

DECEMBER
2004



YSGOL RHIWABON CHRISTMAS 2004



NEWSLETTER



View From the Bridge...

Dear Parents

As we reach the end of what has been a very busy term, I am sure you will be looking forward to the festive period.

There have been many exciting developments in school this year. Our alternative curriculum group in Year 10 has gone from strength to strength, with a number of students profiting from an exciting new range of experiences. Our House System has been rejuvenated, with regular assemblies taking place, many using our new retractable seating in the school gym. Bromcom, our electronic registration system, is beginning to have an impact; our attendance rate now hovers around 92% and this really is something to celebrate.

As you already know our Year 7 intake this year was 160 and early indications are that a similar number of students wish to join us next year. I am immensely proud to be Headteacher of such a rapidly growing, popular school and, as always, I thank you for your support as we continue to move forward at pace.

For students in Years 11, 12 and 13, the Spring Term is the start of the final furlong in a race leading to external examinations and I am sure, like me, you will want to ensure that your sons and daughters approach their studies seriously in this crucial period.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff here in school, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Shaw
Headteacher

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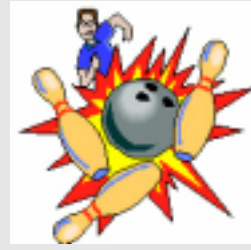
Education Minister to Visit Ysgol Rhiwabon

We are delighted that National Assembly Minister for Education &

Lifelong Learning, Ms Jane Davidson has agreed to make her second visit to Ysgol Rhiwabon to present the prizes at our Awards Evening on Thursday 13 January. Please note that admission to this event has had to be by ticket only. Priority has been given to parents of Prize winners and those children performing on stage. Those with tickets are asked to be seated by 6.50 pm at the latest.

Bowlio deg, canwio a dawnsio llinell

Students from Years 12 & 13 recently spent an interesting & enjoyable time at Glanllyn, all gaining valuable experience of Wales & the Welsh language. Year 13 & Mrs P Gooding were inspired by ex HMI, Nia Royles's speech on Siwan the formidable



French princess of Wales who married Llewelyn the Great. Activities included ten pin bowling, canoeing & line dancing in Welsh ... un, dau, tri!!

Mrs Cooper thwarts shopping hopes!!

"On Wednesday 24 November, Mrs Cooper & her Year 13 Sociology group set off for Manchester, to attend a Sociology Conference. We found the event extremely interesting & a great help with Year 13 revision" reports Sarah Jones. The Conference covered various topics that Y13 will be examined on in the summer. A brilliant time was had by all, especially Mrs Cooper as it was her birthday! The only downfall to an enjoyable day was that Year 13 were desperate to do some shopping..... maybe next time Mrs Cooper?!!



New Staff

Increased numbers in the school have enabled us to appoint several new members of staff this term. Mr Huw Williams has taken over as Head of Design & Technology thereby releasing Mrs Gwyneth Hughes to lead our innovative work on an Alternative Curriculum for Year 10. The Expressive Arts Department has been expanded with the addition of Mrs Fiona Roberts (Drama) & Mrs Sandra Tarver (Music) whilst Mrs Clare Ballamy has joined our PE department. More recently Miss Liz Allen has been recruited to our Humanities department as maternity cover for Ms Alex Cahill & Mrs Georgina Mason has joined the Languages Department. All have settled in well & already considered 'part of the furniture'.

STOP PRESS ► Congratulations to Ms Cahill and her husband on the recent birth of a baby girl.

Cash win for Darika

- The Y10 GCSE Art group recently took part in the Samaritans Poster Competition, promoting awareness of the Samaritans & how they can help young people. Darika Wandless (10CP) gained 2nd prize in this category, winning £75. Well done Darika.



Sixth Form Visit Auschwitz

Year 13 students, Sarah Jones & Christie Gerrard have recently visited Auschwitz in preparation for Holocaust Week in January. They will be giving assemblies in school to all the years & speaking of their experiences to the local community.

