clarinet duet, performed by Dianne Muir and Natalie Murray, and the Swing band who played a medley of show themes.

New Head of music, Mrs Tessa Hammond commented, "I am very excited to be developing musical activities at Hinchingsbrooke; there is a wealth of musical talent to be harnessed!"



*Photo from left to right: Richard Stenton, Katherine Heeley, Dianne Muir, Nick Clarke*



*Photo from left to right: Chris Smith, Matilda Haymes, Jamie Pegram, Roman Hladkiwskyj, Samuel English, Richard Stenton, Euan Johnson*

## **EXTENDED SCHOOLS A TASTE OF HINCHINGBROOKE**

Hinchingbrooke School became a hive of activity after school one Thursday when 180 Year 6 students from local primary schools visited the, "Taste of Hinchingbrooke" event.

The tours gave future students the opportunity to meet some of the staff and sixth form and to see the great facilities that the school has to offer including the Performing Arts Centre, the extensive sports facilities, and the Learning Resource Centre.

Students planning to join the school in September 2010 were able to get their first tour of the school and to get a feel for the many extra-curricular activities that happen after school. The orchestra were rehearsing, "Thunderbirds" for a concert; the modelling and gaming club showed off the wide range of games and models they have. The art department demonstrated some pottery skills and there was the opportunity for some students to join in with the racquets club. During the visit parents were able to buy refreshments in the School's Sports Pavilion Cafe.

This visit is the first in a series of transition events that Year 6 students get the opportunity to participate in and was the first event of this type at Hinchingbrooke School. Attendance far exceeded expectations and students were very enthusiastic about their visit and the facilities they saw. Plans will now be developed to build on the success of this event to ensure we can meet the demand and maximise the benefits for students and parents attending!

Head of Year 7 and Transition Manager Kate Tandy said, "This is a great opportunity for prospective Hinchingbrooke students to explore the school site and experience some of the huge range of extra-curricular activities on offer. It is also an opportunity to meet my team, making us more familiar during our transition primary school visits and the Hinchingbrooke transition events."

## **MATHS CHALLENGE**

39 Sixth Form students took part in the annual Maths Challenge last term. 90 minutes of highly challenging maths was the order of the day in the form of a mathematical problem solving test, using maths in contexts not met before. We await the results with anticipation.

This was followed by the inter-school team challenge on Tuesday this week. James Gemmell, Tom Sargent, Stefan Soleder and Emma Langhorn represented the school and came a very credible 15/24. Mr Hancock was very impressed at their teamwork and how they coped incredibly well with what was, in his words, "incredibly tough", maths.

## **BRONZE ARTS AWARD**

21 of Hinchingbrooke students took part in the Bronze Arts Award which runs after school on a Wednesday. They were required to learn new and exciting skills through a range of creative arts workshops such as Art, Textiles, Dance, Drama and Music, then went on to develop a specific skill in a chosen media.

All students were able to combine practical skills, creativity and communication as they researched various arts practitioners, developed a range of skills and techniques whilst gathering research from gallery performances and visits in their own time. Students then went on to present their skills to others - teaching a workshop or assisting a teacher to pass on their knowledge.

Some outstanding folders of work were produced that really showed very personal and sensitive responses to others' work and their own personal creative journeys as individuals.

A high number of students volunteered to meet the moderator on the moderation time, giving up their time after school and the moderator was delighted to meet with a passionate and enthusiastic group of students, expressing his desire to use some of the work to form the Arts Award website.

We are looking to start up a new group of students in the bronze award and take those that have completed the bronze award through to silver award.

Big congratulations to all students involved in Arts Award. Following the moderation on Wednesday all students have passed their bronze award with the moderator commenting on the high level of creativity in all folders and work. He also expressed his enjoyment of meeting such a large group of the students to speak to about their progress in the Arts Award. Well done everyone!

Many thanks Miss Hand and Miss Boulton

## **USB TOPS**

We recently had a health & safety concern where a student swallowed one of these tops. Please be aware of the danger and advise your child as appropriate. There are apparently retractable tops on the market, which parents may prefer to purchase for their children.

