

# Let's Communicate

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



March 2012

## 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 the Communications Team at school by email [communications@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:communications@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk) and they will register you with Parentmail.

### UNIFORM SHOP/SECOND HAND SHOP

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

### TERM DATES

#### **Spring Term 2012**

Spring Term closes : 30 March

#### **Summer Term 2012**

Summer Term opens : 16 April

May Day Holiday : 7 May

Half Term : 4 – 8 June

*Staff Training Day : 6 July*

Summer Term closes : 20 July

*Collapsed Staff Training Day : 23 July*

#### **Autumn Term 2012**

*Staff Training Days : 3 & 4 September*

Autumn Term opens : 5 September (**Years 7 & 12**)

6 September (*all pupils*)

*Staff Training Day : 26 October*

Half Term : 26 Oct – 2 Nov (inclusive)

Autumn Term closes : 21 December

#### **Spring Term 2013**

*Staff Training Day : 7 January*

Spring Term opens : 8 January

Half Term : 11 – 15 February

Spring Term closes : 28 March

#### **Summer Term 2013**

Summer Term opens : 15 April

May Day Holiday : 6 May

Half Term : 27 – 31 May

*Staff Training Day : 5 July*

Summer Term closes : 23 July

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

## **MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Since I announced my retirement, I am being continually asked if, "I am counting down the days". The answer is, "no", because I do not want to wish away the final days of my career, but I am ticking off "lasts". Each "last" is a point for reflection. "Let's Communicate" itself was originally an initiative of our parents' association, the HSA. It has, I believe, served a useful purpose and I am grateful to the parents who started it. I am not instinctively an enthusiastic communicator, so the discipline of writing my termly letter has kept me mindful of the need to keep parents in touch with what is happening in school, even if the message has been less colourful than the one which sometimes comes home with our students!

I have never been short of things to write to you about in "Let's Communicate". There is, I believe, a great energy in Hinchingsbrooke which is expressed in a rich array of exceptional educational opportunities. It has been a singular privilege to spend my final years of headship with such a professional, committed and enthusiastic staff. Parents too have been very generous with their support and, at difficult times, patient and understanding. In all this our students' hopes and ambitions are our inspiration. Anyone who witnessed our production of "Les Miserables" will have seen a truly extraordinary expression of this and there are too many examples to list.

There have been two other themes in my letters, both with a 'change' theme. In my twenty-five years as a headteacher I have witnessed great social and political change as these changes affect schools. Schools have become more humane in their social and cultural sensitivities with greatly enhanced public accountabilities. However, we have not always moved easily with the times as our current struggle with adapting to life with internet social networking evidences. It has also been a time of intensive political intervention. There has been a large number of major education bills since 1986. Our conversion to academy status is a case in point. Whether all this attention has improved educational opportunity for young people I will leave to the historians.

So, in signing off, I would like to thank you all for the privilege of being Hinchingsbrooke's headteacher for the last nine years of my career. I cannot say that it has been an easy journey but it has, from my perspective, been hugely rewarding. I believe that I leave a better school than I inherited and that Hinchingsbrooke has coped well with many changes, not all of its own choosing. I wish you all well for the future.

Best wishes

**Keith Nancekievill ~ Headteacher**



## HUNTS SCHOOL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP AND THE NEW SCHOOL GAMES PROGRAMME

This academic year saw the introduction of a new government programme to increase children and young peoples' participation in competitive sport. The new School Games infrastructure funding replaces School Sports Partnerships. Fortunately, across Huntingdonshire 75% of primary schools have bought into a subscription service to maintain the Hunts School Sports Partnership alongside the new School Games infrastructure.

This has meant that we can continue to work with schools to maintain high quality PE and sport in schools and continue to offer a wide range of opportunities.

The School Games is an exciting new sport competition for school children and consists of four levels: Level 1 Intra-school, form groups and houses versus each other; Level 2 Inter-school, school versus school qualifying in a Partnership/District round and resulting in a representative to go through to the County Level 3 rounds.