Buddying Beats Bullies

A number of Sixth form students have again been trained by the NSPCC Counsellor to act as 'buddies' for younger students. This project, which was equally successful last year, enables Sixth Formers to act as anti-bullying counsellors for their younger peers.

Vacances en France

Plans are in hand for school visits to France in 2005. Students from Years 11 & 12 will be spending a week in a Château in Normandy during the Easter holidays. There, they will be totally immersed in the French language and, hopefully, practise their oral skills in readiness for their forthcoming examinations.

Nearer the end of the school year Years 7, 8 & 9 will also be on their way to France, staying near Arras, where they will be visiting WWI sites of interest before moving on to Paris & the annual visit to Disneyland.



Children in Need

Virtually all of the Sixth form were involved in activities during the recent Children in Need Day. Many surprised their teachers by turning up in fancy dress & a total of £270 was raised for the event by selling kisses, having their legs waxed (boys), baking cakes etc. You may have seen Mrs Hazel Marshall presenting the cheque on behalf of the students on the BBC Wales Television programme that night.



Our Day Out.....

Our new tiered seating was used by parents for the first time when the students who performed 'Our Day Out' so successfully in the Isle of Wight brought their musical to the school. The first night was a near sell-out, whilst the second night was performed to a capacity audience.

To Bike or to Climb

The Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh group spent a day recently at Nant BH Outdoor Pursuits Centre. There, they had the choice of climbing or mountain biking & returned to school happy, but a little tired.



Game, Set & Match

Tennis coaching has been held for Years 7 & 8 girls after school on a series of Thursday nights. The school has been fortunate in having Joanne Whiteley, a professional tennis coach to run these sessions.






Christmas Carol Concert ... This was held at St Mary's Shared Church, Ruabon, on Wednesday 15 December.

Maths Challenge

13 students from Years 11, 12 & 13 competed in the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge. Last year Tom Partridge in Year 11 beat his Year 12 & 13 counterparts. We await the results this year, but Kieran Walsh in Year 11 is determined to give Tom a run for his money. Year 11 students are also eligible to enter the Intermediate Challenge, where they will be joined by Years 10 & 9 on Thursday 3 February.



Christmas in the RS Department

Yet again, the pre-Christmas season has tapped into our students' creative skills with pleasing effect & the assembly rooms will soon be decked with advent calendars produced by Year 7 students.

Not only can they create but they can act too, & gave inventive performances of Dreamtime in the Drama Studio.

Year 8 have also been under the spotlight. We had a very special Seder meal—even if the haroset was a bit strong.

Broader Education

to students about university life & making university applications. Representatives have been welcomed from NEWI, Aberystwyth, Arrive Alive & the Welsh Assembly.

A number of speakers have been welcomed into the school recently to talk



Payment by Cheque

Some difficulties are being encountered when parents pay for school activities or meals without identifying the student concerned. Parents are reminded that all cheques to school should have the name & form of the student written on the back. Cheques for school events should be payable to 'Ysgol Rhiwabon' but cheques for school meals should be payable to 'Wrexham County Borough Council'.

Library News

The Library has been its usual hive of activity this term. Events held there have included:



► The launch of the Readathon to raise money for the Sunshine International Project.

► The 'Wear Yellow Day' held in November was used to raise money for the Sunshine Project & the School Library.

► Year 12 students will be spreading Christmas cheer at Ruabon Library in December. There, they will be helping lead story-telling & craft sessions for young children.

► Potential future students of Ysgol Rhiwabon visited the Library recently & enjoyed taking part in a cartoon character & alphabet game, as well as completing the book treasure hunt.

Author's Visit

Helena Pielichaty visited the school as part of Children's Book Week. She introduced her books to the students & talked to them about writing & how she gets her ideas. The students themselves were invited to take part in an exercise to finish & develop a story. Everyone contributed something & as a result, the story got stranger & stranger!



