



TUNBRIDGE WELLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Mr J G Harrison, B. Ed. (Hons) **Headteacher**

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

15th February 2008

END OF TERM 3 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our term 3 newsletter. As ever staff and students are very busy. In Year 9 students are making option choices and thinking ahead to their National Curriculum tests in May. In Year 11 students are, I trust, preparing for the final push towards GCSE exams in term 5 and students in the Sixth Form have just finished modular papers and have now turned their attention to their summer examinations. Boys in Years 7 and 8 are not forgotten – a number have been working hard in their rehearsals for our production of *Godspell* (see review later in this letter) and Year 10 have completed their first GCSE Maths paper.

I would like to draw your attention to the term dates for 2008 to 2009. These are available on our website as a downloadable file but are reproduced here for your convenience.

Term 1	01.09.08 to 24.10.08
Term 2	03.11.08 to 19.12.08
Term 3	05.01.09 to 13.02.09
Term 4	23.02.09 to 03.04.09
Term 5	20.04.09 to 22.05.09
Term 6	01.06.09 to 20.07.09

The first day of term for the 2009 to 2010 academic year for staff is likely to be Tuesday 1st September.

Please note the days do not set out the 5 school closure days for staff development purposes. As soon as these are finalised I will adjust the document on the website to show them.

At this early stage you would be safe in assuming that Monday 1st September 2008 will be a staff only day and Monday 20th July 2009 will be a school closure day. I see no educational value in having boys in school for the last day of the summer term when that day is a Monday. By making that one of our 5 closure days it will also allow families wishing to get away on Saturday 18th July for holidays to do so without having to miss any school days. As promised above, as soon as we have set the other 3 closure days, we will let you know.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Yours sincerely

J G Harrison
Headteacher

ATTENDANCE

Recent visitors to the School will have seen the new attendance display on the balcony area.



Each week the highest attending tutor groups in each key stage receive certificates to acknowledge their achievement and all tutor groups are awarded points for their position in the year group league table. These points also transfer (in Years 7 to 10) onto a house league table. At the end of term 2 the year leaders were:

Year 7	7D	Merlins
Year 8	8B	Ospreys
Year 9	9B	Ospreys
Year 10	10C	Hawks
Year 11	11M	
Year 12	12N	
Year 13	13S	

In the house competition Ospreys were leading the way.

The term 3 figures are on display and change on a weekly basis – at the time of writing Eagles are in first place.

The attendance cup is supposed to be a fun way to engage students and allow us to focus on attendance. There is, however, a serious message here. All boys should be aiming for 100% attendance. Hundreds of our boys achieve that target. In an analysis of some Year 11 attendance and mock examination results two facts stood out for me.

Every boy with attendance above 95% had at least 8 good GCSE passes in his mock examinations.

None of the boys with attendance below 95% had more than 7.

Of course there will always be reasons why sometimes boys cannot attend and illness is a factor. I would, however, respectfully ask that parents/carers do not take boys out of school during term time when it is avoidable. Cheaper or more convenient flights are not a good enough reason.

“Education is like the lottery – you’ve got to be in it to win it!”

John Harrison

Reminder

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL 2008 – SCHOOL CLOSED TO STUDENTS (letter sent on 16th October 2007)

In September 2008 a number of new curriculum ideas are to be implemented. These follow a Government review of the National Curriculum and new Advanced Level Specifications.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has confirmed that schools should replace a teaching day with an additional curriculum planning day. For this reason we will be closed, for students, on Friday 4th April.

John Harrison

HOW HUMANITIES STATUS IS CHANGING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT TWGSB

Our Humanities status is beginning to have an effect throughout the School. Here are some of the developments:

More Variety in the Curriculum

- History and Geography will have 8% of the available timetable in KS3. This reflects the central importance that is being given to Humanities subjects within the School.

- New subjects will become available for boys to study. The following additional subjects have been agreed: GCSE Media Studies (September 2009), AS, A2 and GCSE Geology. Other possible subjects for the future are Classical Civilisation from the History Department and Environmental Science from Geography.