*Hinchbrooke Students who performed the Haka at the Level 2 Tag Rugby Festival*

In Cambridgeshire the County Level 3 event will take place on the 10 July at the St Ives Leisure Centre, Pidley Golf Course, St Neots Table Tennis Club and Huntingdon Tennis Club.

The main event promises to be a cultural sporting event with young people actively supporting through music, dance, media reporting (filming, interviewing), officiating and leading activities. These opportunities support students to develop good organisation, communication and management skills, they also provide opportunities to undertake responsibility roles.

The Level 4 event is a National Multisport competition that will take place on the London 2012 Olympic Park on the 9 May.

This will be a high profile national event where the country's most talented school age athletes will compete.

We have secured 200 tickets to take students to the School Games this year on the Olympic Park and we will be working closely with staff across the school to allocate the places as a reward for students. Watch out for more news on this.

Alongside the wide range of competitions that Hinchbrooke students currently take part in, there will be three new competitions introduced this year: golf, indoor rowing and table tennis.

For more information about the Hunts School Sports Partnership or The School Games contact Sue Ager at [huntsssp@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:huntsssp@hinchbk.cambs.sch.uk) or go to [www.huntsssp.org](http://www.huntsssp.org)



### MOBILES PHONES

Please could you remind your son or daughter that if they are not well, they should report to the Medical Room where the School Nurse will take the appropriate action.

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in school at all. If they wish to talk to their parents, Keystage Assistants, Mrs Darbyshire or Miss Bray, will aid them with this.

## FORMULA 1 CHALLENGE

Question: How long could you talk about the size and position of a hole for?

It's not the most inspiring of questions - the sort of thing you might think a Maths teacher might ask their class to do on the last day of term? Well you'd be wrong.

The answer is an hour and a half! – That's the amount of time I spent discussing it with one of the design engineers in this year's Jaguar F1 Challenge team. This was no ordinary hole though. We were trying to work out how we could channel a stream of high pressure carbon dioxide from a large diameter opening through a small diameter opening to make our car go faster and still stay within the rules of the competition.

That really is what this competition is all about – real life engineering on a micro scale.

Last November, a group of students came together to compete in this International Competition, sponsored by Jaguar Cars.

The word "Challenge" understates what the team have had to do. It is in fact, a series of challenges. Yes, they have to design and make a model Formula One racing car but they also have to design and make a presentation stand; find sponsors to work with; develop a team identity around their sponsors and produce a twenty page folder which documents how they went about the project.



*Discussing the wheel design*



*Wheels being turned at our Sponsors*

To do this requires commitment and the team of Jake Elsegood; Laurence Hailstone; Josh Hutting; Joel Mahon; Anthony Owers and Ryan Perry certainly had that. Since the beginning of November they have given up most of their lunchtimes, met once a week after school and since Christmas, have worked on the project in the Design & Technology Department, all day Sunday.

Throughout, they have had to put up with Mr Dunkley, criticising and challenging them at every turn.

The team were sponsored by IMS Supplies, a small precision engineering company based in St Peter's Road. The support they have given the team has been wonderful.

Not satisfied with the standard wheels supplied by the sponsors, the team engineered their own and designed them to run on low friction, glass bearings. IMS manufactured the wheels on their CNC machinery out of a low friction plastic – anything to squeeze a bit more speed out of the car.

The balsawood car was designed on the schools Solid Works CAD system. Prototypes were produced and tested by firing them the length of the Sports Hall (which took about a second and a half). The best one was developed into the final design following research that took the team onto the NASA website to understand how they maximised thrust when sending rockets into space. The prototypes and final design were all produced on our CNC router, a computer operated machine that is capable of producing complex 3D shapes.

As with any manufacturing process the team encountered last minute problems. With a week to go, we were making our final car when the router "ate" it. The guys stayed late to make another.



