Newsletter to Parents December 2021

Edited by Hemani Sandal, Communications Prefect

Herschel Grammar School

Parents and all visitors to the school should enter the building through the main reception area at the front of the school. Please do not use the pupils' entrance. Safeguarding our pupils on the school site is a priority.

Newsletter to Parents Highlights

Dear Pupils and Parents,

A really big well done to everyone for getting to the end of a very long and eventful term. Once again, we have a newsletter packed with all the amazing opportunities and achievements our pupils have been involved in. The extent of these reflects a greater return to the pre-pandemic Herschel which is very encouraging.

Judging the Sixth Form Bake-Off last week might have been the highlight of my term! The Christmas chocolate logs were marvellous, and some of them had a seriously good swirl (as Prue would say!). Our end of term success assemblies were also great occasions to finally get year groups together and celebrate their achievements.

I'm looking forward to wearing my Christmas jumper and the return of our annual Christmas lunch later this week. The talent show is also back in virtual form on Friday and promises to be hugely entertaining. It will be a lovely way to start Christmas.

My thanks to our wonderful staff for all their hard work and support. Much of what you read in this issue would not be possible without their willingness to organise and run these fabulous opportunities. Wishing you all a relaxing and peaceful break. Merry Christmas.

Ms Rockall

Follow us on twitter

@HerschelGrammar
for our
latest news, reminders and
useful retweets!

Graham Wigginton 14th November 1948 - 21st August 2021

By Richard Goodman, Head of Mathematics

At the end of August Herschel lost one of its greatest servants, Graham worked at Herschel from 1973 until his retirement in 2013. In that time as well as being a Teacher of Mathematics, Head of Mathematics and Examinations Officer he had involved himself in all aspects of school life. His funeral was in Alfreton in Derbyshire, Graham's childhood home, to where he had moved on retirement in 2013.

Below are the few words that I said at his funeral:

"In a lifetime you don't meet too many people without an unkind bone in their body. One of those rare people was Graham Wigginton who I first met when he interviewed me at Herschel Grammar School for my first teaching position in March 1998. Even during the interview whilst being lightly grilled by the other panellists Graham was smiling encouragingly and nodding thoughtfully at my naïve and simplistic answers.

At that stage Graham was just completing 25 years at Herschel, he formed a quarter of the 'old guard' along with Julie Robertson, Paul Robinson and Mark Rose who had all been at the school since the early 1970s. Those four vastly different stalwarts had provided stability to the school as it had been through some very difficult times in the early 1990s.

It became apparent from very early on that Graham and I were very much kindred spirits. We both delighted in puzzles, obscure facts and especially mathematics. Similarly, both of us had far better organised minds than we did desks; I would certainly concede that his was the better organised mind, but I edged it with the slightly less chaotic desk.

Graham's health deteriorated in his mid-fifties and he was finding the relentlessness of teaching increasingly stressful. On deciding to stop teaching Graham told me that he wanted me to replace him as Head of Mathematics and luckily the then Headteacher, Julian King-Harris, concurred. Graham was very proud that in his time at Herschel there had been fewer Heads of Mathematics than there had been Headteachers.

Graham then took on the position of Exams and Administration Officer, a position he held until his retirement in 2013, doing the job with an accuracy and rigour that amazed those who judged him on the state of his filing and not on the qualities of that remarkable mind.

On retirement in 2013 Graham gave a sum of money each year to fund the 'Graham Wigginton Award for Mathematical Thinking'. In a few weeks' time I am meeting up with a previous winner of the prize, now a lecturer in Statistics at Oxford University, and I am sure that we will raise a glass to this kind, decent and most unusual of men who dedicated his life to our school."

Slough Youth Awards

By Hemani Sandal

The return of the annual Slough Youth Awards, held this year at Grove Academy, saw Herschel success with two Herschel Finalists and a Herschel host! The awards celebrate the dedication and commitment of the youth of Slough in six categories: Young Inspiration, Young Sportsperson, Young Volunteer, Young Entrepreneur, Young Artist and Young Environmentalist. With Harjaap Singh, previously on the Slough Youth Parliament and previous Slough Youth Award Winner, hosting and the likes of Tan Dhesi MP there, it was an evening to remember!

