

CGS NEWS

ISSUE 6

THE OFFICIAL NEWS SHEET OF CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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It is always a pleasure to write a few words of introduction to **CGS News**, but the problem with words, I find, is that they are rather like a badly behaved dog: they either refuse to come at all, or else they run off so uncontrollably that by the time you catch your breath they are already down at the printers where they can't be taken back.

It is at embarrassing times like this, therefore, when I see my confused ramblings in print, that I realise the importance of using the right words in the right order, or "Literacy Skills" as this is now called in schools.

My A-level English teacher would often tell us that you have to say what you mean so that you can mean what you say. It took me quite a while to figure that one out, so I will close with what I have meant to say from the very beginning... **Happy 2015!**

K. Mulvenna

K.W. Mulvenna

Jordan received a scholarship of £1,500 for QUB, and CGS's Modern Languages department received £500 to purchase materials to support the teaching of languages.

This year Jordan is studying a joint Honours Degree in Spanish and French at Queen's University and our language teachers are incredibly proud and delighted at his success saying he is "an outstanding pupil who showed great talent and enthusiasm for Spanish and French throughout his studies at Carrickfergus Grammar School."



"This year's Spanish exchange was a truly enlightening and unforgettable experience"

- Robyn Wheeler / Year 14

Spanish Exchange Trip 2014

The trip began on the 17th September when the students set off from Belfast City Airport to travel to Malaga Airport. After a long coach trip to El Puerto De Santa Maria, the CGS pupils finally met up with their exchange partners and the fun began!

The next day, the pupils were up at 8am for a tour of their exchange partners' school, SAFA San Luis. After a quick trip home for lunch and some tricky conversations with Spanish parents, the group went on a trip to the nearby city of Jerez for some shopping, sightseeing and relaxing in the blazing heat.

Friday was another early start for the young travellers as they headed off for a busy day in Cádiz with a brief stop on the beach. Fortunately, the weather was sunnier the next day in Seville where the students toured the bustling city before dancing the night away for Juan's birthday.

Sunday was a much needed day of rest which was a chance for some heartfelt goodbyes as tomorrow they would attend some classes in the Spanish school then go back home. Overall, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience enjoyed greatly by everyone who participated, and it also improved their Spanish!

Santander Essay Competition

Jordan McCullough, our Head Boy of 2013-2014, received first prize in the Santander Schools Essay Competition for Spanish and second prize for French, making him officially one of the top young linguists in Northern Ireland.

As a result, he was invited to attend the Queen's University Belfast School of Modern Languages' prize ceremony.



School Council News

As the new year began we went about electing our new school council to make decisions about school life. Pupils from Year 9 to Year 14 voted for their favourite candidate to take their place on the council, representing their year group.

Some of the things the council have been debating over the years are the creation of an art mural by students, discussing the school's homework policy with the Curriculum Vice-Principal and reviewing key school policies and procedures. It will be an interesting year in 2015...



Team building for the 1st XV

At the start of the season our senior rugby squad took a trip to the Palace Barracks in Holywood to take part in a team training exercise. They were able to experience a wide range of exercises that improved their mental and physical strengths, and got to experience some of what soldiers experience on a daily basis.

The boys were split into two teams and placed head to head in a number of competitive activities ranging from races and circuits to open air laser quest and using each other's strengths and weakness to get across a river using only planks of wood. This certainly demanded good teamwork and ingenuity. That being said, everyone seemed to have a great, if exhausting, day out.



The Soapbox Challenge

In September we saw our STEM work take a new direction with the introduction of our Technology and Design Soapbox Challenge.

In after school sessions, a dedicated group of Year 11 students worked in teams to design and build their custom soapbox racers to compete against each other in time trials in the new year.

The pupils sourced their own wheels and seats and they will have gained invaluable experience working with different materials, manufacturing processes and solving problems along the way by using mathematical and engineering solutions.

Race day should be good fun in 2015....



Young Poet Success

At the beginning of this year, Year 12 pupil Amy Laird entered her poem 'Gone' to the Young Poets at the European Heritage Open Days, and won the opportunity to recite it to an audience of the EHOD, friends and family members of the winners at Stormont Castle on Saturday 13th September.

Her poem, printed below, was chosen from hundreds of entries by Chelley McLear who was the Literature and Verbal Arts Co-Ordinator of the event. The theme of Amy's poem was memories, and Amy chose to write about the death of a loved one. After the reading, Amy and the other competition winners were given a free tour of Stormont Castle. Well done Amy!

Gone

*A pink and white checked dress,
Pigtails in my hair
I walk hand-in-hand with my mother, following in
the black car's wake,
Dead silence in the air.*

*Tears flow down every cheek I see, streams of
suffering and pain.
I look in wonder,
As I see the plain brown box
Go under.*

*If only I had known,
What lay beneath each granite stone I skipped by
My family hurting for the one we lost,
Our final glances upon them nigh.*

*I was too young,
To feel, to understand,
The ache I now know,
By his grave I now stand.*



Charity work in Burma

This Autumn Mr Marshall travelled to Myanmar, formerly Burma, with Stand By Me (SBM). He was part of a team of six teachers who delivered a programme of teacher training in Kalaymyo town.