*Discussing shirt design with our Sponsors*

Four days left to go and the primer coat of paint reacted with the coats underneath it to produce another "write off".

Another car was machined and with a massive team effort which finished at seven o'clock the evening before the competition, everything was finished – nothing like a bit of pressure.



On a snowy Friday morning the team travelled with Miss Woolhouse to Loughborough University to compete in the Midlands round of the competition and take on twenty other schools. The prize – a place in the National final. The car was raced along a twenty metre track and every element of the team's work marked. They were also "grilled" by Jaguar engineers to find out how well they, "knew their stuff".

Unfortunately, we came away empty handed but the team can be proud of their personal achievements.

The standard of their work was excellent and in the de-brief we held afterwards, all were in agreement that the winning team was probably just that bit better than we were. That sentiment really sums up the attitude of the guys.

Still, there's always next year. One last question – "About that hole....."

*R Dunkley : Head of Design & Technology*



*The stand and car*



*The team getting a grilling from a jaguar engineer*

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## **INTERMEDIATE MATHEMATICS CHALLENGE – 2 FEBRUARY 2011**

We had a record number of students once again attempting the Intermediate challenge this year with exactly 92 taking part with almost every gifted and talented mathematics student from Years 9 to 11.

By now the Year 11s, who for most, were attempting the challenge for the third time knew what to expect and how the questions could be asked, while as for the Year 9s, it was a step up from the junior challenges and one which they knew would test them on a level that they had never come across before.

The challenges as always tested every area of the maths curriculum and on a lot of the questions required the students to really think 'beyond the maths' and combine their maths knowledge with knowledge from other subjects, for example geography and physics.

The questions got progressively harder as the challenge went on and the last five were extremely challenging requiring students to really be on top of their game.

Seventeen students received gold certificates; seventeen students received silver and we had twenty-five students achieving a bronze certificate. This meant that well over half the students taking part qualified for an award which is an amazing achievement and one of our best performances ever.

Congratulations to the following students who have now qualified for the next round, essentially now a European Challenge:

*Matthew Crosby, Sadie Hodgson, Charlie Powlson, Ross Salisbury, Ryan Perry, Joanna Chen, Megan Gaughan, Robert Fielding, Ed Wilson and Mica Covell*

This is also one of the highest amounts of students that we have ever had to qualify for the second round of this challenge. WOW!

Congratulations to all those that took part, for their enthusiasm, dedication to mathematics and their impeccable behaviour.

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*Hinchingbrooke United, the student voice group, are reviewing the school's use of paper for their bid to achieve the silver flag from the eco-schools award body.*

*We have been mindful of this in our production of "Let's Communicate"; please will you also think about recycling the document if you choose to discard it.*

## SITE TEAM

In late June 2011 I had the pleasure of joining Hinchingsbrooke school's staff in a newly created post of Site and Services Manager. One of my first actions was to bring together the three functional areas of grounds maintenance, contract cleaning and the previous caretaker support under the banner of Site Team. Let me explain a little of what is happening in this group and what we collectively seek to provide.

Previously, four caretakers were available through the school day providing purely janitorial support. All but minor repair, maintenance and improvement work was reliant on external contractors and this necessarily led to repairs being carried out on failure maintenance often delayed until failure occurred and improvement often found to be unaffordable. Site Support element of Site Team now provides 24/7 presence throughout the year with team members available to carry out repair and maintenance work that avoids, as far as practicable, the much higher cost of using external contractors. This approach allows savings to undertake improvement work, again minimising use of the far more expensive option of external contractors.

As far as cleaning activity is concerned, we are undertaking an in-depth, top-down review of all aspects of how the school is presented for both teaching and local community users. A new management contract is being developed that is weighted towards the introduction of novel and innovative ways of enabling our very capable and dedicated cleaning staff to provide the standard of facility that they rightly take pride in. This management contract will also ensure that staff are provided with the opportunity to gain from training that expands their ability to offer school facilities to the highest standard possible.