Better Use of ICT to Help Teaching and Learning

- There is huge competition from all departments to book the 4 computer suites that we already have. We want computers to be an everyday tool to help your children learn effectively. The ASUS PC701 minibook is a new product which has all the power and software that we need and which costs under £250. This will allow us to buy 100 laptops immediately, to improve ICT use in History, English and Geography. We are waiting for the larger screen version to become available.
- All Humanities teaching rooms will be fully equipped with Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) by the end of this year. This technology is much more fun and effective for teachers and learners. In essence the IWB is a whiteboard sized, touch-sensitive computer screen. New IWBs encourage teachers to rethink their lessons and make greater use of film clips, animations and interactivity.
- The heart of the proposed ICT development is the 'Learning Platform'. This sophisticated system has at least three parts: A VLE, A Communications module and an Information Management system.

What is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)?

This software allows departments to put all the necessary parts of a teaching course on line. Pupils who are reading Romeo and Juliet will be able to access support material, pod-casts, tests, exemplar materials, video clips and other useful things which have been placed online by their class teachers specifically to support the learning of pupils in this School.

What will the Communications Module do?

This will allow shared access between parents, pupils and teachers of the material on the VLE and any other information that the School wishes to share. It will strengthen the essential relationship between Parents, Teachers and Students and allow you to follow your child's progression through all his subjects at the click of a mouse.

What is Information Management?

We currently use SIMS to manage the huge amount of information about individual pupils and their academic performance. The Learning Platform will integrate SIMS and the VLE, creating a powerful tool that will help us to personalise the learning of all pupils because we will be able to gather all the relevant information together easily so that we can make better judgements about the needs of pupils and keep parents more closely involved in their child's progression through the School.

More Collaboration Between Subjects

- Many subjects have common elements and working together across the traditional divides can only strengthen teaching and learning. The new National Curriculum documents in History, Geography, English and RE have large areas of common interest and Heads of Departments are currently working together to ensure subjects support each other in developing vital concepts, skills and attributes.
- TWGSB is currently working towards 'Healthy Schools' status and is conducting a 'Sustainable School' audit. While both of these projects are embedded in the Humanities, they also cut across many other subjects. The sustainable school project falls naturally into Geography and is also a 'real world' project in that it requires us to calculate the carbon footprint of the School and analyse it per pupil. The challenge of reducing that footprint for each pupil has implications for the whole School. The key to success is pupil involvement.

Better Assessment for Better Learning

- Traditional assessment is a mixture of objective test results and professional judgement. There have always been differences between subjects like Maths, where testing can clearly demonstrate whether a student understands basic, intermediary or complex trigonometry, and subjects like English where the progress can depend on emotional development or broader experiences.

- In cross-curricular projects the challenge is to come up with assessments which can highlight pupil progress in different subject areas. Students must feel confident that their efforts are being properly assessed and rewarded. Teachers must also feel that collaborative and group work can be assessed effectively.

A Richer, More Exciting Curriculum

- Anyone who reads the school magazine 'Eclectics' will be aware of the extraordinary range of opportunities that are available both as part of the school curriculum and as an extra-curricular activity. Our Humanities status allows us to develop a richer experience for all pupils as part of their life in school.
- At a pupil level, there is the concept of 'co-construction' of the curriculum. This is common at university where a tutor and a student discuss a direction for research, or the focus and scope of a project. In the past, such negotiation would only happen at University level. Current thinking is moving towards developing the necessary skills (or giving the necessary freedom) in secondary aged pupils.
- The Learning Platform will facilitate an enriched curriculum. There are a whole range of digital developments, blogs, wikis, podcasts, online journals, academic chatrooms, animations, etc. which will allow students to work in a way, often collaborating to learn more effectively. Imagine a child sitting at home struggling with a piece of work. At best he can ask his parents or ring his friends and ask for help. The VLE will allow a much wider range of contact – perhaps a Sixth Form Maths student can give online help with a difficult problem to a Year 8 pupil.

*J A Coen
Deputy Headteacher*

SITE UPDATE

Advanced notice: At Easter some ground work will be done to prepare for the new building arriving in the summer. The building will be placed where the picnic area currently is. In this building on ground level will be a dining room that can be used at break and lunch (like the picnic area) but also for assemblies, examination space and a Sixth Form study space; a flexible learning area (unlike the picnic area). On the first floor it is planned to have 2 Science laboratories (to answer a basic need of ours) and a Food Technology room (to answer a future need).

A number of works are planned for the summer holidays, but they are not, as yet, finalised. I will pass on details in a later newsletter.