## **DROPPING OFF STUDENTS?**

Please be responsible about parking cars and dropping off your children and their equipment for school. We have lately had some very difficult situations where either an ambulance or school vehicles could not access the school site. Your co-operation is appreciated.

## ***HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL RECOGNISED AT LIVING SPORT AWARDS 2009***

Hinchingbrooke School are the proud recipients of the Living Sport School of the Year Award 2009, sponsored by Sport Connect.

The presentation was made at the Living Sport 'Celebration of Sport' Awards ceremony held at the Huntingdon Marriott Hotel on Thursday 12 November.

Receiving the award on behalf of the school, Peter Brennan, Director of Sport, said, 'We were delighted to be nominated and are absolutely thrilled to be selected as this year's winners. This award recognises the huge effort that our staff and pupils have made to embed the values and disciplines of sport across the curriculum.'

The nomination citation identified the various ways in which the school, a specialist sports college since 2005, has increased the opportunities for all students to participate in activity regardless of age, gender or ability. The range of initiatives introduced have had an impact on achievement across the curriculum and contributed to improving students' GCSE results year on year.

The judges were impressed by the huge range of traditional and non-traditional activities offered to students both within and outside the school day. The innovative PE curriculum, introduced in September 2006, provides students with opportunities to learn through adventure, learn to excel, express, outwit and train. Last year thirty seven different activities were available through the school including horse riding, shooting, go-karting and scuba-diving. The development of two fitness suites now provide students with the opportunity to learn how to plan and monitor their own fitness programmes and sees students training alongside staff after school hours.

In the evenings and at weekends the school is the hub of sport in Huntingdon West, hosting many local teams and clubs and offering affordable sport and exercise opportunities to the local community.

Nominating the school for the award, Molly Bishr, a parent of students at the school, said, 'Hinchingbrooke is a very special school which really cares about all of its pupils. The staff of the school blend the academic with the practical to provide a superbly well-rounded education.'

Hinchingbrooke finished as runners up at the BBC East Region Sport School of the Year. The glittering award ceremony held at the Tattersalls at Newmarket racecourse on 8 December, saw Norfolk Sixth Form College collect the top award. The prestigious event, a precursor to BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award, placed Hinchingbrooke in the company of Olympic medallists Louis Smith and Gail Emms, World Silver medallist Daniel Keatings, Captain of the Grand Slam winning England Ladies' Cricket team Charlotte Edwards and World Champion football freestyler Dan Magness. Dan will be visiting school later this term to inspire students across the school with his amazing skills.

### **Other information:**

Other schools nominated in the category: Comberton Village College; Granta School; Netherhall School; Stanground College



## HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL LANGUAGE LEADERS' STORY

CONVINCING pupils to give up their lunchbreak in order to study a foreign language might sound like mission impossible.

But that's exactly what's been happening at Hinchingsbrooke School Sports College in Cambridgeshire thanks to the Sports Leaders Foreign Language Leaders Award. Enthusiastic pupils have hosted language classes in their spare time and even invited local junior schools to a specially-arranged foreign festival where they could experience a taste of Europe right on their doorstep.

"I first heard of the Foreign Language Leaders Award shortly after it was launched, and as we are a sports college and already run several successful Sports Leaders awards, I thought it was worth investigating further," said Rachael Lawrance, Head of Languages at Hinchingsbrooke.

"On a national level, take-up of foreign languages at GCSE is an area for concern, with foreign countries seemingly much better at languages than British schools. While our take-up figures here at Hinchingsbrooke are pretty good, we wanted to see if we could ignite even more enthusiasm for learning a foreign language amongst our pupils. This seemed like a great way of doing it."

Rachael originally secured funding for 15 courses, but when some 30 students submitted outstanding applications to take part, she went back and asked for more. She was given the nod to run the course for all 30 applicants. To test the water, the course began as a voluntary lunchtime class for pupils in Year 10 – those aged 14. And despite the difficulties imposed on both Rachael and her students by the lunchtime slot, the results were well worth the extra effort. "I had other responsibilities as a teacher of course, and the students obviously had other things they could be getting on with during their breaktime, so there was commitment on both sides right from the beginning," she explained. "To their credit, the students really made it worth the hard work and immediately got excited about the concept."