Grounds maintenance staff are also expanding their role, taking-up responsibility for managing the magnificent trees across the site. This takes a great deal of work to achieve, and is being undertaken alongside other important developments to assist in delivering the already high standard of maintenance of sports facilities that are in use throughout the year.

Lastly then, why do I believe that all this is possible? I have recently completed a full 35 year career in the Royal Air Force, initially as an aircraft technician, then in the flying branch and latterly as a senior logistics officer supporting operations. In these roles I have delivered change in roles as diverse as improving contractor support to operational aircraft; supporting deployed air components; improving operational viability; achieving 'customer' support aspirations in moving men and materials to live theatres of operations; and the procurement and introduction to service of new aircraft.

These roles enable me to bring skills and experience from a wide and diverse range of responsibilities and activity, but that has many synergies with the constantly changing demands of day-to-day activity at Hinchingsbrooke School. At the same time, I very much appreciate the benefit of not needing to spend days, weeks and months away from home. I have so far very much enjoyed starting to use hard won skills and experience at what is a truly fantastic site, alongside professionally dedicated staff focused on allowing students to achieve, at each stage, the highest possible step on their learning journey. It is important to me that Site Team becomes a respected and integral part in the school's academic achievement and delivers improvements that contribute to the school's well deserved outstanding reputation.

*Mike Coward ~ Site & Services Manager*

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## INSIGHT EVENING – 31 JANUARY 2012

On a very cold January evening a large number of parents turned out to learn how to help their child with realistic revision techniques.

Each attendee could choose to attend two of the seven sessions. A wide range of techniques were offered from: How to revise maths and modern foreign languages, to using the internet, examiners reports, mind maps, visual techniques and helping Able, Gifted & Talented students.

Parents were put at ease and encouraged to participate.

The cookery club sold delicious home-made muffins along with tea and coffee, which were consumed with gusto.



For those who weren't able to attend, or wanted feedback from the other sessions, the resources have been placed on the school website under Home > Parents > HSA > Insight Evening January 2012 (<http://www.hinchingsbrookeschool.net/page/default.asp?pid=233>)

## LANGUAGE BEATZ

In February nearly thirty Year 8 students took part in the first stage of an exciting project. Language Beatz is a regional project where students write, compose and perform songs in a foreign language. The aim is to produce a song that would be useful to language learners and that can be used in lessons.

During the four periods students thought about their own language learning experience and discussed the types of songs that have helped them with their learning – the general consensus was that catchy (even annoying!!), simple and repetitive songs work the best and stick in students' memories for the longest time (years in some cases!).



After the theory, students set about writing their first verse and then finding an appropriate backing track so that they could develop a melody for their songs. Some students found that they needed to change their songs once they had found their backing track.

The next stage will take place before Easter where students will finish and record their songs. The songs will then be entered into the regional competition where students could win the opportunity to record it in a professional studio.

*'It was a fun way to learn more German and learn how to put German into a song.'* Holly Ellis and Shania Conway Y8

*'It was fun!'* Jake Bennett Y8

## FOUR Y7 STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPELLING BEE REGIONAL FINAL

In the last edition of "Let's Communicate", the tutor group winners of the Foreign Language Spelling Bee Competition were announced. Unfortunately, some of the tutor groups were missed off. Below is a list of all Year 7 tutor group winners who recently took part in the school competition to decide which four students would go forward to Stage 3 and represent Hinchingsbrooke at the regional finals just before Easter.

