



# HEADLINES

December 2008



## 'LET'S TALK' WITH LOCAL COUNCILLORS



On Wednesday 3 December pupils from each of the schools in the Limavady Learning Partnership attended a 'Let's Talk' event with some members of Limavady Council.

Fifty Year 11 pupils from LGS took part in workshops to discuss issues relevant to young people living in the Limavady area. BBC journalist, Mark Carruthers, also hosted a question time session with representatives from local political parties including Edwin Stevenson, Boyd Douglas, Michael Coyle and Cathal O hOisin. Our local politicians were grilled on subjects such as youth facilities, the Dungiven bypass and council spending - they were even asked who

they wanted to win X Factor! The event was an excellent way for young people to put their views across to our local politicians and hear some answers!

I would like to thank Mr Michael Allen (LHS), Elizabeth Beattie and Patricia Harkin (Limavady Council) for organising the day and ensuring it all went smoothly.

*Miss G Wright*

## THE REVISED CURRICULUM - ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Over the next few year parents of pupils Years 8 and 9 will notice some changes to the reporting system used in Limavady Grammar School. As I write, the strategy for the changes in reporting is at the planning stage; teachers are attending training courses and a template for an annual report is being devised.

In January, as you know, all pupils will sit examination and a traditional report on the performance and progress will be issued in February. Comments will not only refer to the examination result, but will give some insight into classroom progress.

In June a second report will be issued following the examinations that begin in late May. We are statutorily obliged to comment on a number of areas of the revised Curriculum. So, for Years 8 and 9 this report will not only comment on the examination performance but also on the pupil's progress in *Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities*. These additional comments will be made as a result of classroom assessment.

Secondly a separate and additional comment will be made on each Year 8 and 9 pupil's progress in each of the three Cross Curricular Themes; Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. These comments will be based on formal classroom assessments carried out by a number of designated departments. In June 2010 these comments will include the level of progression at which each child is working in each skill.

*Mr N Handforth*

**SENIOR LAW CLUB**

The Senior Law Club have once again competed in the bar national mock trial competition organised by the Citizenship Foundation at the High Courts in Belfast. The team had to prepare the prosecution and defence of two criminal cases and conduct the trials in front of local judges and barristers. Barristers Amy Ramsey and Claire Annesley had the tough job of defending Orlagh Boyd who was accused of dangerous driving - although she was 'sent down' we managed to raise the bail and bring her home! Other students prepared a case which concerned disorderly conduct and assault, and took on the roles of barristers, witnesses and jurors. Judge Philpotts claimed that Amy Hung was the best witness of the day - cool, calm and collected under Lumen Christi's interrogation! Gillian Young once again did a very professional job as court usher and clerk.

This competition is an excellent way of learning about the work that goes on in a court and how the legal system operates, and it wasn't just for those would be lawyers, but also for those who relished the opportunity to perform and have fun! All of the students worked very hard in the run up to the competition and were highly commended for their hard work. I would like to congratulate all who participated and also to thank Mr Adrian Higgins LLB for his very valuable advice and assistance.



*The students were:*

<b><u>Barristers</u></b>	<b><u>Witnesses</u></b>	<b><u>Court Clerk/Usher</u></b>
Amy Ramsey, Claire Annesley, Kirsy Holmes, Adam Faulkner, Joanne Reay and Jake Knowles-Jensen.	Amy Hung, Orlagh Boyd, Laura Feeney, Jamie Logue, Rory MacAuley, Sean Doherty, Barry Gilloway, Jennifer Kennedy and Sarah Friedlander.	Gillian Young

*Miss G Wright*

**FRENCH DEBATERS WIN THROUGH**

Having been granted a bye in the first round, the French debating season started a little later than usual for our team this year and we were faced with a rather daunting second round tie against Lumen Christi College. Both schools have an excellent record in this competition in recent years and this, as expected, was a real clash of the titans.



We were given the task of opposing the motion "L'obsession de notre société avec la santé nous écarte tout plaisir à la vie" (Our society's obsession with health is taking away all pleasure from life) and our team of Chris D., Lisa McN., Kirsten W. (all Year 14) and Matthew H. (Year 13) had been preparing their arguments carefully over the last few weeks.

Any pre-debate nerves were quickly swept away as the debate got under way and the ferocity of argument was such that the contest lasted a full hour and a half (thirty minutes longer than it had been scheduled to last), as our team brought up such diverse points as the quality of food in our respective school canteens, the benefits of drinking pomegranate juice and, in a rather surreal moment, Chris complimented the final Lumen Christi speaker on how pretty she was! This seemed to do

the trick as the opposition crumbled and the judges unanimously awarded a narrow win in our favour. Congratulations to the four team members as they now progress through to the quarter-finals of the competition in February.

