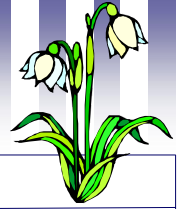




# Headlines

February 2007



## **A Meeting with Prince Charles**

Several weeks ago, the catering manager in Limavady Grammar School, Mrs Christine Conway, was invited by the Prince of Wales to attend a reception in Clarence House to celebrate her work and recognise her, with sixty others across the United Kingdom, as Best School Cooks. As Headmaster of the school I was invited to accompany Mrs Conway.

We queued outside Clarence House, the London residence of the Prince, and saw Jamie Oliver ahead of us. Eventually we reached the main reception area, two rooms decorated beautifully and adorned with photographs of various members of the royal family. Prince Charles and his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall, arrived and moved through the crowd chatting with one group after another. We met with cooks and principals from Scotland, England and Wales, as well as from the Model School, Belfast and Harpurs Hill, Coleraine. After some time Prince Charles reached our small group and began to question us about the various initiatives we were involved in to promote healthy eating.



Mrs Conway runs a very successful school canteen with over 600 students and staff going through each day, and offers an excellent menu every day. Limavady Grammar canteen sells more baked potatoes than any school in the North-West, and chips are seldom on our menu.

Prince Charles asked if the improved food caused better behaviour in students. I replied that our students were very well-behaved and always had been. He looked carefully at my name badge with the name of our school, and made a positive comment about the education system in Northern Ireland, wondering why anyone would want to change something that works so well. We spoke for a few minutes and I found him to be very supportive of the retention of selection.

When the Prince moved on, the press then asked me for comments and I simply pointed out the excerpt from the Bain Report which claims that only 3% of our students complete their GCSE course with no qualifications as against 4, 5 and 6% in the rest of the UK. In his remarks to me, while he did not get into specifics, Prince Charles was echoing the views of Sir Eric Anderson, the Provost of Eton, who last month observed that Ulster schools were outperforming England not only at the bottom end of the academic spectrum but also at the top end. In addition, Sir Eric noted that they proved that academic selection could help social mobility, with 42% of Northern Ireland university students coming from less privileged backgrounds, as against just 28% in England. Sir Eric claims that the "40-year experiment" with comprehensive education in England has failed.

Sir Eric, who had the distinction of having been Tony Blair's housemaster at Fettes and David Cameron's headmaster at Eton, argued that, where selection remains in the state system "and particularly in Northern Ireland", we can see its value.

"In Northern Ireland, 10% more pupils achieve five A\*-C grades at GCSE than in England, and 30% of A-Level candidates get an A grade compared to 22% in England," he said.

"That makes the Government's recent legislation intended to abolish selection in Northern Ireland particularly regrettable."

Regal disquiet over the proposed reform in Northern Ireland is also felt by the majority of parents in the province, if the Department of Education's household survey is anything to go by. Some 64% of those who took part in the 2002 poll supported academic selection.

*Dr S McGuinness*

## **Love for Life Presentation**

The organisation, Love for Life presentation will take place in school on **Tuesday 13 March 2007**. Topics will be from the Relationship and Sexuality Education programme. Parents of pupils from **Years 9, 11 and 12 have already been notified by letter; therefore parents should note that if permission slips are not returned to form teachers, pupils will not be allowed to attend the presentation.**

*Mrs L McFarland (Head of Year 11)*

## **Host Family Wanted**

A fourteen year old boy from Cluses in the French Alps is looking for a family who would be prepared to host him for 10-14 days this summer in order that he can improve his English. Loic is a quiet, sensible boy who is interested in music and outdoor pursuits, especially skiing and hiking.

In return, Loic's parents (his mother is an English teacher who has visited Limavady on several occasions) would be prepared to return the favour and host Loic's partner in France at a mutually convenient time. Or, as an alternative, they have offered to provide his partner and his or her family with free accommodation in one of the apartments that form part of their home.