### 7M1 (Spanish)

Estelle Lluch  
Rodel Daquioag  
Naomi Makwana  
Sophie Stamford

### 7M2 (German)

James Price  
Alex Laycock  
Drei Loneza  
Grace Redwood

### 7M3 (German)

Eloise Merritt  
Charlotte Aikens  
Dan Crooks  
Jess Lumley

### 7C1 (Spanish)

Iman Jabar  
Tayyaba Attryde  
Ira Bornstein  
Matthew Kent

### 7C2 (German)

Ashley Balls  
Cameron Campbell  
Amelia Kennedy  
Caitlin McMillan

### 7V3 (French)

Eleanor Bissell  
Gemma Hartley  
Christina Coletti  
Chloe Graves

### 7P2 (German)

Mark Beckett  
Jay Clemmence  
Megan Lawrence  
Charlie Padgett

### 7V2 (French)

Jenny Bissell  
Harry Edwards  
Adam Steel

### 7V1 (German)

Sam Foulkes  
Tiri Jamieson-Hixon  
Brandon Simpson  
Annie Smith

### 7P1 (Spanish)

Charlotte Warren-Palmer  
J-Em Capito  
Charlie Leggett  
Joe Sullivan

All of the students were hugely impressive and it was clear that they had worked really hard to learn the 100 words.

After a very sharply-fought battle, and one nail-biting 'sudden-death spell-off', the following students were selected to represent the school at the regional final just before Easter:

Estelle Lluch 7M1  
Jenny Bissell 7V2  
Tiri Jamieson-Hixon 7V1  
Amelia Kennedy 7C2





## LANGUAGE ON FILM

Approximately sixty Year 9 students recently took part in the first of two Language on Film workshop days. The project joins language learning and film-making and links into a regional competition where students will have the opportunity to see their films on the big screen in Cambridge.

During this first workshop students learnt about the stages of professional film-making and watched some good and bad examples of finished films from previous years of the competition.

They then prepared and delivered a 'film pitch' to a Dragon's Den style panel who really put them through their paces and made them think about the feasibility of their films.

After the pitches the groups set about writing their scripts and producing a storyboard before practising their camera angles with a trial filming session.

All in all it was an excellent day and the quality of language and creative ideas was very impressive indeed.

After Easter the Year 9 participants will complete the second workshop day in the project where they will focus on filming and editing their movies ready for entry into the Language on Film Competition and the Cambridgeshire Young People's Film Festival both in summer.



## RUSSIA TRIP 2012

Russia was cold. Walking out into the chill wind for the first time in St Petersburg was breath taking in both a metaphorical and literal way. Our second day there was spent gingerly walking up the gangplank to stand on the deck of the battleship Aurora. Huddled against the wind, we could imagine ourselves back to October 1917 firing the blank that began the Revolution. Other highlights of the St Petersburg part of the tour included the Winter Palace which houses the Hermitage museum. As our guide Andre reminded us on a number of occasions, if you were to spend just two minutes looking at every exhibit, it would take you nine years to get around the whole thing. We didn't stay this long but had enough time to see the room in which Kerensky's Provisional government had been arrested by the Bolsheviks and to watch a golden peacock open its wings and a rather odd hen make a strange crowing sound to mark the hour.



Moscow is, in many ways an assault on the senses. Again cold, though only around -10, it snowed half heartedly throughout, though no amount of the white stuff can stop a Russian city as teams of men and machines battle constantly to keep the city going.

The nighttime tour included a stop at the lake which inspired Tchaikovsky to write "Swan Lake" and Red Square is beautiful at any time and indeed the word 'Red' is actually based on an English mishearing of the word for 'beautiful'; nothing to do with the political persuasion of Russia for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The tour of the Kremlin was another of the many highlights on this tour and the chance to see the throne which Ivan the Terrible sat was a particular treat.

In summation, Russia in 2012 was cold, strange and an experience like no other.

## OPTIONS EVENING

Over three hundred parents and students braved the weather and joined Hinchingsbrooke staff for the 2012 Options evening on 9 February.

The evening started with presentations by the Head and other senior staff in the PAC and then moved to Lower School for a series of subject workshops.

This year we are pleased to be able to offer a wider range of subjects and courses than ever before. If you also count the fact that students can now select the courses they will study in over one third of their learning time it is clear that the current Year 9 have greater opportunities than any year group before them.

