

Hurst News



Senior School Newsletter no 8

September 2008



The Shell go active at Blacklands Farm

Dear Parents

We are at that stage in term when the start seems like a long time ago. The new pupils and staff are no longer new and have already achieved so much. Induction went well (see page 2). We have already had our first pupil production of the term, "An Inspector Calls", which was excellent - acted in, directed and produced by pupils, as well as a staff production, "Death and the Maiden", directed by a pupil (page 4). The choir has sung at Chichester Cathedral - beautifully (page 3). The musicians have played a concert for the Hurst Arts Festival, as well as a charity concert in Keymer. The rugby and hockey sporting seasons are off to a fine start, with some extraordinary results from our rugby players and some impressive performances by the girls (pages 5-6). In addition, the CCF and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme are well underway and increasing numbers. Finally, academic work is cracking on. It has been a busy few weeks.

In this newsletter, I hope that you will get a flavour of what pupils have been doing so far, but also a brief look over what happened during the summer vacation.

Good reading.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Kelly'.

Academic Hurst

The new School year starts

Creative Hurst

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The Shell at Blacklands Farm

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DIARY DATES

Michaelmas Term
Drama Productions

The Silver Sword
Wed - Fri 8th - 10th October

King Lear
Wed - Fri 5th - 7th November

Pygmalion
Wed - Fri 19th - 21st November

Tickets are available free of charge from the Lodge.

The new school year at Hurst

Induction

by Richard Taylor-West

The Induction period, those first three days of term, is always a challenging time for the Senior School. Six hundred people come home to Hurst, or arrive for the first time, and are met with a whole series of activities and events, co-ordinated every year by a mildly nervous, yet optimistic, Richard Taylor-West.

The Shell and the new Lower Sixth are introduced to facilities, staff, new language (What is Congo?) in a full and varied range of programmed sessions including: teambuilding with Mr Simkins and his crews, study skills, practical sessions in the Learning Resources Centre, tutorials and barbeques.



Shell Team Building Activities



Lower Sixth Barbeque

The Remove spend a great deal of time 'learning about learning' in the form of an intensive Study Skills Programme delivered by their tutors, which is timely as they are about to embark on their GCSE courses and need all the help they can get with absorbing knowledge and skills.

The Fifth Form and Upper Sixth are met by what have become known as Startup Tests – what the Headmaster fondly calls 'sports hall moments'. The tests are designed to see how much has been achieved over the holiday in terms of learning and to remind those two year groups about the importance of the weeks and months ahead of them.

The programme ran smoothly and the finale was a presentation given by Freddie Knoller one of the last surviving veterans of the Nazi concentration camps. The entire Senior School listened in awe as he told us his life story. He conjured visions of the Gestapo, the war time girls of Montmartre and the horrors of Auschwitz. His story was incredible, leaving us all with a great deal to think about.



Dance

by Graeme Spencer



On Thursday 18th September the dance masterclass led by Kevin Jewel – former dancer with the Frontline Dance Company and SignDance Collective - was a roaring success for all who

attended. Male students were challenged with physically explosive dance material which attracted quite an audience within the Prep School. Kevin commented on the strength executed and fearless conviction demonstrated from the performances of our male students.

The Est.05 and Est.07 Dance Company members were also treated to an hour of Kevin's expertise. Dancers were led through a lyrical sequence, combining a sense of weight, suspension and locomotion. Kevin was impressed with their drive and discipline and remarked how confidently they were able to pick up the material, quickly progressing to performing this to a high standard whilst retaining an air of grace and eloquence. I coordinated this masterclass and felt particularly proud of all the company dancers who were a joy to watch moving in full flow and it was clear that many became completely lost in the moment.

Music

by Neil Matthews

Choral Evensong

Hurst College Chamber Choir was extremely privileged to be invited by the Dean of Chichester to sing Evensong on 17th September. The choir consists of sixteen of the College's finest singers and this means that everyone's contribution is crucial to the overall sound. They are a talented group of pupils indeed.