The course, which is aimed at giving students the leadership qualities necessary to teach the rudiments of a foreign language to their peers, proved a winner from the outset. "First we discussed good and bad ways of teaching and getting your message across," explained Rachael. "For many of the children, it was the first time they had really thought about what goes into a teaching lesson. They were surprised about how much work was involved. They had to plan their own lesson and then they began to teach each other in small groups, perhaps just starting with teaching 10 new foreign words to their 'class'. Feedback and constructive criticism was given to help them improve their leadership skills and make their lessons more interesting."

The students learned that good language teaching requires excellent communication, clear pronunciation and fun for the participants. "They soon learned that it was much better to think of fun ways to learn a new word rather than just read it out of a book," said Rachael. The students enjoyed the process so much, they began teaching small classes of 11-year-olds from the school, which helped them to learn to cope with different personalities and levels of behaviour. And then, during the Summer Term, they put together a foreign languages festival at the school, inviting children from the local primary school to experience a little continental culture. "Things really took off then," said Rachael, "and they really let their imaginations go. Three different classrooms were set up to reflect different countries and the students got fully involved by dressing up in cultural dress from either France, Spain or Germany."

"They prepared different food, made flags for their country and even played sport with the primary school children, communicating in their chosen foreign language. The motivation and excitement from both sides was tremendous. They all got a real buzz out of the event and were keen to do more."

Since then, the course has continued to grow. Foreign students have been invited to the school and taught English sport by some of the original course participants. And this year, a major festival is being planned to include all nine of Hinchingsbrooke's local feeder schools.

The award has now been adopted as part of Hinchingsbrooke's curriculum and Rachael has had to enlist the help of another language teacher to help cope with demand.

"Learning a new language has more kudos to it now too," said Rachael. "We have created some pin badges incorporating the European Union logo which are awarded to successful students in front of the whole school in assembly. We are also working on printing up some Foreign Language Leader Award T-shirts."

No less than 60 students will take the course during the next educational year – doubling the original group size.

"As well as the benefits of increased confidence and motivation for languages, the award is also a wonderful thing to have on your CV or university application," added Rachael.

"It shows a real commitment to learning outside of everyday lessons and a willingness to work on your own initiative." "The children have been really motivated by it and our GCSE language uptake levels have increased as a result. Language is now being seen as a cool option to take."

## FORMAL HALL AT THE HOUSE

On 13 January the History Department hosted *'Formal Hall at the House'* for Year 13 students studying the English Civil War.

It was a unique event which allowed students to meet and discuss current historical research with Dr David Smith, a leading academic from Cambridge University who has published extensively on the Stuart Monarchy, the Civil War and Oliver Cromwell.

In the historic setting of Hinchingsbrooke House, the event began with reception drinks and a 17<sup>th</sup> century game of 'Shovelboard' (an early version of shoveha'penny) on one of the long banqueting tables in the Inner Hall.



Students and staff were then invited into the Library of the House to listen to Dr Smith's lecture on 'The choosing of sides in the English Civil War' after which he kindly took questions and debated issues raised by the students. Following the lecture, historical debate and topical readings connecting Hinchingsbrooke's history with the English Civil War continued over dinner in the Chapter House Room.

The courses were punctuated by period music excellently performed by members of the History Department. Mrs Kate Tandy performed the royalist ballad, *'When the King enjoys his own again'* whilst Mr Fullard entertained the assembly with a rendition of the civil war inspired song by Billy Bragg, *'The World Turned Upside Down'*. The evening concluded with Ellen Thornton (Head Girl) proposing a vote of thanks to Dr Smith and with his presentation of a signed book on Oliver Cromwell to Lydia Bousfield who had defeated all challengers on the 'Shovelboard' table earlier in the evening.

*Tom Wheeley*

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## YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

Hinchingsbrooke School won 4 out of the 5 prizes at the Young Chef of the Year Competition.

Overall winner Felicity Berry who also won best main course and best dessert.

2nd Cameron Roberts

3rd St Peters

The students all did well and Cameron, in particular, showed a high level of skill.