Overall it was a very positive evening with students and parents alike leaving enthused and excited about the choices to come.

Many parents expressed regret that they couldn't redo their own secondary education. As one parent put it, "The Key Stage 4 curriculum you are offering is excellent and very inclusive – our daughter wants to do lots more than she is able to fit in!"

Good luck to Year 9 with their choices and KS4 studies.



Hinchingsbrooke School has made a successful bid to have our International Schools Award extended for another three years. To complete our application we will submit a portfolio of evidence for seven activities with an international flavour that have made an impact on lessons within our curriculum. The British Council, who make the award, were particularly impressed by details of our Eurovision Song Contest for Year 7 students and have assured us that our submitted plan is on track for securing the Full International Schools Award for 2010-13. Students from our Student Voice will be working together to gather evidence for our final portfolio of evidence



In recent years we have begun to use the secure online email services provided by [www.epals.com](http://www.epals.com) to exchange emails with students from all around the world. Some classes in Years 7 & 8 have shared messages, opinions and information with other students in Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Guadeloupe, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Kenya and Japan. As this project develops we hope to secure partner schools for Video Conference and the exchange of ideas and opinions across a range of subjects.

### SIERRA LEONE



Through the British Council, Hinchingsbrooke School has taken the first steps towards developing a Partnership link with a school in Sierra Leone. Year 9 students recently played host to a visiting teacher from Sierra Leone, making his first ever trip out of his home country. After an informative tour of the school we were able to agree aims and objectives for developing a school link exploring the Values of the Olympics and the Paralympics through the teaching of Sport and we were happy to pass on a small collection of letters from our Year 11 students to introduce our school to his. We have applied for funding for a reciprocal school visit this year and look forward to a long lasting Partnership. We have approached the Chief Executive Officer of the Craig Bellamy Foundation who has agreed to explore ways in which we can work together in developing this link. The Craig Bellamy Foundation works with aspiring professional footballers in Sierra Leone and has established a football league to encourage fair-play and a real commitment to stay in school – if you don't attend school, you don't play football. You can find out more by watching the ITV4 programme 'Craig Bellamy's African Dream' which is still available on ITV Player.



## “LES MISERABLES”

For three days before half-term Hinchingsbrooke School was buzzing with the joy of performance. “Les Miserables” at the Performing Arts Centre, directed by Tim Wickstead with musical direction by Liz Mummery, was astounding and students who had shown a passing interest in humming or foot tapping, developed into mature and talented actors and vocalists.

With sport as a specialism, the Academy knows the importance of performance as a test for young people; it is a hurdle, or a track which allows individual excellence and team celebration.



“Les Miserables” is a demanding piece, which requires an empathy with love; an understanding of the significance of death and an appreciation of resilience and strength.

Jamie O’Donnell’s Jean Valjean appealed to the audience to appreciate the twists and turns of human fate and the perseverance of people guided by love and passion.

The revolutionary student, Enjolras, played by Angus Knight, showed us a new character, different to the famed productions; here was a young intellectual, calling Paris to arms and then tragically realising, “Oh dear the people are not going to join us; we are vastly outnumbered and we are going to die.”

Peter Bottley’s Javert was truly menacing, whereas Lottie May’s Fantine was girlishly adoring. Bronte Beckett and Dominic Sibanda played the crude and disgusting Thenardiers with relish. By the time Valjean sang, “Bring him Home,” there was not a dry eye in the house and Cosette, played by Laura Hobbs, sang better than many professionals. Marius and Eponine, played by Jack Galbraith Edge and Abi Guest respectively, performed her death scene with touching sensitivity.

The voices soared; the emotions broke upon a shore of youthful professionalism and the audience gazed spellbound by the waves of talented youth rolling forward across the barricades of Paris.

The synergy of lighting, costume, sound and set paid homage to the raw talent of the young people. Compliments flew in day by day – “I enjoyed this so much more than the West End production...the best six pounds I have ever spent...we sang all the way home.” Sincere congratulations should go to the cast, crew, musicians and staff who made such a magical event possible.