Heat reflective safety film will be applied to our south facing windows and normal safety film is being applied to all windows in the older parts of the building. This work will start during the February break.

The Site Development Team will meet for their first meeting in term 4. I look forward to sharing their work with you in the terms ahead.

John Harrison

NEWS FROM THE MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

Congratulations to Joseph Stevens (7E) who was our successful entrant for the Autumn Term **Maths in Kent Competition**.

Well done to George Coulon (13S) who achieved a "distinction" and Bronze Medal in the **UK Maths Olympiad**. He came 43rd and is through to the Final Round, from which the UK Squad for the World Championships in Spain will be selected.

The 2007 **National Cipher Challenge** has concluded and, for the second year, some of our teams held top positions until being defeated by the Final Round. Nevertheless, two of our teams came first and third out of the Kent entries. Well done to team members: Craig Barton, George Coulon, Seb Eade, Dan Golding and Joe Williams (all Year 13).

Nearly 120 students from Year 11 Top Sets recently took part in the **UK Intermediate Mathematics Challenge**. The results should be available shortly.

Our **KS3 UK Maths Team Challenge** "squad" has been training for their regional heat on 19th March. The team of four will be selected shortly.

After ten races in our **TWGSB Grand Prix** season, Manav Mehta heads the Driver's Championship with 71 points and four wins, with Liam Morris in second on 45 points and three wins. You may recall that these two teamed up to win the recent national Jaguar Cars Christmas Grand Prix. So far, twenty-five boys in Year 9 have scored points in our Championship. Races take place most Friday lunchtimes, with the boys setting up cars, calculating pit-stop strategies and conducting practice laps during the week.

Year 12 Further Mathematicians recently attended a lecture given by Richard Lissaman from Coventry University on the uses of mathematics in internet search engines and video games.

Most **Year 11** students will be taking their next **GCSE Module** on 11th March. It is important to continue the revision process at home during the Work Experience and holiday weeks.

*G Young
Head of Mathematics*

COMMUNITY PROJECT

Below is an item about a community project that two of the School's students have been involved in (Charlie Conn and Ed Davies, both in Year 9).

They are working with Sevenoaks District Council to develop a skate park in Sevenoaks. For some years the young people of Sevenoaks have been lobbying for the construction of a facility where they can enjoy wheeled sports such as skate boarding, rollerblading and BMX biking in safety.

The boys' involvement began when Charlie wrote to the Council on this point. The Council replied confirming that they were in the process of designing a skate park to be built in the town and inviting Charlie and any interested friends to get involved. As a result, Ed and Charlie have been working with Sophie Lord, the District Council's Youth Development Officer, since mid October to decide what facilities should be provided and of what materials they should be constructed. This involves working in partnership with the Town Council, which is leading the overall project.

So far the boys have attended three Council Meetings and been part of a trip to visit a number of skate parks in Surrey with Sophie, the owner of Skaterham, an indoor skate park in Caterham, and a number of Town Councillors. This trip took place on Saturday 5th January. They also wrote a letter, which was published in the Sevenoaks Chronicle before Christmas, to raise awareness of the project and to encourage other young people in the town to become involved at the planning stage.

The project is providing the boys with practical experience of the issues surrounding the provision of a community facility, as well as direct experience of the workings of local politics like how the Town and District Councils work together to achieve their common aims. They are learning about how the funding for the project works (for example, the Lottery funding available cannot be used for any other project but must be used by a tight deadline). *[They have my sympathies here - sounds like a lot of educational funding! - JGH]*

The boys have committed wholeheartedly to the project and are enjoying sharing responsibility for bringing the project to a successful conclusion.

Charlie and Ed would be very happy to discuss the project with anyone interested.

NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The School is working towards achieving Healthy School Status. As part of this process, we want to consult parents for their views on how to deliver Sex and Relationship Education as effectively as possible. SRE already forms part of the PSHE Education programme of study. We now wish to take this forward and develop the programme to ensure that we can deliver the best possible education for our students.

If you would like to contribute your views on this matter, please write to Geraldine Green, setting out your relevant background. This will enable us to select a balanced panel.

*N G Green
Head of PSHE/Citizenship*

SCHOOL CHALLENGE

"It's fingers on your buzzers and this is your starter for ten." - and with this the School team consisting of Callum Funnell (12M), Stuart Hollins (12H), Jack Bennett (10B) and Matthew Bouette (10D) started the first round of a general knowledge competition run along the lines of University Challenge.

