

# MOOR HOUSE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER EASTER EDITION MARCH/APRIL 2010

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Welcome to the Easter Newsletter!



### MACBETH at the GLOBE



Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, all students from Key Stages 3 & 4 attended a matinee performance of 'Macbeth' at the Globe Theatre in London. They were accompanied by staff from the teaching, therapy and residential care departments. Thanks must go the staff in the administrative and medical departments for their support in the organization of the trip. This production of Macbeth was specifically designed for a young audience and the modern costume design and set really drew the students in. They were impressed by the characters using zip wires to move from the upper galleries to the stage- quite a feat! The students were, as always, impeccably behaved and a delight to take out. It is hoped that the school's ongoing Globe Link membership will allow us to make this an annual event in the coming years.

*Please look at the display board outside the music room to see some of the comments that students made about the performance - this display was designed and put up by some of the year 10 students*

# World Book Day

This year, World Book Day was celebrated in school with a carousel of workshops exploring different aspects of writing. The students in key stages 2 & 3 attended these workshops in their class groups. They learned how to 'Train a Dragon' and cooked recipes featured in some of Roald Dahl's stories. They also explored the use of idioms and wrote poems of their own. There was also the opportunity to read the books that they had chosen to buy with their World Book day vouchers.

The feedback received from both the staff and the students was very positive. The event will no doubt be repeated in future years.

## BLOOD BROTHERS ASSEMBLY ROOMS TUNBRIDGE WELLS

February 24<sup>th</sup> 2010 1.30 pm.

Students: Music and Drama Options Groups

Staff: Mrs. C. Redgrove; Miss K. Horne; Miss K. Golby; Mrs. D. Carter

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Mrs. Carter battled gallantly through some awful weather, and dropped us at the theatre doors, a large Victorian building, with not much atmosphere. However, we had very good, raked seats—just above the sound system and therefore much to the delight of Caoimhe who is passionate about sound effects!

Blood Brothers has to be a classic. It never fails to draw in the audience and make them laugh, cry and think in almost equal proportions. The students had been well briefed as to the story line, and they had been asked to consider aspects of the play such as the relevance of wealth v. poverty in the '70's.

It was wonderful to observe our students totally engrossed from beginning to end. They loved the antics of Mickey (Mrs. Johnstone's "kept" twin), and the mock gun battles the children had. Some of the dialogue had been updated, and this caused amusement (in the "rude" bits!!)

The end proved as tense and dramatic as it did thirty years ago, and our group was just as shocked, and to an extent upset as the first audiences must have been. They clapped vigorously at the end.

Getting back to the bus proved a life skills exercise—as we had to cross many busy roads!!!

An amazingly successful outing, and one that should be repeated if ever Blood Brothers is in the area again.

Thank you to the staff for their wonderful support.

Chick Redgrove

## **“Anne Robinson” visits Moor House!**

**A whole school Weakest Link competition was held on 24 February.**

**Adapted to be a house competition and consisting only of science questions, volunteers took the podium and were gradually voted down to a final between William Gell and Tom Barnard. After a tense finish, Tom took the first prize of an iTunes voucher and 30 house points for Blue House. Michael Conlon had good reason to feel aggrieved as he was the innocent victim of a pincer vote-out during one of the later rounds, even though he was at that time the strongest link.**



**Congratulations to all for having the courage to take part, and special congrats to the winner, Tom Barnard!**

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## **PSA BARN DANCE**



Thanks to everyone who attended the Barn Dance on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March helping raise £164.10 after expenses.

Huge thanks to those people who sent in donations and items for the raffle and for all the great support given by the Staff and the Ian Petrie Band helping to make an evening of fun enjoyed by all!

The PSA would be supporting the Summer Fete and so look out for advertisements on this next fundraising activity.