## Y8 PREFERENCES

Secondary school is a time for making choices, some of which can have long lasting effects and others that are relevant for only a short period. Year 8 have started this journey over the last few weeks as part of the Preferences process. On Thursday 23 February, two hundred parents and students joined Hinchingsbrooke staff for the preferences evening in the PAC.

There cannot be many secondary skills that offer their students the choices we are able to do: from chess and games to architecture, from ancient history to modern music. There is something on offer to please everyone and judging by the reaction of parents and students alike it is something we are getting very right indeed. This year we are pleased to offer a wider range of courses than ever before. Year 8 are now over half way through Key Stage 3 and have the new found opportunities of preferences yet to come.

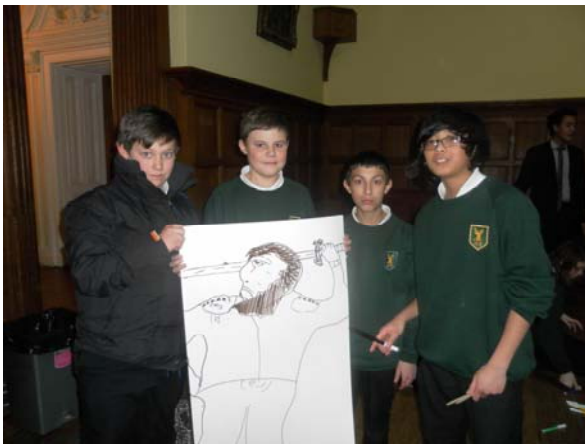
It seems that 2012 is an exciting time to be part of Hinchingsbrooke. Good luck year 8.

## CROMWELL DAY : 10 FEBRUARY 2012

The History Department held their annual 'Cromwell Day' on Friday 10 February, which proved to be one of the most successful days of recent years thanks to the excellent participation of all the Year 8 students. As a department we really were impressed with the contributions and behaviour of the students.

'Cromwell Day' is an opportunity for the Year 8 students to experience history lessons in the perfect setting of Hinchbrooke House, which of course provides the ideal backdrop for the students' work on Oliver Cromwell and the English Civil War.

Throughout the day the students moved between the elegant rooms of the house, taking part in different workshops, all with a focus on the way Oliver Cromwell has been interpreted by history. Students explored the idea that Cromwell can be a figure who embodies many characteristics; heroic, tyrannical, religious; with historical opinion depending upon which aspects of his life and career the historian wishes to emphasise!



Therefore as well as being a great day to get to know Cromwell a little more, the workshops also allowed students to explore the larger ideas of who creates history and how do we choose which evidence we should rely upon to construct our own opinions. The Year 8 students had suddenly become mini historical philosophers in one day, joining the likes of Karl Marx and Eric Hobsbawm.

It was a real pleasure to see some of our AGT Year 8 students and Year 13 A Level students rise to the challenge of discussing Cromwell's protectorate with Dr David Smith from Selywn College, University of Cambridge.

Without exception, every student who met with Dr Smith was enthralled with his knowledge on the subject, with the A Level students leaving with their hands clutching the ultimate revision notes for their exam in the summer.

Overall we had a fantastic day with Cromwell, making the most of our setting!

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## OXBRIDGE

Four Hinchbrooke Sixth Form students have been offered places at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for September 2012.

They are (from left to right) Andrew Bunting, Exeter College, Oxford, to read Physics. Rachel Crosby, Newnham College, Cambridge, to read Natural Sciences. Alexander Murray, Selwyn College, Cambridge to read Mathematics, and Alastair Hannah, Magdalene College, Cambridge to read History.

Mr John Norris, the Head of Sixth Form said, "I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and commitment shown by these four gifted students, and also to members of our teaching staff and ex students currently attending Oxbridge colleges, who have acted as mentors during the course of the year. We aspire to steadily increase the numbers of successful candidates from Hinchbrooke over the next few years."