Rachana Camberbaty was Finalist for Young Sportswoman of the Year for her determination in playing cricket and football to an almost professional level despite being the only female in her clubs!

Hemani Sandal was Finalist for Young Inspiration of the Year for her passion in creating positive change in sexual violence education across schools nationally, displaying her activism through her work with charities, governors, online campaigns and clubs within Herschel!

New Portrait Competition

By Miss Emma Wood and Sanjana Mageshwaran

The New Portrait Competition runs every year and is organised by the Linnean Society of London. This year, pupils were tasked with drawing a self-portrait, alongside a plant that interested them, taking inspiration from artist John Tyley. Eight pupils from Year 7 and 8 took part this year and have had their entries sent off for the national competition. Check out some of this year's amazing entries!

"I enjoyed participating in the competition as I got to showcase the self-portrait skills learnt during the art sessions in school in addition to drawing my favourite 'blooming cherry blossom tree'.
Billowy pink and white blooming cherry blossom trees go hand in hand with the arrival of the magical time of the year, the Spring. Known as "sakura" in Japanese, these pale blooms are a symbol of spring because it is a time of renewal. However, because the blooms are short-lived, they are also symbolic of the fleeting nature of life."

Cyberfirst Girls' Competition

By Miss Emma Wood

Cyberfirst Girls' Competition is held every year by the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) to get more girls interested in a career in cyber security and coding - a notoriously male-dominated field. It is held for girls aged 12 – 13, and has many different topics, such as cryptography and networking and cyber safety. The CyberFirst Girls Competition provides a fun but challenging environment, and makes your brain work hard! It consists of many challenges which you must solve using different tools to help you such as looking into websites and inspecting elements to crack codes and find flags. Our Year 8 team (The LADYbugs) have made it to the finals and are going to Southampton in February, to compete against the top 12 teams in the whole of the South East of England! To get through to these finals, we had to go through the online qualifiers, which everybody can join. This year, 37 girls in our year group entered the online qualifier round - 70% of the girls in the year group! The challenges can be really mind boggling, but that doesn't mean you've lost all chances! You can use hints to help you solve these problems. Hints cost you a few points but thankfully we were given an early Christmas treat and were able to use hints freely. We had many opportunities to complete these tasks in break time, lunch, and even before school! It has been so fun joining this year's competition and we have all learnt so much along the way!

Rank	Name	Points
1	LADYbug	6288
2	The deTECHtive Children	6033
3	JAAS	5278
4	sHuT dOwN	4928
5	Loading...	4923
6	Update Complete	3603
7	F5	3453
8	Access Denied	3258
9	8C++	1078
10	Indecisive	323

Congratulations once again to our winning team the LADYbugs, consisting of Vishudhi Dias, Yatee Sharma, Isha Chodimella, Arya Kaimal!

MiSAC Competition

By Abdullah Kassim

MiSAC, a microbiology association, carried out their 33rd annual competition centred around fungi and the climate. Though we tend to think of fungi as the mushroom, the reproductive structure is just the smallest structure of the fungi compared to the extensive network of hyphae that branched the topic. Throughout the webpage design that I was told to create, I discussed about how fungi may affect climate change in a negative way through the formation of chloromethane and symbiotic association between the common wheat and a fungi to tackle nitrogen oxide production. Despite the fact that this competition is unrelated to the field of work that I wish to go for in the future, it was an extremely fun challenge which taught me new biology content that I had little or no knowledge about. Additionally, I learnt key concepts in researching through planning, drafting and stitching together a final write-up like an essay, but with colours and design. I congratulate those who have also taken part in the competition and I encourage those in the lower years to have a go at next year's task!

The Big Debate

By Zainab Inam

This December students in the sixth form were given the fantastic opportunity to participate in the annual Herschel Grammar School "Big Debate". The question of "whether voting is a privilege accorded to a few or a right" gave students, including myself, the opportunity to learn and become enlightened about politics and human rights as we prepared and researched the topic. With both the year 12 and 13 teams comprising of three main debaters and a crucial supporting team, we quickly united together, excitedly rehearsing, discussing and planning.