This was the first time that the School had accepted an invitation to take part in the competition which seemed to be contested primarily by other grammar schools and independent schools in Kent.

In the first round on Thursday 22nd November 2007 we were drawn against the favourites, and hosts, the King's School Rochester, who turned out to be a formidable team with an outstanding pupil who would not have not been out of place captaining a team in the university version of the competition.

After the first round defeat we were entered into the Plate Competition where we made our way into the semi-final on 31st January, 2008, which was held at St Edmund's School, Canterbury, where we came up against Dover College. Unfortunately we didn't make it to the final and our efforts ended with the students shaking their opponents' hands and wishing them good luck for the final.

The team seemed to have enjoyed the experience and on the way home in the car the conversation was about the excellent quality of Rochester's tea along with the composition of next year's team and the devising of strategies to ensure that we go even further –the next time!

*W M Kern
Assistant Headteacher*

VISIT BY A FASHION DESIGN STUDENT

During the afternoon of Friday 1st February, Louise Bush, a Fashion Design student from the University College for the Creative Arts, visited the School. Louise is in her third year studying a degree in Fashion Innovation and Management.



Pictured here, Louise spent the day talking to students from Years 11, 12 and 13 about preparing their portfolios for university and the opportunities available in taking a degree in Fashion Design. Louise showed the students a selection of work from her portfolio including sketchbooks, design sheets and garments.

*A-M Bush
Art Department*

A DAY OF CULTURE, INSPIRATION AND EDUCATION IN LONDON



On a cold Saturday in January some A-Level Art students met Mrs Buttery and Miss Bush at the Tate Modern Gallery for a day of culture, inspiration and education. Although some students were 'fashionably late' there was plenty of time to see the Louise Bourgeois exhibition and the big spider, Ghosts and the Supernatural at the Photographers' Gallery in Covent Garden and to have an obscenely large pizza! By the evening only the staff returned exhausted; the students carried on till dawn. No doubt drawing from London life!

*J Buttery
Head of Art and Design*

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Year 10 Science Trial Examinations take place on 14th March (Physics 1A) and 18th March (Chemistry 1A and 1B and Biology 1A and 1B). These are practice for the GCSE Unit 1 papers to be taken in June, so revision should be taken seriously. The Unit 1 exams constitute 25% of the overall GCSE in each Science. Each paper is a 30 minute multiple choice paper.

Boys have been issued with relevant revision guides, but parents may also like to guide their sons to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>, and <http://www.bustertests.co.uk/tests/gcse/> (for Physics and Chemistry at present).

These sites will also be useful to Year 11 boys starting to prepare for their remaining Science Unit tests in June.

*D Seabrook
Acting Head of Science*

NEWS FROM THE PE DEPARTMENT

Another very busy term of extra-curricular activities draws to a close and the School has had a notable amount of successes during this period.

Football

Congratulations to the U14 Football squad who defeated Glyn School 1-0 in the last round of the National Cup. They have now reached the last 32 of England and are playing away against Steyning Grammar School in the next round on Wednesday 13th February. They are now our only representative school side still in cup competitions, and we wish them luck in their next game.

Despite good performances in all his trials, Nicholas Rich of Year 13 was not selected for the final U18 England squad. However, Nick is still confident of gaining a football scholarship at Eckerd College in the USA, a prestigious football academy.

The 2nd X1 squad finished second in the East Kent League, and were narrowly defeated 2-1 by Dover Grammar in the Kent Cup quarter final in December.

Overall it has been a very successful football season with the Senior 1st X1 winning back to back league titles and the U14 and U15 teams progressing well in the National Cup.

Rugby

Good performances against strong opposition in Ravenswood and Maidstone Grammar School were achieved by Years 7 to 10. However, our Year 8 rugby squad are currently our most successful side, defeating both Ravenswood and Maidstone Grammar School. Our Year 7 team finished second in a recent Emerging Schools Festival at Tonbridge Juddians RFC. The Year 9 team also finished in second place and qualified for the next stage of the Emerging Schools Festival.

Basketball

Our Year 8 and 10 Squads are currently playing in the West Kent League and both have played good standard basketball. The U15 team had easy wins over Beacon and Bennett, and our U13 squad beat Bennett, Tunbridge Wells High and lost narrowly to Beacon in an excellent game. Both teams should reach the play-offs which will occur in March.