Evensong is a service that consists of a vast quantity of music that ranges from the sixteenth century Versicles and Responses to a final choral anthem. The choir chose to sing some big repertoire which included the famous setting of the Magnificat and

Nunc Dimittis by Stanford in C Major and an anthem by the contemporary composer Maurice Bevan, There's a Wideness in God's Mercy. It was a delight for the choir to sing in such a beautiful building with such a fantastic acoustic and the singers really felt that they could let themselves go.



This was, without a doubt the finest musical venture that I have been involved with since I have arrived here at Hurst and it was a pleasure to be a part of such a special and memorable service. The pizza for the choir afterwards was well deserved!

Music at The College

Thursday night saw the Music School's contribution to this year's Hurst Festival. The concert showcased Hurst's finest talent to an audience from the village and wider community and opened with the Chamber Choir fresh from their success at Chichester Cathedral.

The choir sang two pieces accompanied at the piano and this set the scene beautifully for Alex Gatton on the clarinet. Alex played the Fantasy Pieces by Schumann – not easy in any way. He played with poise, polish and panache and there were some beautiful, lyrical passages. Daniel Urban followed playing some slow jazz on the Tenor Saxophone to a by now rapt audience. Daniel really kept the mood extremely well, preparing the way for Sophia Woodward who played a giant of twentieth century clarinet repertoire, the Clarinet Sonata in B Flat by Paul Hindemith. There was much rhythmic playing here and the audience finished the first half dazzled by Sophia's technical fluency and musicality.

Kate Bray, the Assistant Director of Music and College Organist, played her socks off. Hurst pupils

are very lucky to be able to work with such a talented and experienced accompanist.

The second half of the concert moved to ensembles and began with the Clarinet Ensemble who played a variety of music ending with a cheeky Charleston. The sax ensemble entertained and bemused playing *Carnival* by Karen Street – a piece that ends with the players walking off whilst they play causing the music to fade away in all different directions. The Jazz Band under the direction of Andrew Sutton rounded off the concert with a great blend of toe-tapping numbers both fast and slow. The band is really sounding good at the beginning of the year and this bodes well for a great tour to California in March 2009.

Drama

by Nicholas Beeby

We have already seen two plays performed this term and there has been much activity besides with auditions right across the year groups for the productions taking place later in the year.



Death and the Maiden by Ariel Dorfman

Upper Sixth former, Cai Jones recently undertook the difficult and challenging task of directing three members of staff in Ariel Dorfman's play 'Death and the Maiden.' The play centres on the experience of Paulina Escobar and in the newly-formed

Chilean democracy in the early 1990's, living with the memory of having been kidnapped and tortured fifteen years earlier. The play is an intense piece which leaves the audience wondering about what really happened and what was the reality of Paulina's state of mind.

An Inspector Calls by J B Priestley

This is Hurst's third year of involvement in the Hurst Festival. This year we entered the hugely popular 'An Inspector Calls' and played to packed houses both nights. Again, for the third year running, the play was directed by sixth formers. Abigail Walker and Alex Heaton did a remarkable job of putting together a



very self-assured piece that showed off their talents and the talents of their excellent cast well.

Forthcoming Drama Productions:

The Silver Sword 8th - 10th October

Another Hurst tradition continues this year: the Michaelmas term production directed by our gap student. Following on from last year's 'The Chrysalids' directed by Francesca Zoutewelle (who, incidentally, has just started her studies at RADA), Olivia Robinson directs 'The Silver Sword', adapted by Stuart Henson from the popular children's book by Ian Serraillier. A cast of nearly thirty will help to recreate war-torn Warsaw in the Bury Theatre.

King Lear 5th - 7th November at Hurst

The annual Shakespeare production is always a highlight in the Hurst drama calendar. This year's 'King Lear' is particularly auspicious as it will arrive at Hurst's Bury Theatre fresh from appearing in venues in Beijing and Shanghai. The cast of seventeen set off for China at the beginning of half term and will take some Western theatrical traditions to the East as well as experiencing a huge amount that Chinese culture has to offer.

Pygmalion 19th - 21st November

The newest member of the Drama department, Jonathan Scott, directs what is arguably George Bernard Shaw's most popular piece, Pygmalion. This is yet another opportunity for more pupils to become involved with drama at Hurst and provides an opening for the Shell to participate in a production in this, their first term.