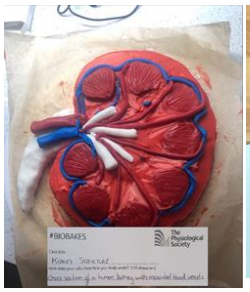
While transforming our streams of creative and inspired ideas and perspectives into coherent speeches, we exercised and honed our communication skills. While each team had the advice and leadership of a member of staff, who guided us through the challenges on our path and dedicated their time to sharing their knowledge with us, we as students were still awarded a great degree of independence and responsibility which is an invaluable experience which helped us grow not only as students but also as young adults. With each meeting, each draft and each practise as we crept closer towards the big day, or should I say big debate, the eagerness and anticipation in the air was almost tangible. Despite the natural feelings of anxiety we felt, participating in the debate undeniably boosted our confidence as well as our public speaking skills. For the supporting team the sacrifice of their time for research and their dedication in collaboration with the debaters not only provided us with a rigid foundation of support but also revealed everyone's ability to cooperate and work successfully as part of a team. On the day of the debate all the varied feelings of nervousness and excitement were unleashed and we were met with great support from our year group and a respectful, engaged and interactive audience.

The opposing side was incredibly well prepared and immensely passionate and as a team we were immensely proud of the courage and confidence it took to debate in front of the sixth form and staff. The opportunity to formally debate was a highly memorable and valuable experience for us. The debate is also measured by which side changed the most minds, which demonstrates the intellectual and bright minds of the audience who were open to listen to and place their feet in the intimidating but crucial waters of political discussion. The debate was a great learning experience which we thoroughly enjoyed and now know how we could improve next time.

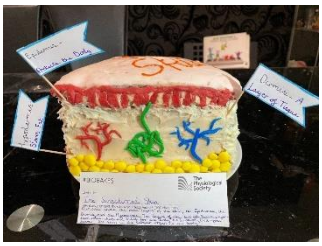
We are grateful to the school for delivering us this chance to engage in debate and have a voice, especially after the previous lockdown. We will not forget this and I strongly encourage future sixth form students to take part in the debate at Herschel. Not only is the debate a testament to the variety of extracurricular events at Herschel which make school life thrilling and memorable, but also provides one with the chance to build and hone public speaking, communication, research and teamwork skills as well as step out of their shell and build self-confidence and character.

BioBakes

By Miss Emma Wood



The Physiological Society hosts a national competition every year for bakers of any age to demonstrate a biological process/principle via the medium of baking! 15 pupils across multiple year groups competed this year, and we had two shortlisted entries (Visual Trick or Treat by Sanjana, and Sensational Skin by Anvi, Arya and Saanvi, all Year 8) which are now featured on the competition website for all to see! We had some great entries this year, which will hopefully serve as inspiration for next year's bakers – well done everyone!



Sixth Form Bake Off

By Rachana Cambampaty

The Great Herschel Bake Off was a truly wonderful experience. The day began with the first daunting task: making gingerbread. We were only given two things essential to survival in all baking endeavours: an hour, and a recipe. Nonetheless, I must admit, it was rather exciting.

The second round comprised of the showstopper yule log. We had envisioned a rather extravagant idea and the worry was whether we'd be able to execute it flawlessly in time. I'd also never tried the recipe before, so everything could have gone horribly wrong. The only way to surpass this fear was to follow the recipe to a T. After two gruelling hours of baking, we'd done it. We weren't confident we'd win, but we were proud of our creation, nonetheless. We then had to wait for the judges' verdict, and we peeked through the window every now and then just to gather an idea as to who had won the glory of the respect of the hard-to-impress judges; all we could do was hope. After what seemed like an eternity, we were finally called back, so the verdict could be delivered. Mrs Pether announced the runners up and the unlucky 'losers', and the anticipation thus melted to a successful finish, as we were crowned winners.