If any of our pupils would be interested in this opportunity, please contact me at school for further details.

*Mr I Sampson*

## **The Irish Win In Paris!**

*No, we're not talking about the rugby team at the Parc des Princes and you haven't missed a heroic performance from Lawrie Sanchez's boys at the Stade de France. But another titanic Franco-Irish encounter did take place in Paris last month with the Irish French Debating team taking on the French and, despite the debate being conducted entirely in French, the Irish won! One of the team members was Sarah Robb (Year 14), the only pupil from Northern Ireland to be selected. This is an account of her trip.*

This January I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Paris with a team of Irish senior pupils to take part in a debate against some pupils from a Parisian lycée. As the debate was to be conducted entirely in French, I obviously felt some trepidation, and was even more terrified to discover that the debate would also involve spontaneous heckling in French. However, after nine weeks of intensive training with various French specialists from the Dublin area, the team felt much more confident. The three other Irish team members and I met up on Saturdays before the debate, usually at the home of Breda Kelly, head of the Alliance Française in Dublin, where we would speak in French for four or five hours at a time and work on our speeches. The level of French was extremely high and I did feel intimidated at first. Nonetheless, we finally felt confident enough to debate against real French people.

To be honest, I didn't expect to win – it seemed impossible to imagine beating the French team in their own language. But on the night, we worked really hard, and we won! The Alliance Française paid all of our expenses and took both teams out for a celebratory meal in Paris, overlooking the Eiffel Tower. Not only did we get to participate in a challenging debate, but we also had lots of time to visit the sights of Paris, which were amazing.

Participating in the debate showed me that you really can succeed if you work hard and are determined, and I'd like to thank all those who helped me in the (very stressful) weeks leading up to the debate.

*Sarah Robb (Year 14)*

## **Rugby Report**

The rugby season has now entered its final month and unfortunately all Cup teams have now ended their various competitions. However, each team produced a great deal of excitement along the way and created much interest.

The 3rd XV defeated CAI before losing away from home to a very strong Ballymena Academy side. The 2nd XV lost to Rainey Endowed and then fell to Larne Grammar School, somewhat surprisingly, in the last 16 of the Plate. The 1st XV followed up their Cup wins at Larne Grammar School and Belfast High School with a difficult trip to Enniskillen to play Portora Royal School. A drop goal two minutes into injury time saw Portora record a 10:7 victory. Heartbreaking for the LGS boys who were magnificent on the day. The 1st XV then played Ballymena Academy in the quarter final of the Shield and went down 43:27 in a thrilling game of rugby.

The Medallion XV having lost narrowly and unexpectedly to Dalriada, defeated Down High School in the quarter final of the Plate. Favoured with a home draw in the semi-final they entertained the Shield favourites Royal School Armagh who proved much too powerful on the day. Congratulations and thanks to all the boys and staff for the way in which they represented their school, both on and off the field of play.

The junior teams continue to play and success in all age groups has been achieved over Foyle and Londonderry College and Omagh Academy.

*Mr S Barr*

## **A-Level German Study Day**

On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, our Year 14 German class together with our classmates from Limavady High School and our teacher, Miss Allen, set off for Belfast to attend an A-Level study day organised by Queen's University for students across Northern Ireland.

On arrival, each school was ushered into the lecture theatre at the Peter Froggat building where we were introduced to various lecturers, many of whom were native German speakers.

To begin with, everyone was a little apprehensive but, at the same time, very excited. The morning was divided up into three fifty minute sessions, each being taught by a different lecturer. To start with, our class along with pupils from Ballyclare High School undertook a session on essay writing skills by engaging in various set tasks.