General Knowledge Quiz

The Library hosted a Year 9 General Knowledge Quiz when teams from Ysgol Rhosnesni, Ysgol Dinas Bran, Ysgol Clywedog, Ysgol Bryn Alyn & Ysgol Rhiwabon took part. Ysgol Rhiwabon ended up third, five points behind the winning team from Rhosnesni.

Up, Up & Away .. But not Yet!!

Unfortunately, bad weather meant that the Year 7 Balloon Race due to be held on 22 October had to be postponed. A new date will be organised soon. It is hoped that the destination of the balloons will be plotted on a map & linked with the Year 7 lessons in Geography.



Student Working Groups

A number of working groups have been formed in the Sixth Form. They have accepted responsibilities for various events & activities in the school. These include organising the carol service, helping with the Year 6 Open Evening, assisting in the running of football teams & designing improvements to their own common room.



Conwy Climb for Geography Students

Year 11 GCSE Geography students went to Llandudno on Monday 18 October to collect data for their coursework. The students worked in small groups on the beach in Llandudno and on Conwy Mountain. This year we introduced a new investigation—a study of microclimate along a transect from sea level to Conwy Mountain. Here we measured air temperature, soil temperature & air pressure every 25 metres from sea level to 244 metres above sea level. By the time we got to the top the students deserved their well earned rest!

Environmental Work as part of the curriculum

The Year 10 Alternative Curriculum Group has been working at Tŷ Mawr Country Park since the beginning of the Autumn Term. Every fortnight an afternoon has been spent at Tan-y-Cut Woods, undertaking practical work. The group has cleared broadwalks, trimmed back overhanging branches & cleared streams. Recently, they have improved access in the woods by repairing wooden steps. The next project is to build a small wooden bridge across a stream. A big 'thank you' to Bill, the warden at Tŷ Mawr Country Park, who has been working with us.

Paper Recycling Project



Since September Year 8 tutor groups have been responsible for running the paper recycling project at Ysgol Rhiwabon. The aim of the project is to make sure that all waste paper from the school goes for recycling ie newspapers, waste paper, magazines. Staff & students put the paper into boxes which are located in every teaching room & office. These boxes are then emptied by Year 8 tutor groups every Wednesday on a rota basis. The boxes are taken to the school's paper bank. When this is full it is emptied & the school receives money for each tonne collected.

Mathematics Problems—can you solve them?

SoaP Problems

In each of these puzzles, the number is the clue for what each letter stands for.

For example ... 5 = SoaP 5 = Sides of a Pentagon

7 = DiaW

100 = CiaM

90 = DiaRA

2 = LoSoaR

86400 = SiaD

180 = ASoaT

12 = EoaC

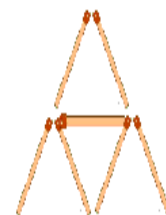
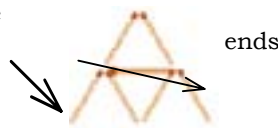
60 = EAiaET

Matchstick Puzzle

Arrange 9 matchsticks like this

Remove 2 matches to leave 2 equilateral triangles.

Solution must have no loose match



THE OLD BOYS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Parents may be interested to read about the development of the Old Boys' Grammar School site. Gower Homes have consulted Ysgol Rhiwabon and preserved many of the oldest external features. They have continued to work with the school by arranging a competition to name the site. Chloe Hughes, currently in Year 10, was the winner with her title 'Old School Court'. Gower Homes are also the main sponsors of our splendid new student planners and recently donated some surplus computers for use in the school. The school wishes to thank them for their support and looks forward to a continuation of these links. Below they have outlined some details of their work.

GOWER HOMES, OLD SCHOOL COURT, PONT ADAM

The conversion of the Old Lower School in Ruabon has proved a challenging yet rewarding project for Gower Homes. The primary objective was to provide modern, high-specification homes on 2 floors whilst retaining the original character of the buildings, particularly the external appearance which has required several of the older skills and crafts being employed.