Christmas Shoebox Appeal

By Sheetal Khosla

As the new Charity Prefects, we decided upon FSCI's shoebox appeal to be the first charity Herschel fundraises for this year. Each form was given the task of filling and decorating shoe boxes with presents for the less fortunate children in south-eastern European countries. FSCI help to raise awareness for social change and inclusion. The students at Herschel did amazingly, many making their own boxes and filling them with gifts at home. As a school we gathered over 200 boxes. These Christmas boxes will go to abandoned children living in state care, poor rural schools, prisoner's children and refugees. These presents will help to show those less fortunate how loved they are and spread happiness in their community at Christmas time. This fundraiser allowed for forms to come together as a team, build leadership and organisational skills. It was a great success and we hope this can be continued annually.

Art Competition Winner

By Miss Fozia Shafique

Over the past month, students in Year 7- 9 were invited to enter a Christmas card competition run by Simply Education. Students were encouraged to show off their artistic flair through creating a festive card design. I am pleased to announce that following on from last year's success which saw Nidhi (Year 10) winning the competition, this year we have another winner: Yashita Ghate in 8R! Congratulations to Yashita! Her design will now be printed professionally and sent out as Simply Education's annual card. We hope you enjoy the card just as much as we do. Well done to all those that entered.

BioArtAttack Competition

By Gunveen Kaur

The BioArtAttack competition allowed students to show off their "something related to biology" in any form of artwork. I participated in the competition, as I wanted to see how far my imagination could take me. My project was about the different parts of the brain. To create it, I used various coloured pulses and sweets to represent different areas.

I really enjoyed this competition because it brought out the creative side of everyone and didn't limit our imagination. It allowed us to keep an open mind to new ideas, think carefully and become independent with our work. Research and patience were needed, and at times it seemed like my plan wouldn't work. However, I realised that BioArtAttack was meant to be a fun competition which anyone could take part in.

With this positivity, I created my project. I must say, it looked quite good! Apart from mine, the four other entries that were sent off looked amazing as well: a kidney model, plant cells poster, foetal development model and a 3D brain model. The hard work and care put into them was evident. Everyone else that participated had expressed their enthusiasm for their individual projects; I feel that everyone thought this competition was about enjoying their work – not about winning.

HGS Virtual Chess Club

By Mr David Brown

The online virtual chess club has continued with 35 new Year 7 players joining in and about 10 from other year groups. We have 109 players on the books with about 50-60 attending weekly.

The sessions start with a well-prepared lesson from either Shreyas Mathur or Mr David Brown. This is followed by a 4-game tournament on the Lichess platform. The results are collected and players move up or down the ladder accordingly.

On Tuesday 30 November the chess club hosted an inter-form tournament with the following players making the top 3 in each year group

Year Group	1st Place	2ND Place	3rd Place
7	Noel Ashiedparambil	Om Gore	Ayman Ahmad
8	Ojas Ritesh	Samuel Brown	Ahmed Bedreddine
9	Abinash Yogarajan	Saketh Manda	Yashas Patni
10	Eric Nasim	Hamza Maniar	Mohamed Bouzid

Chess club is open to all Herschel Pupils and if there are any who would still like to join they are most welcome. Chess club happens online on Tuesdays 16h30-18h00. This short video has details on how to register on Lichess.org and join the HGS Chess club:

https://www.loom.com/share/09293c8f2ca54802abb263311fe09453

Year 8 Design and Technology

By Mr Peter Nti

KS3 have enjoyed an exciting term in Design and Technology working through their projects. Below are some photos of their work: Year 7's Trophies, Year 8's Automata and Year 9's Speakers and Pterodactyls.

KS3/4 Top 20
By Mrs Chloe Barton

Enjoy celebrating those students who have achieved the most merit points in their year group! Congratulations all!

