



# HEADLINES

November/December 2007



**LIMAVADY GRAMMAR SCHOOL'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT**  
Will be held in the Assembly Hall on Thursday 20 December 2007 at 7.30 pm  
Retiring Voluntary Collection in aid of British Heart Foundation  
All Parents and Friends are Most Welcome

## Mathematical Challenge

A number of our A-level Mathematics students recently took part in the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge. Over 1,900 schools with 87,000 entries were involved in a competition which encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve non-standard problems.

The school had 1 Gold, 3 Silver and 8 Bronze certificates with E. Mitchell achieving the Best in School award.



## Charity News

### *Operation Christmas Child*

The charity committee would like to thank everyone who helped us to send 150 filled shoe boxes to this year's appeal. Each box will make a difference this Christmas for an underprivileged child.

### *Christmas Hampers*

Every year we send approximately 25 Christmas hampers to the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul annual Christmas appeal. These are distributed to less fortunate families in the area. We are asking each child to contribute £1 or a suitable item of food to this worthy cause before Monday 17th December.

### *Bangladesh Appeal*

Thanks to your generosity we were able to send £300 to help those affected by the recent disaster in this region.

### *Concern Fast*

Some of the 50 pupils who fasted for Concern on Friday 30 November. We would really appreciate it if all outstanding sponsor money could be with Mrs Mills before the end of term

### *Meningitis Research Foundation*

Do you have any old mobile phones lying around the house? Only 25 re-useable mobile phones recycled will help the Meningitis Research Foundation raise £150. If you wish to donate your old phone to this cause please bring it to Mrs Mills by Friday 11 January 2008.

School breaks up for Christmas on Friday 21 December at 12.30 pm  
and reopens at 9.00 am on Monday 7 January 2008.

We wish all parents and pupils a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

## Tuttlingen Exchange 2007/2008



At the end of October we welcomed a group of 19 German students and their teachers to Limavady. They were hosted in families and thoroughly enjoyed the local hospitality.

During their stay they visited W5 and Belfast city centre as well as the Tower Museum in Londonderry.

I would really like to thank all the families who hosted a German student and helped to make their stay so enjoyable. We are now looking forward to our return visit in June.

## French Debaters Meet Their Waterloo (but go down fighting!!)



Alas, our dreams of a third successive debating title have come to an end as our French debaters lost to Lumen Christi in the quarter-finals of this year's competition. Having to speak against the motion "*L'accès facile aux drogues menace l'avenir de notre société*" (easy access to drugs is threatening the future of our society) proved too hard a task, but our team gave it their very best effort and participated in a lively debate against very strong opposition. Our captain, J. French, was nominated equal best speaker and there was also a plucky performance from L. McNeill (Year 13), who was called into the team at the last minute.

I would like to thank all the members of this year's squad for their efforts this term. Participation in this competition requires a considerable amount of time and hard work for the pupils concerned, not to mention the courage to stand up and participate in a debate in front of an audience in a foreign language. Although we didn't win, we had a lot of fun (in a jelly-legged, stomach-churning kind of way) and well done to you all.

## Senior Law Team

On Saturday 17 November a group of Years 13 and 14 students travelled to the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast to compete in the Bar Mock Trials organised by the Citizenship Foundation. Limavady Grammar School, competing for the first time, was one of twelve schools in the competition. It was a great experience for all the students and we were very pleased to beat Methodist College in round 1 and Grosvenor Grammar in round 2 but unfortunately lost to Lumen Christi College in round 3. Lumen Christi College however, who won last year, took the honours and will go on to represent Northern Ireland in the National Finals.

The team consisted of: Leigh Ferris, Aaron Grieve, Laura Kearney, Liam McNulty, Claire Annesley, Kirsty Holmes, Siobhain Corr, Amy Hung, Amy Ramsey, Barry Gilloway, Sarah Frielander, Josie French, Andrew Devlin and Gillian Young.

Gillian Young, 6L acted as the team's Press Officer and was awarded a prize for her press portfolio. This competition was judged by journalists from the Belfast Telegraph and Gillian's entry was highly praised. Congratulations to Gillian and all the team for their hard work - they were all highly commended by the High Court Judges, barristers and representatives from the Citizenship Foundation.

We would all like to thank Eoghan, Joe and Dean for helping us to prepare for the competition.