Thank you

Suzanne

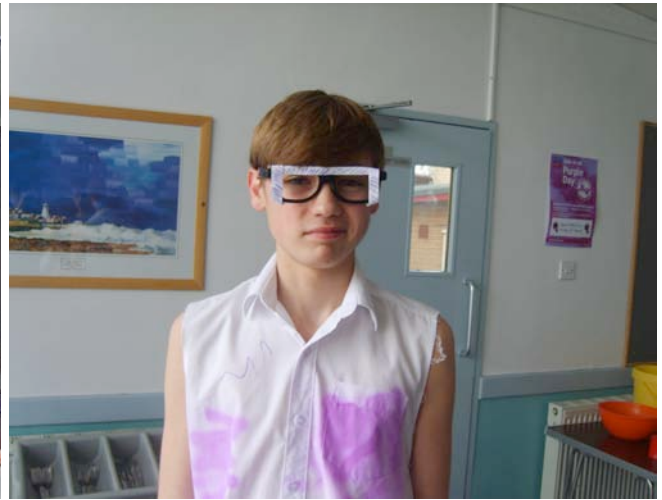
# PURPLE DAY FOR EPILEPSY AWARENESS

We would like to thank all students and staff for wearing purple and supporting Purple Day. We have raised the awareness of Epilepsy throughout the school and the students have learnt a lot about this condition. Special thanks to Residential Care Workers for making the badges.

Kind regards

Epilepsy Champions

Shirley, Suzie, Karen and Jackie



## Key Stage 4 Educational Visit to Berlin: 25th - 27th February 2010 – Report by Mr. Hart

On Thursday 25th February 28 sleepy students in Key Stage 4 and 14 bleary-eyed adults were woken from their slumbers at around 3am. Despite the reduced amount of sleep it didn't take long for the excitement to kick in as we had breakfast and waited for our coach to turn up, because the day had finally arrived - we were off on our Educational Visit to Berlin!



Our EasyJet flight departed from Gatwick Airport on time and as we flew in over Berlin we could see snow covering the landscape, confirming the recent reports of freezing cold weather. After landing we collected our luggage and found the coach that took us to our hotel. We were shown to our comfortable rooms and then enjoyed a late breakfast of tasty German food.



After breakfast we headed off to our first visit of the day - the Berlin 1936 Olympic Stadium! Berlin was originally going to host the Olympic Games in 1916, however due to World War I these games were cancelled. When Berlin was selected to host the 1936 summer games a new stadium was built and it is still there today - although it has been given a modern new roof to keep the rain off the spectators.

In 1936 Adolf Hitler and his newly elected National Socialist party - which is now commonly called the Nazi party - hoped to show the world that the Aryan 'master race' athletes were the best. Nazi propaganda promoted the Aryan race as being better than all others, and considered people of other origins as inferior or even as sub-human. Hitler was disappointed to find that Jesse Owens, an African American, proved this idea very clearly wrong by going on to win four gold medals at the games.



These days the stadium is home to the Hertha BSC Berlin football team, and in 2006 the Fifa

World Cup Final was held here. National and international matches are regularly held here, and although the only thing on the pitch when we visited was snow, it did not stop people enjoying the sights and taking in the history of this amazing location.



After visiting the stadium - and the stadium shop - we headed on to our second destination of the day, the Charlottenburg Palace. This is the largest palace in Berlin, and has a very personal connection to one of our students who is related to the Prussian royalty who lived in this palace for a time! Although the beautiful gardens, modelled on the gardens at Versailles in Paris, were covered by snow it was evident that this would have been a wonderful place to live.

Our final stop for the day was Humboldt University, the oldest university in Berlin. Many famous people from German history studied here, including Albert Einstein. However, it is also remembered because Joseph Goebbels - the Nazi Minister for Propaganda - organised the first of the infamous Nazi book burnings in the square just outside the university. 20,000 books were burned because they contained ideas and opinions that the Nazis did not want people to learn about. A memorial to this awful event is hidden underground in the square - a library that has no books.

With that done, we headed back to the hotel for a delicious dinner and a relaxed evening with some games where the students got to learn some interesting facts about the staff that they thought they knew so well!



We had another early start on Friday morning as we headed off to the Reichstag - the home of German parliament since 1999. It was previously used as the home of German government from 1894 until 1933, when most of the building was destroyed by fire, probably set on purpose by the Nazis to create an excuse to suspend human rights and seize power.



When East Germany and West Germany were reunified at the end of the 20th century, the government of Germany returned to the Reichstag in Berlin, and a brand new glass dome was installed on top of it. This glass dome sits directly above the debating chamber. Visitors can go into the glass dome and look down into the chamber. A spiralling slope inside the dome takes visitors to the top and gave us a superb view of the surrounding Berlin cityscape.



We then went to the Brandenburg Gate, a former gateway to the city of Berlin. It was built in 1791 and modelled on the entrance to the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. In 1933, the National Socialists - the Nazis - marched through it, introducing the darkest chapter in German history which left the city destroyed and Germany divided. Some green statues by the Brandenburg Gate turned out to be human beings but they were kind enough to let us have our photo taken with them!