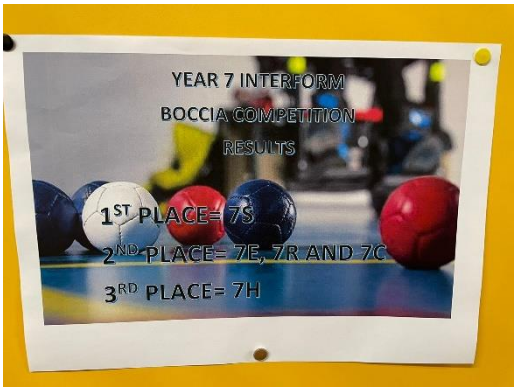
TOP 20

Year 7			Year 8			Year 9			Year 10			Year 11		
Full Name	Reg Group	Points	Full Name	Reg Group	Points	Full Name	Reg Group	Points	Full Name	Reg Group	Points	Full Name	Reg Group	Points
Kaur, Gunveen	7R	51	Haq, Umer	8R	49	Khan, Shamaila	9H	48	Fatima, Noor	10E	48	Brown, Daniel	11S	31
Essien, David	7S	47	Patel, Param	8S	40	Jayarajan, Parvathy	9R	36	Nainu, Rajan	10S	44	Ahmed, Abdullah	11S	26
Acharya, Rijuta	7C	42	Azam, Taha	8C	39	Faisal, Yusuf	9H	35	Rao, Surabhi	10R	39	Morkeh, Melinda	11S	26
Kothari, Saanvi	7S	42	Walia, Manjot	8R	36	Yasir, Zainoor	9C	35	Borda, Vrushti	10E	37	Ali, Adeeb	11H	22
Yousaf, Abdulrahman	7S	39	Mitchell, Harvey	8C	34	Chaudhry, Eshal	9S	34	Ulhaq, Emen	10C	37	Gupta, Riya	11S	22
Krol, Dominik	7H	36	Abraham, Samuel	8H	33	Yousaf, Noor	9R	34	Elango, Sweety	10S	33	Muchibi, David	11S	22
Pallikkathodi Erathali, Haneen	7S	36	Ritesh, Ojas	8S	31	Banga, Manraj	9C	33	Morris, Daena	10C	33	Vaid, Rahul	11S	22
Dave, Yuvraj	7C	34	Ali, Selasi	8R	30	Kakran, Roma	9H	33	Sattar, Hafsah	10C	32	Naseha, Ikra	11R	21
Parida, Divyansh	7S	34	Brown, Samuel	8R	30	Damle, Nikita	9C	32	Asif, Aayan	10E	31	Dhanoa, Manjot	11R	20
Derdzinski, Dorian	7H	33	Karwa, Saanvi	8S	30	Saleem, Ahsan	9R	32	Rutherford, Cerys	10H	31	Young, Rayne	11C	20
Nair, Anirudh	7S	33	Samydurai, Hari	8C	30	Khurram, Fahad	9R	30	Srikrishna, Akshith	10S	31	Arutselvam, Renita	11S	18
Osei, Lewis	7R	33	Arif, Yahya	8R	29	Jeyabalan, Abhina	9C	29	Garg, Anika	10S	29	Jeyarajah, Sabinaa	11H	18
Jafari, Aylin	7E	32	Aslam, Ana	8S	29	Vaidyanathan, Advaith	9R	29	Kirubaharan, Abbishaan	10S	29	Saini, Dhruv	11C	18
Khan, Layla	7C	32	Bhatkal, Anvi	8H	29	Ajmal Khan, Nuha	9S	28	Urmil, Kashish	10C	29	Ahmed, Khadijah	11S	17
Kumar, Arushi	7S	32	Chodimella, Isha	8H	29	Haran, Amber	9R	28	Aeri, Naina	10C	28	Chaudhery, Zinedine	11S	17
Sivathas, Rishickka	7S	32	Ghuman, Harmani	8H	29	Singh, Manraj	9R	28	Bennett, Asia	10C	28	Dhanjal, Avneeta	11S	17
Yadav, Abhinav	7C	32	Kamath, Prithvi	8R	29	Abubakar, Abdullateef	9H	26	Bhavsar, Mahi	10H	28	Kanikkainathan, Tharun	11R	17
Shah, Anushka	7S	31	Mageshwaran, Sanjana	8E	29	Bethamangala Rajasubbanna, Tejas	9C	26	Hoonjan, Sahib	10C	28	Karimov, Rasul	11S	17
Damle, Ananya	7S	30	Sharma, Yatee	8H	29	Labak, Jakub	9S	25	Jaiswal, Ojash	10R	28	Mahmood, Esah	11R	17
Hussain, Ibrahim	7C	30	Adwani, Aarav	8H	28	Mehta, Tia	9R	25	Saiyara, Shamma	10E	28	Patil, Atharva	11S	17
			Jain, Arohi	8S	28				Semar, Younes	10S	28	Shaisha, Wedd	11E	17
			Mujeeb, Anya	8S	28							Sharma, Gurunoor	11S	17

Year 7 Boccia Competition
By Mrs Chloe Barton

Year 7 took part in an interform Boccia competition which they thoroughly enjoyed! Well done to 7S as the winners of the year!