The team worked in two Christian ethos schools for pupils between 4 and 17 years old. Education was the focus of the trip - to offer opportunities for the teachers in each school to develop existing skills and gain new skills. Currently, there is no teacher training available in Myanmar and teachers do not have to have attended university. Students normally go to university at the age of 16 and graduate at 19 with a standard of education roughly equivalent to A level. Some of the teachers however have completed their schooling at 16 and begun teaching the next academic year at 17 because they were recognised as good pupils.

In this region SBM has 6 homes where sponsored children are cared for and raised in a loving family atmosphere. SBM also supports children to live at home with their families through the child sponsorship programme. The team were privileged to be able to visit the SBM homes and spend time talking to and playing with the children who lived there. This was a very humbling experience, although the homes were sparse and the children had few toys they were very happy playing with each other. These children were the lucky ones because although they had been abandoned, orphaned or street children, SBM had taken them in and was providing for them in a Christian home.

Burmese people that we met on our travels were polite and helpful. Both staff and children in the schools and homes were loving and welcoming and the children all seemed happy. Although they didn't have material wealth they had lots of other people close by them whose friendship they could enjoy. I want to thank Carrickfergus Grammar school pupils, Governors and staff for the financial support they sent and for giving me permission to volunteer in this way. With all the donations received SBM has been able to send money and resources totalling approximately £1500 to support the work in the Kalaymyo region of Myanmar.



Scripture Union

The SU weekend is one of the highlights on the SU calendar; this year was no exception; from the 19th to the 21st September, teachers and pupils from CGS SU went to Castlewellan castle for a fun weekend of praise, prayer and play, along with buns, beat and bant. As soon as we were on the bus at 6pm the fun had started with a sing-a-long to Disney, Christian and chart music.

The rest of the weekend was amazing! It was filled with both funny and heartfelt moments from testimonies and verses to getting lost in a maze. We also had a great speaker who talked us through our theme which was "...be transformed..." in Romans 12vs12. This was all about how God could transform us and use us as his light on earth.

The SU weekend is for both Christians and non-Christians who want to know about God or grow closer to God through their faith and I would recommend it to anyone who is thinking about going next year.



The Flute Challenge

On Saturday 13th September 2014 flautists from all over Northern Ireland travelled to the Kings Hall, Belfast in an attempt to become world record holders. The current record for the "Largest Flute Orchestra" is held in Japan with a total of 3742 participants.

The aim of the World's Biggest Flute Orchestra was to increase the world record to 4000 whilst raising money for charities including the NI Children's Hospice and Marie Curie Cancer Care. A piece was specially composed for the event, "Towards the Blue Horizon" by Mel Orriss. It was designed to be played by all types of flute from classical to Irish, so everyone was able to join in in a group performance at the end of the day.

It was a great day of fun and flute-playing and as a result, four of our pupils can now call themselves World Record holders!





Habitat for Humanity

Ten pupils from Year 13 have been taking part in Habitat for Humanity's 'Good Relations and Citizenship Schools Programme' along with ten students from St. Dominic's High School, Belfast. This three day, cross-community programme allows different schools to come together to demonstrate active citizenship along with helping to build houses for those in need. This experience helped the pupils learn about the issues of poverty, conflict and social justice.

The pupils involved all found the programme motivating and challenging as they had to think about many factors as to why people are in need of this charity.

Dates for your diary

January

- Monday 5th : Return to school ([Week 2 timetable](#))
- Monday 5th - Friday 16th : Year 12 'mock' exams
- Monday 5th - Wednesday 14th : Year 13/14 'mock' exams
- Thursday 8th : 4.15-7.00pm Year 11 Parent/pupil/teacher meetings
- Thursday 15th : Year 8 Parental Information Evening
- Tuesday 20th : Year 10 Parent/pupil/teacher meetings
- Thursday 29th : Open Evening. School closes at 12.40pm

February

- Wednesday 11th - Friday 13th : Year 13 Work Experience
- Monday 16th - Friday 20th : Half term
- Monday 23rd : Return to school ([Week 2 timetable](#))
- Wednesday 25th : Year 12 Parent/pupil/teacher meetings

March

- During month TBC Year 12 Careers Convention
- Thursday 5th : Higher Education Convention (for Year 13 pupils)
- Tuesday 10th : Years 13/14 Parent/pupil/teacher meetings
- Thursday 12th : Spring Concert
- Friday 27th : School closes at 12.00pm for Easter holidays

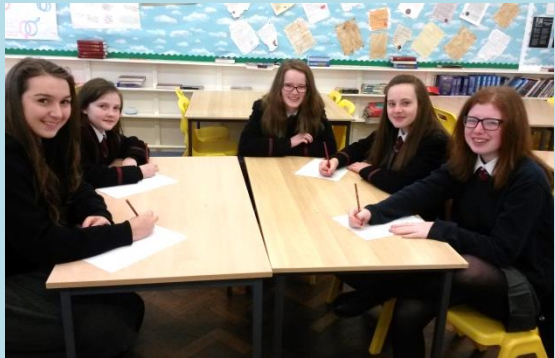
[Pupils return to school Monday 13th April \(week 1 timetable\)](#)

The Wordsworth Club

The Wordsmith Club is new to CGS and is run by Miss Stewart and Mrs Taylor, our new English teachers.

The club is for anyone with a passion for reading or writing and who would like a place to express their love of English. It is also for those who are maybe struggling to achieve their target in class and want some extra aid in their subject.

Each month focuses on a different topic from Personal Writing to Functional Writing.



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