Next to the Brandenburg Gate is the Holocaust Memorial, built in 2004. It is made up of 2,711 concrete slabs in a grid pattern on a sloping field. The design is meant to produce an uneasy, confusing atmosphere that represents a supposedly ordered and logical system that has gone terribly wrong. Although it sounds a bit odd, the memorial certainly succeeds in creating this creepy feeling of being lost and confused.



Following this we visited the Memorial to the German Resistance museum. Here we learned about people who had opposed and resisted the Nazi regime such as Claus von Stauffenberg, a German Army colonel. Stauffenberg planted a bomb that was meant to blow up Adolf Hitler. Unfortunately the plan failed and he and the other conspirators were executed. Some were shot in the courtyard outside the museum.



After lunch and a hot drink at Starbucks we headed towards our next stop, but got waylaid by

a street vendor selling furry replica Russian hats. Mr. Mayes had been tasked by Mr. Bathe to obtain one of these, and unwittingly started a craze of Moor House School students buying their own. The street vendor was very pleased with this and probably made a whole days' sales in about 30 minutes! However his profits were somewhat reduced by Susie Simpson's impressive haggling skills, including the internationally recognised 'Do I look bothered' expression!

This detour completed we headed on to The Topography of Terror, an outdoor exhibit housed in the excavated ruins of the SS and Gestapo buildings. Our guides explained much of the history of Germany during World War II using a combination of their excellent English and also the source documents and photographs, all of which made a big impression.



Our final stop for the day was the famous Checkpoint Charlie, the main crossing point between East and West Berlin. For many years the city was divided by the Berlin Wall. In the museum we discovered many clever ways people had managed to secretly cross the border. Then it was back to the hotel for a fun evening filled with chicken-wings and music!



Saturday morning had another early start (are you spotting a pattern here?) as we left Berlin and headed north towards the town of Oranienberg. Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp - based just outside this town - was used as a working camp between 1936 and 1950. The freezing cold weather was appropriate for this was a place of death. 200,000 people were taken here, and over half died; from the extreme cold, from disease, from medical experimentation, from torture or by being shot.



The stories we were told here were quite shocking, the more so because they weren't just stories, they were real historical accounts of what people went through. From learning about roll calls that lasted longer than 24 hours, during which people would literally die from cold and

exhaustion, to finding out that the entry point was called 'Station A' whereas the exit point - the gas chamber - was called 'Station Z' as it was 'the end', the experience provoked some emotional reactions from students and staff.

The 'Arbeit Macht Frei' sign, that promised the prisoners that work would make them free, was a cruel trick. For many their only escape was death.



Our last visit was more uplifting - literally - but no less steeped in history. The Berlin TV Tower, built in East Berlin in the 1960s, is at 364m high the tallest structure in Germany, and the fourth tallest freestanding structure in Europe. When the sun shines on the stainless steel dome the reflection usually appears in the shape of a cross of light. People named this 'The Pope's Revenge' to mock the Communist Government of the time, which did not believe in God.

After a visit to the Alexanderplatz shopping centre to stock up on souvenir postcards, chocolates and sweets, we took a high speed elevator to the visitor platform of the TV Tower, 204 metres above the ground, and admired the excellent view of the city below us.



Eventually it was time to come down to earth and start our journey home. After a final opportunity for photos we headed to the airport to catch our flight. Tired out after a full-on three days, it didn't take some people long to fall asleep!

In conclusion, it was a real pleasure to spend time in the company of students and staff who, together, showed what a fun and rewarding experience learning can be. The students were extremely good company on what was a physically and mentally demanding educational visit and they were excellent ambassadors for Moor House School and the UK.

The visit would not have been possible without the dedicated support of Leanne Boyhan, Sue Brady, Mrs. Carter, Miss Gerety, Mrs. Greig, Mr. Kitchen, Mrs. Lee, Mr. Mayes, Mr. Osborne, Susie Simpson, Mrs. Vallance and Mrs. Hanscombe-Vinton. It is a genuine privilege to work alongside such complete professionals who always put the interests and well-being of the students first.

Thanks are also due to all the parents (and staff) who contributed to making the visit possible, particularly Nikki Lawton and Helen Cuthbertson, Linda Squire in the Front Office, as well as Evelyn Demadema and Jill Pascoe in the accounts department. Lastly, my thanks also go to Andy Turner (and the team at Sporting Destinations) for the invaluable support they provided before, and during, this educational visit.