Tickets for all three productions are available, free of charge, from the Lodge.

Shell Day at Blacklands Farm

Friday, 12th September

by Richard Taylor-West

Annually, the Shell – all of them – are taken to Blackland Farm, near East Grinstead, for an activity day. The purpose of the trip is to bond the year group by placing many of them outside their comfort zone.

The day is masterminded by Fred Simkins who is supported by Richard Taylor-West and a host of experts. Mr Higgins swung the Shell from the tower on site abseiling; Mr Sambles and Mr Shearman put them through their paces on climbing walls, whilst Miss Dunning and Miss Bray coordinated the orienteering. Mr Kift was a highlight of the day, driving the troops through low rope tests and tunnels!

The event lasted all day and Shell returned to campus just in time for Chapel – exhausted but elated. A great deal of fun was had and a lot of new relationships forged. It was great day out.



Sporting Hurst

Netball

by Rebecca Jutson

This term we have introduced Netball training on a Saturday morning for the girls involved in the Sussex Knock-out Cup and this has already helped our U14A and U19B squads to victories over The Towers Convent and Sussex Downs College respectively. The U19A squad will take on St Bede's and the U15B face Sackville. The U15A squad (who won at U14 level last season) and the U16A squad both had a bye in the first round, are waiting to see which opponents they will face in the next round.

The girls are highly motivated and appreciate the opportunity to train in this term. We also have the National Schools Tournament starting in November and it will be good to see the girls better prepared than ever before as a result of innovation of the Saturday morning training.

Sporting Hurst cont'd

Rugby by Rob Kift

Rugby has got off to an extremely busy start with 40 matches already played (excluding Cup fixtures). The spirit and tenacity in all teams have been outstanding and it is clear that the boys are enjoying their rugby. Meteoric progress has been made, particularly at the junior end (U14's and U15's) and the quality of play is impressive.



The 1st XV has bedded down nicely and, with some dominant performances by the forward pack, won against Christ's Hospital, drawn 0-0 with Worth and won comfortably against Seaford College. A comprehensive 42-0 win in the first round of the Daily Mail Cup over Sackville will be followed next week by a second round match against Sevenoaks, whom we have drawn for the second time in two years. The 2nd XV have set their usual high standards, winning 5 out of their 6 matches thus far, and once again we have a 3rd XV who have played 3 matches, with a win against Christ's Hospital and two losses. The team spirit is commendably strong and additional fixtures have been arranged against such heavyweights as Dulwich and Wellington College.

The U16s have already won 5 matches with the A's winning impressively against Christ's Hospital and Worth. This side has yet to get fully into their stride but promise much. The B's have done brilliantly well winning 3 out of 4 games; a real tribute to enthusiasm and the Hurst spirit, as putting this side out has often relied on participation from some Fifth formers who wouldn't normally represent the school at rugby.

The U15s group is 'flying' with both the B's and C's currently undefeated. The C's have shown real commitment and there will be some additional

fixtures to bolster their season. The B's are arguably our most successful side having already scored 188 points! The A's after a shock defeat in the opening game against Christ's Hospital have 'stepped it up' and are playing some excellent rugby. They have an important Daily Mail Vase match on 2nd October, away at Claverham Community College, Battle.

Finally our U14s have been absolutely fantastic so far. The boys in all three sides are still getting to know each other and it is a real credit to them that they have played such well-integrated and co-ordinated rugby. All three sides are undefeated so the pressure is on to keep that success going.

Girls' Hockey by Chris Wilson

The girls have started the term off with some very strong performances from all the teams. The girls have benefited hugely from the Summer Tour and pre-season training before school started. The senior teams are performing really well with the 2nd XI and U16A teams unbeaten after playing Cranleigh and Epsom! The 1st XI have had a tough two weeks but started really well against Sutton Valence.



The improvements in the junior teams are now really starting to show with the U15A producing two great performances against Epsom and Eastbourne in the Sussex Cup. The U15B team have improved hugely from last year and results will start to go their way! The U14A team is a very talented side and having watched them against Epsom they are certainly learning very quickly and are being well coached. The U14B team is also progressing nicely with a playing pattern being set up and the girls working really hard to get that pattern right. With the fixture against Christ's Hospital coming up, the girls could not have wished for better preparation.