## RE DEPARTMENT TOUR OF ROME 2012

The RE department trip to Rome has gone from strength to strength.

This year saw the trip grow in both terms of numbers and time spent abroad, this year with a five day extravaganza.

The strength of the trip seems to dwell in its ability to appeal to such a wide range of students and disciplines.

The group numbered psychologists, sociologists, historians, scientists, language speakers, artists, literature students as well as RE and philosophy students.



This wealth of interest and disciplines meant that the role of religion, whether in the ancient or modern world, came under intense scrutiny from the students.

Under the onslaught of the unusually cold conditions for Rome, students engaged with concepts on the role of religion throughout history, the nature and existence of God and the role of art as an expression of both faith and power. It is to their credit that the students brought such an open and inquisitive mind with them.

The grand tour of Rome took in the iconic site, from the Colosseum, to the Vatican and St Peter's Basilica.

However this year we also visited the Borghese Gallery which showed the students sculptural work by the same architect who redesigned much of Baroque Rome, Bernini.

Alongside this the students took in the stunning artwork of Caravaggio, whose artistic endeavours became, and still are, the prized jewels in any art collection.

Again students proved to be exceptional in their inquisitive approach to the clash between the Greco-Roman mythology and the Christian message which supplanted it.

The trip certainly encouraged students to consider how one might exert power and influence through clever use of imagery!

Many thanks are due to the students for an exceptional trip, along with Miss Parker, Ms Hodgson and Mr Wheelley for their continued support.



Watch this space next year to find out about the success of the RE Department trip to Venice to explore the clash between Byzantine, Catholic and Islamic art and theology.

*Paddy Winter*



## AN UPDATE FROM THE HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HSA)

The first event of the new year for the HSA was an Insight evening on Tuesday 31 January 2012. For many parents and carers, it has been a while since they had to revise for GCSEs and the event was an opportunity to find out how things have changed since they were at school. The objective was to show parents and carers how to help advise, direct or support their children in the run up to their exams or tests so they can prepare effectively. Teaching staff ran six workshops covering a range of topics, including using on-line revision sites, creating a better working environment and using examiners' reports as study aids. Parents were able to choose three of the subjects and interact with the subject matter experts. The event was very successful with 87 parents and carers attending. Feedback from all was extremely positive with many wanting to pass on their thanks to the teachers and the school. In addition, thanks to Richard Burton with Vicki Horlock who organised the whole event, the most successful in recent years.

The next HSA Insight meeting is scheduled for Thursday 14 June when there will be the opportunity to find out more about the huge number of extra-curricular activities on offer to Hinchingsbrooke students. So if your children have a particular interest or you just want to see if there is an activity they may find interesting then look out for the adverts in "Let's Communicate".

The next social event is a family quiz night which will be held in the PAC on 23 March at 6.30 pm. There will be family orientated questions which, if my experience is anything to go by, your children are more likely to know the answers than you do.

One of the tasks for the Committee prior to the event is to find prizes both for the winners and the raffle, so if any parent reading this article has an unwanted Christmas present and would be happy to donate it to the HSA, please contact me on the number below and I will arrange collection. The night promises to be excellent for the whole family so please look out for the adverts.



For those who like more formal evenings, the annual HSA Ball is scheduled for Friday 11 May 2012. This is a chance to wear formal evening dress, chat, eat, drink and dance the night away in the historic ball room of Hinchingsbrooke House. Last year's ball was so popular we had to set up an extra dining room so look out for the adverts and snap up the tickets while they are available. It's a unique experience and excellent value.

In July 2012 the HSA plans to organise a Celebrity Cricket Match with a BBQ and possibly retail stands; the day will be a great day out. There will be more information to follow, so please watch Parent Mail and "Let's Communicate" for details.

*Steve Connor : HSA Chair (01480 414678)*