*Mr I Sampson*

## FRENCH EXCHANGE VISITORS

A group of French exchange pupils from the Lycée Charles Poncet in Cluses will be visiting us at the end of March on the second leg of our Senior French Exchange. At present, the group of French pupils looks likely to be larger than our own group going to France and we are trying to find some extra host families so as not to disappoint any pupils in France wanting to visit Limavady.

The pupils concerned are 16-17 year old and the approximate dates of the return visit are from **25 March until 3 April 2009**.

If any parents feel that they would be able to host a French pupil during their visit, please could you contact me at school as soon as possible?

*Mr I Sampson*

## MESSAGE FOR CURRENT P6 PUPILS AND PARENTS

You will be aware that I am retiring from my post at Limavady Grammar School in mid-January. I write to thank you for all the support that you have given me over my years as Principal. My successor is Mr Robert Wilson, currently Vice Principal of Cambridge House Grammar School and I know he is looking forward to taking up the challenge of leading the school.

I wish to inform you of our plans for transfer of pupils in September 2010, information that will be of interest to P6 pupils and their parents. My Board of Governors has resolved that we will be one of 30 schools forming the Association of Quality Education, AQE. This Association will provide assessment papers on Saturday mornings in November 2009 which your P6 pupils are invited to sit. Details of assessment papers may be found on the AQE website, [www.aqe.org.uk](http://www.aqe.org.uk). You will see that the papers will be similar to those currently used for the 11+ test with the exception that there will be no Science questions. They will focus on English and Mathematics.

The tests will be available in Limavady Grammar or in other centres including Foyle and Londonderry College and Coleraine Academical Institution. Prospective applicants may choose any centre and use the result to apply to whichever school they wish. Application for schools will be through the WELB as at present and the criteria for admission to Grammar Schools mentioned will be similar to that currently used.

While details are not finalised it is envisaged that schools offering the test will allow access on a Saturday prior to the test day to allow pupils to acclimatise themselves to the school hall. It is my intention, and that of my successor to keep you fully informed of developments and of final details when the test dates approach. Many of these details will be available on the AQE website so I strongly advise you to check it regularly. In the meantime please feel free to contact me for any clarification which you need regarding transfer.

Once again thank you for your personal support over the years.

## ROAD SAFETY WARNING

We have been contacted recently by a member of the public who alerted us to the fact that one of our pupils was involved in a 'near-miss' type incident as she walked home from school along a road with no footpath.

**Parents - please warn your children that they must take care along unlit, country roads.** The school has purchased a number of fluorescent vests that we are willing to give to pupils who may be at risk whilst walking home.

***Please contact the school office if you would like to have one for your child.***



### *Ladies and Gentlemen*

I have been honoured to be Principal of Limavady Grammar School Principal for the past eleven years and have been privileged to work with your sons and daughters.

Every moment has been special. We have been so successful because we took the time to get to know each other, and when a youngster joined us on our journey, we took the time to share with them our value system and our vision. Every day has been a delight and I leave only because of the inexorable march of time, and because statistical probability tells me that even though I feel great, I should move on while I can contribute to other things.

I hope to carry our vision to the Regional Training Unit in Belfast, the body responsible for the training of school leaders in Northern Ireland. Over the past three years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with many of the new post-primary principals in NI. I am amazed at how positively they respond to what seems to us such an obvious approach to young people, to be intentionally pleasant through people, place, policies and programmes, to create a similar intentional response from them, and at the same time to improve our academic results beyond our dreams. It's a bit surreal, but we know it works.

We've had amazing times; we have an incredible team feeling which parents and substitute teachers comment on; we've had such fun through sport, drama, and all the rest of our activities in and out of the classroom. But you are wise enough to realise that LGS has *always* been like this. All the characters have always been there, just with different names, names which youngsters may have never heard of, but by whom parents might have been taught.

I've hiked with them, coached sport, blown up laboratories, sung with them, travelled with them, golfed, rock-climbed and orienteered. I've taught chemistry, RE, maths and even technology. Then, in 1990, for seven years I went away to learn how to be a Head, and after that our current adventure began.

My thanks to you all for all you mean to me, for all you've done for me and for the children which you have entrusted to us. I have loved every moment from Wednesday 1 September 1971 until Friday 9 January 2009. I never would have believed as a young man, that I would ever be honoured by being allowed to work with such fine people, among such fine young people.

I wish the school well under the leadership of my successor, Mr Robert Wilson.

Thanks for the memories.

*Sam McGuinness*

**LIMAVADY GRAMMAR SCHOOL'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT**  
Will be held in the Assembly Hall on Wednesday 17 December 2008 at 7.30 pm  
Retiring Voluntary Collection in aid of the Northern Ireland children's Hospice  
All Parents and Friends are Most Welcome

**Please note change of date for Year 10 Parents' Meeting**

Year 10 Parents' Meeting will be held on **24 February 2009 from 4-6 pm** and not 25 February as originally planned.

**School breaks up for Christmas on Friday 19 December at 12.30 pm  
and reopens at 9.00 am on Monday 5 January 2009.  
We wish all parents and pupils a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.**