## Rugby Report

This has been a busy term for rugby with the school fielding up to 7 teams on Saturdays. Pride of place goes to the U13A XV who have scored over 600 points in their 10 matches and conceded only 40. The U13A XV has also had an impressive term winning 7 out of 10. The U12s have also started well with the A XV defeating Cambridge House 58:8, the B XV winning by 60:5 against the same opposition and the C XV 30:20 also against Cambridge House. The U12As also defeated Antrim Grammar School 80:0.

The U14 and Medallion XV had slow starts to the season but are making steady progress with each team getting close to a 50% win/loss ratio. The Medallion team has been drawn at home to Strabane Grammar School in the Shield and hopes are high for a victory. In the senior school the 3<sup>rd</sup> XV has enjoyed success winning 5 out of 7 matches but face an awkward test against Coleraine Inst in the Cup. The 2<sup>nd</sup> XV is progressing well with 6 victories out of 12 starts. This is impressive as the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV is a very strong side and has been disrupted by call ups to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV due to injury and inter-provincial commitments. They have been handed a very difficult away match in the Cup against Campbell College but hopes are high for a win. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV's are like the 2nds, a very young and inexperienced side. This has resulted in a slow start to the season as players found their feet at this level. The 1sts however, are playing good rugby and winning matches and should be looking forward to their home tie against Lurgan College in the Cup.

Mark O'Connor and Andrew Moore were both selected this term for the Ulster Schools' U18 XV and played in the inter-provincial series. Both boys acquitted themselves well and the school is very proud of their achievements. They were a big loss to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV during the month of October but have returned with a great deal of experience which can only be good for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV's.

Many thanks to all who continue to coach and travel with the teams. The attitude and dedication of all the boys is excellent and a credit to their school. With Cup matches before and after Christmas, training over the festive period promises to be hard but 'fun'.

## Netball

The Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Coleraine and District Netball league has been well and truly underway from the beginning of October 2007. The teams have shown dedication and enthusiasm to their training sessions from the word go!

Proving very successful to date is the Minor team, captained by Rachael McCluskey, Year 9. This team has excellent potential to win their league section and has overcome tough opposition from St Mary's Limavady and Loreto College to date with high scoring victories.

The Junior and Intermediate teams have lost to tough opposition by the narrowest of margins, but are still on course for top finishing positions in their league sections with their up-and-coming fixtures.

The strong Senior team, captained by Claire Annesley, Year 13, have shown great progress and skill this year. At present all appears to be on track for a top 2 finishing position within their league section with still a few matches outstanding.

Several Northern Ireland Cup and Plate matches are still to be played within the next few weeks for both the Junior and Intermediate teams - Good Luck!!

## Northern Ireland Champions!

The IFA Girls National Indoor Championships concluded on a high for the Limavady Grammar School football team. Having won their regional heats they proceeded to the finals in the Valley Leisure Centre Belfast where they defeated Belfast Model to become the Northern Ireland U15 indoor champions. The overall standard of the competition was extremely high with 55 schools throughout the province taking part. As well as winning the prestigious trophy and title, they were also presented with a new football kit for the school.

Well done to the following girls who were involved: Lauren Butcher (captain), Emma Haslett, Sarah Kelly, Hannah Dickson, Rachel McSparron, Stephanie Allen, Catherine McKay, Amy-Lee McIvor.

## "Dancing at Lughnasa"

The school assembly hall has been alive to the sound of a throbbing Irish beat for the last few weeks, as rehearsals came to a climax for this year's school production of "Dancing at Lughnasa" (by the celebrated Irish playwright, Brian Friel) which was performed at the end of November..

And what an experience it proved to be! When we first decided to stage this Tony award winning play, a few eyebrows were raised...it was such an emotional play, did we have the talent for it? What about recreating an authentic working kitchen from Donegal in the 1930s? And Friel is notorious for capturing the rather blunt, and at times explicit, vernacular of the day....on our stage? Surely not....!

We took on the challenges one by one, and managed to overcome them - often with spectacular success. This was indeed no ordinary play, but it was handled by a cast and crew who relished the opportunity to show that Drama is alive and well - and flourishing! - in LGS.