The roof was entirely replaced in traditional Welsh slate, the finials at the apex of the roof being hand-made to replace several which were missing. Unobtrusive Velux windows in the roof provide additional light.

Much of the East façade (along Lower School Lane) was originally rendered, this has been replaced by red facing bricks to be in keeping with original Ruabon red bricks. This wall also contains new stone door and window apertures, hand-carved to match existing masonry.

These refurbishments will enable these fine old buildings to retain their originality and charm.

The four units have now been completed, one of which has been fitted out as a furnished showhouse and can be viewed between the hours of 10.00am to 4.45pm, Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday & Wednesday).

We are now looking forward to our new development at New Hall Park Phase III, Ruabon where we shall be building 2, 3 & 4 bedroom homes. It is anticipated that these properties will be released early 2005.



Ysgol Rhiwabon
Ruabon
Wrexham
LL14 6BT
Tel: Wrexham (01978) 822392
Fax: (01978) 810230

Headteacher /Pennaeth - Peter Shaw BA -Headteacher

"Ysgol Rhiwabon provides good opportunities for pupils' academic, personal and social development"
Estyn Report May 2003

E-mail: mailbox@rhiwabon-high.wrexham.sch.uk
Website: www.ysgolrhiwabon.co.uk



Cricket

News.. Several students have been attending NE Wales cricket trials & playing for various clubs in the indoor league which takes place in the Sports Hall every Tuesday evening.



Football News ..

Teams in Years 7, 8, 9 & 10 have had a full set of fixtures this term. All teams have achieved success but our Year 8 team currently remains unbeaten & if they win their next 2 games will win the Wrexham County Under-13 League. Thanks must go to our Year 12 & Year 13 students who helped with the various teams. Congratulations to Gareth Partridge (Year 8) who has been selected for the North Wales Regional Development squad.



Hockey News ..

Congratulations to Billy Swarbrick who recently represented North Wales Under-13s against South Wales.



Gavin's Great Occasion

Gavin Vaughan (Year 12) was given the opportunity of a lifetime as Wales played host to the All Blacks at the Millennium Stadium recently. Gavin entered & won the competition 'Make Rugby Dreams Happen' - his prize was the chance to see the build-up behind the scenes & meet the Welsh rugby squad ahead of their Autumn International match with New Zealand. Gavin said, "All my friends are really jealous & - like me—can't actually believe I've won".

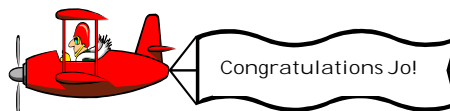
PE & School Sport Rhiwabon Development Centre

- ▶ **Dance & Gymnastics** are again the main focus of the Development Centre this term.
- ▶ **Mr Bingham** has been mentoring staff in 4 of the feeder schools in Gymnastics. He will continue the process with the remaining 4 schools after Christmas.
- ▶ **The Development Centre** held a Gymnastics INSET course at Ysgol Rhiwabon on Friday 26 November. A total of 60 primary school teachers from the local area attended the course provided by Ian Gadd from UWIC.
- ▶ **Dance Taster Day** was held in October. Mrs Ballamy is now teaching dance to Year 7 students.
- ▶ **Gymnastics Club** is held during lunchtime on Wednesdays. There has been an excellent response to this club with students working towards Gymnastic Awards.



Joanne Wins Again in Tae Kwan Do!

Joanne Chalk (Year 13) recently won the Cadet Girls Heavyweight Blue & Red Belt in Coventry. This is the biggest-ever competition held by TAGB with over 2,000 competitors. Well done, Joanne!



Two Minibuses & A Van

Eagle-eyed members of the community will have noticed that we now have two 17-seat new minibuses supplied by Arthurs of Oswestry. Our school van has been spruced up with the same livery produced to our own specifications by Sign & Design. We wish to thank Steve

Rowson of Arthurs of Oswestry (Tel 01691 652235) and Jean of 'Sign & Design' (Tel 01691 658144) for their assistance in arranging this.