Felicity went on to compete in the regional final at Hinchingsbrooke on 30 January. This final is attended by the best of the region including Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. Competition is fierce with very talented catering college students as well as year 10 and 11 students from schools.

Felicity did very well, producing and presenting a stunning 3 course meal for two, on a budget of £12, in 2 hours, but unfortunately missed out on the prizes.



*Anne Crabtree*

## WINNING ENTRY FOR POETRY COMPETITION

As promised in the last edition, we now have the results of the Year 8 Poetry Competition. Mr Nancekievill read many different poems submitted by students after they spent time considering either friendship or heroes and creating poems that reflected their thoughts. He visited every group to congratulate those students whose poems he had particularly enjoyed. Well done to all students who took part: the English department and Mr Nancekievill really enjoyed reading your poems!

Charlotte Gaskin:

A friendship is a journey that will always go on  
You must trust, respect your friend,  
Because a kind friend is hard to find,  
But some friendships you see don't go on,  
And the friendships you had might have gone...  
But some surprise you,  
Out of the blue,  
When people say they like you,  
Then you should like them too.

## INSIGHT MEETING

On Wednesday 20 January Hinchbrooke Insight hosted its Spring Term meeting, this term's topic being 'History and Geography – Discover how interesting these subjects can be!' We were pleased at the number of people who took us up on this offer and we were all treated to very interesting examples of current teaching from the History and Geography departments. The evening was both informative and relaxed and we have had very good feedback from the parents attending: 'very entertaining and informative' and 'very worthwhile attending' were amongst the comments.

If you would like to become involved in Insight our next planning meeting is Monday 22 March 2010 and our next open meeting is 'Extra Curriculum' on Tuesday 8 June 2010 – please contact Vicky Wastell on [vicky@wastell.co.uk](mailto:vicky@wastell.co.uk) or Steve Ellison, Deputy Head, on [sje@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:sje@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk) for further information.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) – AS ASKED BY PARENTS AND ANSWERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- 1 **My son received an after school detention recently. I asked the member of staff concerned with the incident if it would be possible if he could spread out the detention time over break times as I do not like him coming home late when it is dark. I was told this was not possible and wondered why.**

Andy Bennett, Head of Guidance said, "Detentions are a necessary and impactful sanction at Hinchbrooke School's disposal. If there are concerns by all means discuss with the relevant Head of Year, but please note, After School Detentions (ASD) are not negotiable. Shorter days and earlier darkness are not an acceptable reason for a student not to attend ASDs at Hinchbrooke School. It is necessary to provide parents with x 24 hours' notice, but if a student has been given an ASD it is the responsibility of parents to organise alternative and appropriate methods for that student to get home safely, just as it is necessary and sensible to have a contingency transport plan in place if an 'emergency' were to arise. If students behave poorly, or accrue lateness to form periods, assemblies and lessons it is likely an ASD will be given. Lack of compliance may well result in a higher level sanction being applied at our discretion. This may seem very harsh, but we find that students respond better to consistency in sanctions and are less likely to offend again."

- 2 **I receive the E-Cops email from the area Police and noticed that school students had been seen cycling at speed along Huntingdon High Street. Could you tell me please how you pass on this information to your cyclists?**

Andy Bennett, Head of Guidance said, "We have indeed received one or two concerns raised by members of the local community, with regard to the cycling safety of a small minority of our students. These concerns can be summed up as an apparent lack of concern for the safety and well being of others or themselves. Apart from the evident safety concern, this can lead to police involvement and potential fixed penalty fines. If your child cycles please discuss and re-iterate the need to be safe, lawful and considerate when cycling at all times, and certainly on the way to and from school. These issues have been raised in a series of assemblies given by the police. Use of appropriate cycle paths, safety head wear, cycle lights and high visibility clothing is advised. Look out as well for a safer cycling initiative we are working on with the specialism and extended schools staff. "

**If you have a question that you feel has not been answered, please contact the HSA (see details on front page). The school continues to collect both positive and negative feedback in order to continuously improve. If you have any feedback on how we can improve communication between parents and the school, or if you have a response to this newsletter, please contact Mrs Beddow at the school via the Head's PA ([headspa@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:headspa@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk)). This information is collated and monitored by the Governing Body's Ethos Committee.**