The Boccia Competition was extremely fun and all of the students participating were all determined to win for their tutor group. Supporters from each tutor group were there, cheering their form on whilst boosting morale, making the competition much more worthy of a win. Victories, defeats, and strategies all played a key part in the competition as the results ended up as: 1st place 7S, 2nd place (with a three-way tie) 7E, 7R and 7C and 3rd place 7H. Showing amazing sportsmanship, all of our teams shook hands and congratulated one another, making everyone proud of themselves. We will have to wait until next term to see who the next victors are and I'm sure this will be even better than the last!
By Ria Nainu



Talent Show

By Hemani Sandal

Year 13s enjoyed their very last Talent Show with some memorable acts from across the school! With our very own One Direction, Ariana Grande and Madhuri Dixit taking to the stage to perform singing, dancing, magic and so much more, we feel honoured celebrating the talent within our school. For me, the standout act was indeed the Grinch and Santa Clause sharing a romantic dance under the spotlight! What a way to end our time at Herschel!

Bikeability

By Mr Giles Whittaker

In groups of six, several our students have been undertaking Bikeability training recently. The Level 2 course takes about 8 hours and develops skills for cycling on single-lane roads and navigating simple junctions. All the Year 7 and 8s, who took part, successfully completed the course. The bike trainer, Andrew Paine, was an excellent instructor and told me how impressed he was with our Herschel students. Talhah in Year 8 said 'My favourite thing this term was Bikeability because of how much I learned from it.'

Safeguarding at Herschel

By Mrs Katrina Rodriguez

At Herschel Grammar school, the safety and well-being of all pupils is of the utmost importance. No child should suffer harm, either at home or at school.

If you have concerns about a child's safety or well-being you should contact a member of the safeguarding team.

The Safeguarding Team for 2021-22 is:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Katrina Rodriguez (kro@herschel.slough.sch.uk)

Deputy Safeguarding leads:
Mrs Catherine Sharpe (csp@herschel.slough.sch.uk)

Mr Chris O'Donnell cod@herschel.slough.schuk
Ms Jo Rockall (jro@herschel.slough.sch.uk)
To contact a member of the Safeguarding team in an emergency, please call the school Reception on 01753 520950.

Worried about a child out of school hours?

If you have a serious concern for the immediate safety or well-being of a student out of school hours (including evenings, weekends and school holidays) please contact Slough Social Care out of hours service on 01344 786543.

If you are not a Slough resident, please check your local Social Care services for contact details.

If you think your concern relates to a crime, Thames Valley Police can be contacted on 101 or 999.

Further details can be found on our safeguarding page:

Safeguarding (herschel.slough.sch.uk).

Holiday Activities and Food Programme for Winter 2021

By Mrs Katrina Rodriguez

Please see the attached flyer for some local holiday activities (where a hot meal would also be provided). Places do need to be booked. Please see the flyer for how to book. Enquiries can also be made via email - HAF@slough.gov.uk.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme WI

[This attachment is available here: https://www.herschel.slough.sch.uk/For-Parents/Safeguarding-3]

Stay Safe Online

Please find below the details of the NSPCC updated pages of support for parents about keeping children safe online.

Pupils may be spending more time online over the summer and with routines changing young people may have seen something that isn't appropriate. It might be that an innocent search has led to a not so innocent result, or children might look for things because they are curious. So what do you do?
The NSPCC have put together top tips for parents to know exactly what to do if it happens.

What to do if your child sees something inappropriate online (net-aware.org.uk)

Looking for Talent

We would love to hear about our students' achievements in the wider world. Please send a brief description of any such outstanding successes to talented@herschel.slough.sch.uk, stating the students' name and form.
We will celebrate them in forthcoming newsletters.

Mrs Smith, HPP Co-Ordinator

Christmas Jumpers 2021