The set (courtesy of Messrs Donnell, McMillan and McElwee) was unbelievable. The construction was so detailed and realistic that it prompted many in the audience to question whether or not the range actually worked...and where on earth did they get the "aul Belfast sink from?". Clever art work depicted the garden outside, complete with turf stacks and trees - the perfect place for Gerry to woo Christina under the watchful gaze of her four sisters through the cottage window! Detail was paramount in a set such as this, and this was delivered by the Props team under the leadership of Mrs Macqueen. An expert eye, she sourced authentic antique goods and somehow transformed a stage set into a home. Our stage was now set; all we had to do was live up to its standard....

A small cast of eight was assembled in September after a series of workshop auditions, and rehearsals began in earnest. I always thought we had a great cast who were capable of dealing with the tricky emotional demands of "Lughnasa"...but even I was amazed at the level of engagement and understanding they exhibited. It is literally impossible to single any one person out - each actor filled their role with enthusiasm and talent, often "becoming" that character before our very eyes. One member of the audience remarked that when watching them onstage, you forgot that they were only 16 or 17 years old - such was their acting ability. As a family of sisters, Naomi Canning, Stacey McGonigal, Lisa McNeill, Hannah Jack and Rachel Currie provoked emotions in the audience ranging from happiness to anger and frustration, all coupled with a glowing sense of nostalgia. The girls handled complex issues of sibling rivalry, repression, abandonment and utter despair with tender performances all round, and their break into a wild, Irish dance revealed just how alive those Mundy sisters really were. Naomi Canning excelled in her role of the eldest sister Kate, desperately fighting to keep her crumbling family together under the auspices of respectability; Stacey McGonigal's comic talent shone in her role of Maggie, yet she also conveyed Maggie's more regretful side as she mused over past memories. Lisa McNeill's heartbreaking performance of a simple minded Rosie was an absolute delight - never coming out of character once, while Hannah Jack's moving portrayal of Agnes evoked pity and compassion. As Christina, Rachel Currie excellently conveyed a rather naïve young mother, convinced that her lover will return and swept up in his patter when he does. The subtlety of change in her emotions towards him was astounding - we felt for her.

Andrew Devlin's accomplished performance as smooth talking Welshman "Gerry Evans" was utterly convincing - we could all see what "Christina" finally recognised herself, that he was nothing but a "loafer, a wastrel" and yes, Friel is right - sometimes there is a time and a place for more basic terminology!

Daniel Mullan's controlled and precise portrayal of Father Jack was outstanding. He managed to evoke revulsion and pity from the audience for such a complex character. Warren Keys' superb narration in the role of "Michael" reduced many in the audience to tears, the level of poignancy conveyed in his monologues was perfect and his delivery was at all times, measured and engaging.

Those who managed to see the production will agree that it was one of the most accomplished to hit our stage - perhaps even this area. It is rare that a production can touch so many people in so many ways. Perhaps that is the skill of Brian Friel's writing...the time and era in which it is set...or the talent of those involved in the production itself? Or perhaps it is a combination of all of those things, with a sprinkling of magic thrown in for good measure? "Dancing at Lughnasa" was, quite simply, a triumph - and one of the proudest moments of my life. Heartfelt thanks to all who made it happen.

*(Claire Gordon)*

## Excellent GCSE and A-level Results

The school was pleased to be placed 10th in the Northern Ireland in the School League Tables published in the Sunday Times in November. This year 69% of our grades at A-level were A or B, while 51% of our grades at GCSE were A or A\*. We've been consistently in the top 150 in the United Kingdom for the past 6 years.

While many other grammar schools take in 100% A grades, we have a mixed entry profile in Year 8, with about 70% of our grades in the A category. The Sunday Times does not give these entry profiles, which of course contribute to a large extent, to the final results. Nor does the newspaper indicate the entry barrier to 6<sup>th</sup> form. We accept GCSE totals below 9 points, while many other schools reject entry to sixth form for all students, including their own, with less than 18 points at GCSE. Staff and students are to be congratulated once again.

## Top of the Class Once Again



In 2005, David Smyth was awarded First Place in Northern Ireland in GCSE Physics. This year he has added to this fine achievement by the award of First Place in A-level Chemistry. David achieved full marks in all modules.

This is a recognition, not only of David's Ability and hard work, but also of the quality of teaching offered in Limavady Grammar School across the science subjects. Indeed this is the second year in succession that we have had First Place in Chemistry as Andrew Hardeman was given the same award in 2006.

David's teachers were Mr James Calwell and Mrs Carol Crown.