Break followed at 11 o'clock which gave us the chance to chat to other pupils from across the province who are sitting their A-Level German exams this year. Then we attended a talk on the novel we are studying this year, "*Ich fuhl mich so 50-50*", and were given a fascinating insight into life in the former East Germany by Martina Seifert who comes from Leipzig where the novel is set and who was 18 years old at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, just like the main character in the novel. During this session, we picked up key phrases and gained a better understanding and knowledge of the text which hopefully we will use in our literature exam in June.

After this, we attended a class on translation skills from Dr Marko Pajevic, another native German speaker who has also worked in Paris.

At 1 o'clock, everyone went for lunch at various cafes in the Student Union where we got to experience student life at first hand. Then, in the afternoon, all of the students were mixed into six groups to take part in a quiz on German football. This was good fun and again gave us the opportunity to meet students from other schools.

All in all, this was a thoroughly enjoyable day. We found the sessions very informative and they certainly helped us with our German studies. We also got to experience a day on a university campus and enjoyed the chance to meet students from other schools who are studying the same subject as us. We would certainly recommend this event to future A-Level German students' because – *Wir hatten Spaß gehabt*.

*Emma McCloskey (Year 14)*

## **Charity Committee News**

### **ShoeBiz Appeal**

We collected approximately 400 pairs of shoes to assist Blue Peter's work with children in Malawi who are affected by HIV. 330 pairs of shoes will buy a bicycle for a community care worker, giving him or her the chance to visit children in their homes. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this worthwhile cause.

### ***Do you love someone enough to give them your last rolo?***

On 14 February we delivered 608 rolos for Valentine's day and raised £300 for the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association. Many thanks to all who helped.

### **Comic Relief**

Red noses will be on sale soon. Other activities are being organised for 16 March. Details to follow.

*Mrs J Mills*

## **Scripture Union**

The Scripture Union invites you to an event which will take place **each lunchtime (20-23 March)** in the school assembly hall AND ALSO at **7.30 pm on Friday 23 March**, same venue.

 **ONE WAY**



## **Back In The Final**

It is said that lightning never strikes twice. If that is the case, then nobody has told our French debaters. Determined not to be outdone by last year's team, who won the Northern Ireland title by beating Methody in the final, our French debating team has made it all the way to this year's final, to be held at Queen's University on the 21 March, where our opponents will be ..... Methody!

Our place in the final was clinched on Wednesday 21 February by defeating St Michael's Grammar School, Enniskillen at the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster. Congratulations to our team of Sarah Robb, Laura Mitchell, Gillian Given (making her debut in this year's competition) and Hannah Crawford who successfully argued against the motion "*On ne peut pas combattre le réchauffement climatique sans réduire notre qualité de vie*" (We cannot fight global warming without reducing our quality of life). Particular congratulations to **Hannah Crawford** who received the best overall speaker award.



Our task in the final is to argue against the motion "*Les bienfaits de l'immigration l'emportent sur les désavantages*" (The benefits of immigration outweigh the disadvantages).

Tense, hard-fought, politically contentious – the final promises to be all of these and much more. But let's wish the team well as they start to prepare for what we hope will be another epic David versus Goliath encounter.

*Mr I Sampson*

## **Parents' Association**

**Easter Draw:** this is our major fundraiser for the year. Envelopes and tickets will be distributed to pupils during this week—please ask your child for tickets. As all children in the school benefit from the proceeds of this draw, we would ask for your continued support. The draw will take place in school on Friday 30 March.

*Mr S Barr*

## **Internal Examinations—June**

Years 8, 9, 10 and 11—examinations begin Monday 28 May and end on Friday 01 June.



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## **Parents' Afternoons**

Year 13	-	Wednesday 14 March from 4-6 pm
Year 11	-	Tuesday 27 March from 4-6 pm
Year 9	-	Tuesday 15 May from 4-6 pm

## **Holidays 2007**

St Patrick's Day	-	Monday 19 March
Easter Break	-	Monday 02 April—Friday 13 April (incl)
May Day	-	Monday 07 May
School Year ends	-	Friday 29 June at 1.00 pm