Basketball practices for Year 8 are Monday evenings and Year 10 practice on a Tuesday lunch-time. All our practices are open to anyone.

Swimming

Many thanks to all the swimmers who represented the School in the recent Kent Schools' Swimming Championships. Notable performances were achieved by Angus Wyatt (Year 9) who finished 1st in the 100m Breaststroke, Léandre Stevens (Year 9) who finished 5th in the 100m Butterfly and Elliot Neale (Year 11) who was placed 6th in the final of the 100m Freestyle. As a result of his win Angus Wyatt has been invited to swim for Kent Schools against Surrey in March.

A huge thank you to Mrs Neale and Mr Stevens, who acted as team managers for the event, which took place over two Saturdays in January.

Badminton

Congratulations to the U14 Badminton squad who came second in the Regional Sports Partnership Competition and were narrowly beaten by Judd in the final.

Inter-House Competitions

The School held its first Inter-House Hockey tournament for Year 8 in January and the event was a great success. The winners were Merlins (8D). On Saturday 9th February it was the Year 9 competition - with Eagles (9E) the victors - and the Year 7 tournament will be organised for next year.

The Year 10 Inter-House Basketball competitions are now in full swing and Merlins (10D) and Hawks (10C) are the early pace setters in the league format.

*K Downing
Head of Physical Education*

GODSPELL 2008

After months of punishing rehearsal schedules, panic and pizza, the performances were finally upon us. Lines had been learnt, music transposed, costumes bought, staging acquired, lighting and sound set up... all that remained was for us to summon up the energy to actually get out there and pull it off!

Godspell is a fantastic show comprising great music, comedy, action and big messages for modern society – but without energy and commitment from cast, band, crew and directors, the whole thing can fall horribly flat. Like true professionals, however, every single member of the team contributed 100% and the resulting performances had audiences laughing, crying, clapping and singing along. Many members of the audience complimented the cast on their ability to maintain the energy levels, communicate with the audience and move seamlessly from scene to scene – all challenging aspects of putting on a show in a school environment. Also mentioned were the band, who some said were so good, that you didn't even notice they

were there! As the government are currently introducing the idea that pupils should have five hours of cultural activity in school per week, I think we can say that through Godspell, with pupils involved from Year 7 through to Year 13, we are a school that is more than capable of accomplishing this!

Some cast and band members deserve a special mention – Ben Luxon (Jesus) played his role with sincerity, warmth and humility, leaving the audience and other cast members feeling suitably bereft during the powerful crucifixion; Tom Meek (John the Baptist/Judas) effectively portrayed the important relationship created with Christ and the ensuing struggle that emerged with his loyalty; Edward Preston Bell, who in Year 7 was the youngest of the disciples, gave a performance full of zest and playfulness that became contagious and affected the whole cast; and Oliver Etherington from Year 8 brilliantly performed the entire piano score for the whole show.

All that remains now is to make a decision as to whether we have the energy to take this highly successful show on tour, abroad...

*R Lovera
English Department*



MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL OFFICE

Most of you are now registered with ParentMail. The Company has recently added a new feature to its software whereby they automatically ask for any changes to parent mobile/e-mail data directly from you. These registered detail changes are then e-mailed to School. Occasionally mobile numbers are different to those we have on our School pupil database and we are updating our records. Please remember to advise us at School if you change your numbers/e-mails as well as letting ParentMail know.

STOP PRESS!! YEAR 9 FOOTBALL - TWGSB U14 v STEYNING

Congratulations to the U14 TWGSB football team who are through to the last 16 in the National Cup Competition following a 2–0 win over Steyning Grammar School. After a goalless first half, TWGSB started positively, pressurising the Steyning midfield. The deadlock was broken after 50 minutes when Liam Kingsmill skilfully beat three players on the edge of the penalty area, then slipped the ball through to captain Mushed Miah, who finished well. Steyning then pushed forward looking for an equaliser, but the TWGSB defence lead by Liam Mahon and Adam Staveley held firm. The victory was assured 10 minutes from time by Callum Bennett scoring from close range. TWGSB will play John Hampden Grammar School from High Wycombe in the next round.

*P G Douse
P E Department*