## FOOTBALL Vs BLOSSOM HOUSE

**The senior boys football team played Blossom House on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March on the school field. Moor House ran out winners!**



## Canbury Football Tournament – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March

### **Juniors Year 7, 8, 9**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March a group of 10 boys participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Canbury Invitation Football Tournament. From the beginning the boys were faced with a difficult task to progress having been drawn in the group stages with previous winners The Swedish School. However, in their first game the boys performed heroically to come from a goal behind to draw their first match 1-1 with the Swedish School. In the next game they succumbed 2-1 in another competitive fixture and then faced very strong opposition in Hampton Court House who prevailed 6-1.

Nevertheless the boys enjoyed themselves immensely and bearing in mind the lack of preparation and previous match experience their performance was full of spirit and determination. Congratulations to everyone who attended.

Squad: Will Gell, Sebastian Smith, James Andrews, Henry Ellis, Michael Conlon, Angus Smith, Matthew Bore, Martin Nemry, Hamish Stuart and Jake Ferris.

Danny Carroll



## SWIMMING GALA

On 31<sup>st</sup> March we held our traditional inter house swimming gala. An exciting event culminated in Nelson House winning the trophy and Megan Nardini (Nelson House Captain) taking the best swimmer award.

Thanks go to all the staff who supported the gala and particularly Hayley Chilcott, the coach, who did a great job in this, her first gala.

Congratulations go to all the students who participated as they all did so well and should be very proud of themselves.

Tom Gerred of Year 11 deserves a special mention for helping a fellow student who was in difficulty in the water.



Some of the winning Nelson team with Megan holding her shield and Hamish Stuart holding the House Trophy.

# Oxted Project

Each year all pupils in year 10 take part in the Oxted project. The aim of the project is to give pupils their first taste of the world of work by providing a work placement for a short time, once a week, at businesses in and around the town of Oxted. This year we have planned that, for four weeks before Easter and then another two weeks after, each member of year 10 will journey from Moor House to Oxted to complete their placement each Thursday. The pupils are accompanied on their journey and in Oxted by staff of the Year 10 teaching and therapy departments.

So far our pupils have completed their first four placements (or three slightly longer periods of work). We are grateful to the local businesses that welcome our pupils into their place of work; this year pupils have enjoyed working at food stores, fashion outlets for children and adults, a garden centre, a 'workshop' for elderly and disabled, a charity retail shop, and a book shop/stationers. Even over the short period of these placements pupils are discovering the importance of good organisation, accurate timekeeping, dressing in an appropriate way and being able to get on with new colleagues and members of the public in a work setting. Each week the pupils record their experiences in their 'diary' and try to think of a simple challenge to attempt in the workplace the following week. All our pupils are behaving in an excellent manor, as we would expect, and some have already received compliments from their work colleagues. Each of our Year 10 pupils is benefiting from this experience and most are enjoying their placements, though for some this is a significant measure of how far they have progressed since joining Moor House.

Less of a unique experience, but equally important, are the opportunities afforded to practise travel skills, money skills, buying a meal and eating out. All our pupils are happily purchasing their own train tickets and lunch, though some still need guidance with budgeting and choosing a 'balanced' meal.

We have two weekly sessions remaining on the Oxted project but already we are looking forward to the extended 'work experience' placements later in the year. The pupils have had a chance to make their preferences known and while not all may get their first choice, there are some exciting opportunities available. Detailed arrangements for many of these placements are now being finalised and each pupil is expected to attend a brief 'interview' before final confirmation of their assignment.

The Oxted project relies heavily on a large number of staff working together. Thanks are due to those that work behind the scenes co-ordinating placements, preparing resources and organising pupils as well as those that travel with us to Oxted.

Report by Mr. Osborne

## FAREWELL TO JAMES 'JOCKY' GRANT

The school said farewell to 'Jocky' Grant, who retired at the end of the Spring Term. As a tribute to Jock the school held a special assembly attended by staff and students where everyone wore a hat with a feather which has been Jock's trademark around the school.

Jock was a very popular member of staff who gave a great deal to the school including the organization of the poppy day appeal and the liaison with the Royal British Legion in Oxted, who so kindly allowed our students to attend the Remembrance Day parade and lay a wreath from the school. Jock will be sadly missed and we wish him a long and happy retirement.



## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Examinations begin on May 26th

SATs for KS3 students May 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

SATs for KS2 students May 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>

Sports Day Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June

Leavers' Day Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July