Sporting Hurst Summer 2008

Hockey Tour to South Africa Summer 2008

by Chris Wilson

47 Hurstpierpoint College Hockey players - both boys and girls aged between 14 and 17 - accompanied by Hurst staff undertook a packed round trip to South Africa covering some 15,000 miles in just 19 days. First stop was the Hockey Academy in Potchefstroom, followed by a hectic schedule of fixtures against South African schools and colleges, in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth to name but a few, for both the boys' and the girls' teams.



The trip was not just about hockey, however, and visits included a day spent discovering the history and traditions of the native South African tribes and visiting 5 different types of tribal village; the Maropeng Cradle of the Earth Museum where some of the earliest fossils of mankind are to be found; a day spent on an ostrich farm at Oudtshoorn, the 'ostrich capital' of the world; a jeep safari at a game reserve, tempered by a sobering visit to the Langa Township near Cape Town.



All in all, Hurst played an extraordinary 32 hockey matches during the trip winning 14, forcing 4 draws and incurring a total of 15 losses. I was enormously proud of our pupils. They conducted themselves

superbly both on and off the pitch, they learned a great deal about themselves and each other and, through staying with host families, gained an invaluable insight into life today in this great 'Rainbow Nation.'

Pre-Season Rugby Ireland

by Rob Kift

47 boys from this season's U15A team and 1st XV squad spent 4 days in a pre-season training camp based at the University of Limerick in Ireland. Using the University's excellent sports facilities (which incidentally are used by Munster's professional squad), the players were put through their paces by the Hurst coaching team. Torrential rain remained



the backdrop to the trip but the spirits were never dampened; indeed the first day saw our players take to the River Shannon in 'Dragon' boats as part of the team-building experience. Both squads played two matches on tour. The U15's played Presentation College (Dublin) and Garry Owen RFC and the 1st XV Clanwilliam from Tipperary and Garry Owen RFC. The whole experience was invaluable in building team cohesion and preparation for the beginning of the new season.

Congratulations to our Athletes

Three of the College's Athletics Squad competed in the English Schools Athletics Association national finals held in Gateshead in mid July: Holly Webb in the Junior Girls' Javelin, Warwick Meyler in the Junior Boys' 400m and Cameron Bygraves in the Intermediate Boys' Javelin.

Warwick also took part in the National AAA Championships in Birmingham in August and won the silver medal in the U15 400m in a time of 52.49 seconds, a new personal best by almost 2 seconds.

To compete at these levels of competition is a wonderful achievement. Well done!



New Classroom Block

The preliminary ground works for the new classroom block are now well under way. The piledriver (pictured here) and team have been working hard.

Fortunately, the site is screened off from the rest of the campus and pupils are getting used to the new routes to and from the classroom block. We are pleased to report that disruptions and noise have, thus far, been minimal.

Refurbishment and new Medical Centre Accommodation

Despite considerable growth in past years – numbers in the senior school have increased by over a third in the past four years – Hurst remains very much a boarding school. Sixty per cent of our pupils board and we have therefore started on a long-term programme to increase the number of beds in the College and to improve the standard of our boarding accommodation – which, in some houses, was starting to look rather tired. Work this year has included refitting parts of Star House, increasing the capacity in St John's, replacing the shower facilities in Shield and converting the former medical centre into a sixth-form annex of Martlet. As part of this project, the medical centre has been relocated into the buildings at the centre of the campus and we now have facilities which are well equipped and open to all College pupils.



Last, but not least, most visitors to the College over the past six months will have noticed that the Chapel has been swathed in scaffolding. This is the latest stage of another long-term programme to renovate the College's historic listed buildings, and has involved a substantial amount of work to the roof, flint and stone-work on the north and east walls of the Chapel, as well as the renovation (off site) of all the windows – including the superb, large east window. In addition to the external works, the interior of the Chapel has been redecorated, the lighting renewed and new oak benches installed to provide space for the increased numbers of pupils and staff who meet and worship in what is both the physical and spiritual centre of Hurst.