

I got a shock last week during half term when my kids made me put Heart Extra radio on in the car...only to discover it had suddenly morphed in 'Heart Christmas'. I'm fairly sure this was the 1st November – and they were already playing back to back Christmas songs on this station. While my youngest two were delighted at this development, it's fair to say I was a little more Scrooge-like in my response. But the fact is, no matter how much I (and other like-minded grumps) might try to ignore it – we are now entering into the Christmas countdown season...

Birth of a Star?

It's not quite a Christmas baby, but I'm sure the whole school community will join me in offering our congratulations to Mrs Lumsdon who yesterday gave birth to her first child, Clara May. I've often been scolded by my own wife when I tell her about one of our extended family/friends giving birth, and am then unable to give any more details. So this time I am pleased to be able to share that the baby weighed 6lbs 2oz and mum describes herself as 'One very happy but tired mummy'. We wish the family all the best as they start this adventure together.

Assemblies This Week

Students in year 7-10 have all had an assembly this week promoting Children in Need, and our Christmas Shoe Box appeal. I asked for us as a school community to think about one of our core values – Compassion and to relate this to those who are less fortunate. I am hoping they will be creative in coming up with ideas on how we can raise money and awareness around these issues. I also explained why we usually avoid the 'quick-win' of a non-uniform day. While I understand that this is probably the easiest way to raise money for a cause, I just feel that it is more appropriate for the students to focus on doing something proactive that requires some genuine effort, thought and ownership. Giving up some of their time, or planning a project, or committing to a fitness challenge, doing something either individually or as a team – these things all help to raise money for good causes like these, but they are also more likely to get us thinking about the real reasons for doing it in the first place. I don't think this really happens at all when we simply bring in £1 to wear whatever we want for the day.

We also reminded students about the Shoebox Appeal. This was a massive success last year and is a really simple way for us to make a difference to a lot of needy children. Students pick the age group and gender that they want to support, and then bring in everyday items into school (see attached list) which are put into individual shoeboxes and send to children in struggling countries, many of whom literally have nothing. Thank-you to all the parents who are already helping their children support school with these causes.

Remembrance Day Service

Today Mrs Hoile has taken a group of our Services Family students to attend a Remembrance Day Service at Ripon Cathedral. I've attended the event for the last 2 years and can testify to what a moving ceremony it is. Next week in school, Mr Gill is delivering Remembrance Day assemblies to all year groups and some Yr 11 students have been filming staff and students to show their thoughts on what this day is all about. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our services parents – your children are an important group within our school community and we truly value our links to the armed forces.

Year 11 Geography Trip to Leeds

Mr Childe writes: On Wednesday, our Year 11 Geographers visited Leeds for the day to collect data for their geographical investigation into change in an urban area. In the morning, small groups carried out a land use survey, pedestrian counts and environmental quality surveys across the city centre. After a well-earned lunch, we ventured into the inner city area of Leeds to complete our investigation to collect some contrasting data.

Despite some rather wet and windy conditions, the students showed excellent levels of resilience to complete their work – and just about keep smiling for most of the day!

Year 7 Theatre Trip to Darlington

Miss Cropper writes: We took 49 Year 7 students to see 'Billionaire Boy' by David Walliams at the Darlington Hippodrome today. It is brilliant as a school that we can offer such creative and engaging trips, providing students with a well-rounded education. All students involved had a fantastic time, and the opportunity to meet the actors after the show for a Q&A was an added bonus. They were all a credit to the school. Special thanks to Mrs Riley-Fox, Mrs Noake and Mrs Cann for their support on the trip.

Library Open for Business!

Parents will be aware that at the end of the summer term, we relocated some classrooms and the school library to the main block. On Wednesday this week we were finally ready to open the new library to students. Since then, it has been bustling with keen readers and others who need to access a computer at lunchtime (or who just wanted to 'have a nosey' around this new space). The English department is already planning the latest Reading Passport programme as well as looking at other uses for this space such as the Friday Film Club. As the weather continues to worsen, it is great to have this resource available and we welcome students who are ready to use it sensibly and appropriately as a quiet space in school.

On a related issue, we are also working to promote the importance of reading across all year groups and Monday morning form time will, from next week, be given over to dedicated silent reading time. Please can parents support this incentive by ensuring that students have an appropriate book with them at all times. I'm sure many parents have experienced the same cycle that I have with my own children – when they were younger they would happily read but as they grow older, the influence and temptation of 'screens' definitely makes this more of a challenge. Teachers are now more aware than ever that focussed reading is a crucial skill that we simply cannot take for granted. With exams becoming ever-harder, and more challenging in their content, we must ensure our children have regular opportunities for this.

Website Appeal

I've recently been looking at the school website and thinking about how we can revamp it to better sell the school within our community and beyond. The first priority is to ensure that all the content is up to date – I am aware that some older material is still appearing and we are currently working on this, section by section.

One of the other things we would love to do is to show off our students more effectively through this platform. For example, I would love to have a short video montage of students talking about the school – I'm thinking of something that could appear on the home page when people first click on to it, perhaps to some background music. If there are any tech-savvy parents out there who would be willing to help us produce something like this in a way that looks professional, and are keen to work with some students to pull it together, or to help us create a BHS Community Video – please contact me to discuss.

Upcoming Events: Presentation Evening and GCSE Information Evening

This coming Tuesday we look forward to holding our annual Presentation Evening – a flagship event for the school where we take the time to recognise the many outstanding achievements of our students, across different fields. Our guest speaker this year is Andrew Keeble from Heck Foods. Award winners have received their invitations and anticipate a busy night of celebration ahead!

Another important event (for Yr 11 parents) is the GCSE Information Evening on the 21st November. Please try your best to attend this evening – we really try to cram it full of useful tips and advice on how to work with us to support your son/daughter in Yr 11, during what can be a very stressful time (for them and you). Having been through it myself as a parent for the first time last year, I can honestly say that I 'stole' several ideas that actually worked for us at home, so I hope that we can leave you feeling confident and fully equipped to be successful with this. Please see the attached letter for further details.

Yr 11 PPE Exam Information for Geography and Citizenship Students

Please see Mr Childe's attached handouts which clarify exactly what areas will be focussed on for the forthcoming Geography and Citizenship PPE exams. These exams begin week commencing 25th November.

Year 11s: Northern School of Art Open Day

The next open day is on Saturday 16th November between 10am – 2pm. If students would like to apply, please follow this link: [http://application.northernart.ac.uk/\(S\(eld45oxto43adwxbs3xmqlbt\)\)/default.aspx](http://application.northernart.ac.uk/(S(eld45oxto43adwxbs3xmqlbt))/default.aspx)

They can also book onto the open day to make signing in quicker on the day. Just click here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-northern-school-of-art-open-day-college-level-saturday-16th-november-2019-registration-65398610003>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Stuart Featherstone
Recruitment Assistant at:

The Northern School of Art
FE Campus Green Lane
Middlesbrough
TS5 7RJ
Phone: 01642 856163

Inclusive Education Service – Drop-In Sessions for Parents

Please see the attached leaflet for further details of these sessions that are being offered around Language and Communication, Social Skills and Understanding, Peer Interaction, Emotional Regulation, Sensory Processing. Sessions to be held at Catterick Garrison.



Mr T Kelly
Headteacher