David is reading Medicine at Queens' University Belfast.

## Medical/Dental Appointments

As you will know registration is taken twice a day - morning and afternoon sessions. Department of Education regulations now count Medical/Dental appointments as authorised absence for statistical purposes. This is to encourage parents to make appointments for their children out of school hours. We realise that, on occasions, this is not always possible, and so the school will apply the following policy:

- A pupil, who appears for am registration, leaves school for an appointment but returns before pm registration will be recorded as present.
- A pupil, who arrives late in school with an excuse of an appointment but is in time to attend for part of that session, will be recorded present for that session.
- A pupil, who leaves school for a p.m. appointment before pm registration, will be recorded as absent for that session.
- A pupil, who leaves school in the morning following am registration and does not return to school that day, will be recorded as absent for the pm session.

Parents are reminded that requests for pupils to be released for all appointments should be sent to one of the school Vice Principals on the day prior to the appointment. The Vice Principal will sign the request and a permission slip will be given to the pupil enabling them to sign out at the appropriate time on the requested day. If you have any queries on this please contact the school.

## January Exams start on:

- Tuesday 8 January 2008 for Year 12 pupils
- Friday 11 January 2008 for Year 14 pupils
- Monday 14 January 2008 for Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 pupils.
- All pupils have received a timetable and set of instructions which they must read carefully.
- Please note that Years 8 and 9 have a revision day at home on Wednesday 16 January.
- Years 11, 12, 13, and 14 are only required to attend school when they have an exam and may revise at home at other times.

## A Trip To Stormont

On Wednesday 7 November, Mr Crawford and 10 students left Limavady Grammar School to visit Stormont as part of the Local Democracy Week initiative organised by Limavady Borough Council. Pupils from Limavady High School, St Mary's High School, Limavady and St Patrick's College, Dungiven, also attended.

We were dropped off a mile inside the gates at the bottom of the 60 steps up to the beautiful Stormont building. The inside of the Great Hall was very impressive with marble floor, artwork on the ceiling and five large chandeliers. TV cameras were present to record on film all the MLAs who were present, and us, of course!

The Minister for Education, Catrina Ruane gave a presentation on the history of the Northern Ireland Assembly and how it worked. We were told how the Assembly had the power to make decisions and how the Debating Chamber worked.

After lunch we got the chance to put questions to MLAs from our local area. It was interesting to hear their opinions on relevant issues including Global Warming, Water Charges, Road Services and Farming.

The final part of the day was a tour of the Chambers where the Assembly members meet to discuss various issues. After finding out how the Chamber worked, we had some decision making to do for ourselves. "Aye" and "No" were the replies when we were asked if we should stay on at school to the age of 18 with the "Ayes" having the majority vote, much to the disappointment of many!

The day was enjoyable and very worthwhile. It was good to learn how our country is now being governed and to meet some of the people responsible. Thanks must go to those people at Limavady Borough Council who organised the day and to Mr Crawford who accompanied our group.

## "Birds of Prey" Day

What were you doing on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October?

Well, if you aren't in 8V then you missed a great day. My class was invited to go to St Mary's High school to listen to a wildlife talk given by Mr Ian Patterson. The event was organised by the Roe Valley Learning Community and pupils from our school, St Mary's High School, St Patrick's College, Limegrove and Limavady High School were present.

Ian Patterson showed us five birds of prey. Firstly we were shown a Barn Owl. There are only 50 - 100 of them living in the wild and they can hear a mouse's heart beat from 2-5 metres away.



Next it was the Long Eared Owl. People think they have two long ears on their head, but these are only tufts of feathers and their ears cannot be seen. We were then shown a Buzzard and two Kestrels. One Kestrel was male and one was female (it was duller in colour). The Kestrels are different from the other birds of prey because they are daytime feeders. Ian told us that the female Kestrel makes sure the place is kept tidy, while on the other hand the male leaves food all over the ground - they seem almost human! Finally, the best was last - the Peregrine Falcon which is the fastest of all birds of prey.

The day was great and we learned a lot about these most interesting birds of prey.

## Year 10 Parents' Meetings

There has been a change to the dates of the Year 10 Careers and Parents' meetings:

- **13 February** Year 10 careers information meeting in the Lecture Theatre at 7.00 pm
- **20 February** Year 10 parents meeting in the Assembly Hall from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm