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**HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL**  
*A Specialist Technology & Language College*

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**HEADTEACHER'S NEWSLETTER**  
**November 2010**

Dear All

It has been an action-packed first half-term and the second half looks like being equally busy.

Please see below for some News Updates on:

- Exam Results
- Staff Training
- Lower School Disco
- Cheese & Wine Evening
- European Week of Languages
- School Trips
- Open Day/Evening
- Year 7 Meet the Tutors Evening
- Author Visits
- Music Department News
- Sport News

Attached you will also find:

- Calendar for the next half-term
- Announcements of upcoming events

I have had many positive comments from parents about the way the year has started and I look forward to working together with you all to ensure things continue to improve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any queries, concerns, worries or issues.

Yours faithfully

Mr M. Brown  
Headteacher

PS I'd also love to hear all the positive things which Hitchin Boys' means to you!

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Head Teacher: Mr M. Brown

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## NEWS UPDATES

**Exam Results:** The best ever at GCSE with high standards maintained at A-Level. At GCSE 80% of boys achieved 5A\*-C (71% including English and maths) and at A-Level a 96% pass rate was achieved with all but one student gaining entry to the University of their choice. Also, Sixth Form this year is the largest it has ever been with 220 students which indicates its success and popularity.

**Staff Training:** So far this year teachers have spent several training (INSET) sessions focusing on Outstanding Teaching & Learning and Assessment & Marking. A further INSET day will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> November. School will be closed to students that day although the high demands of some courses may mean that small groups of students need to attend for practical assessments.

**Lower School Disco:** The Year 7 and 8 Disco was well-attended with over 250 students from the school and the Girls' School getting hyperactive on sugar and fizz, and bouncing around in the school hall to the latest sounds. Many thanks to teachers who came to help out and thanks also to the Parents' Society for arranging.

**Cheese & Wine Evening:** The Parents' Society has also been busy with over 75 tickets requested to our Cheese & Wine Evening which took place in October. This was an opportunity to welcome parents of our new Year 7 boys, to meet some teachers and meet other parents. Lovely food and wine supplied through the Parents' Society and thanks again to staff for coming back to school in the evening.

**European Week of Languages:** Modern Foreign Languages staff have been busy organising European Languages Week, which was a fun week of events highlighting the importance and range of languages in our every day lives. The week included daily language quizzes, foreign speciality cooking, Eurovision song contest, the Languages Tent and Flag Alley, learning writing in Japanese, competitions for best language themed work, a "Euro-café" breakfast event and a daily boules competition on the lawn in the Quad. Many thanks to all the MFL team, to Mr Walton for additional organisation and especially to Mr Simms and Ms Downing for the creativity and ingenuity which made such impact on the school.

**School Trips:** All students returned safely from the Borneo World Challenge expedition. Our thanks to Mr Thorp and his team for organising this. All students also returned safely from the South Africa expedition - most are now fully qualified PADI scuba divers. Thanks to Mr Hanahoe and his team for organising. Both members of staff are already planning their next expeditions for the summer ahead. The Geography department organised fieldwork trips for Years 8 and Year 11. A Classics trip to Rome took place over half-term. Thanks to Mr Murdoch for organising and the other staff for giving up their half-term to spend time in the Eternal City. Year 9 students are currently visiting the World War One battlefields of northern Europe under the guidance of our WW1 expert Mr Andrew Spooner. Mr Spooner visited the school earlier in the term to present and explore his personal collection of uniforms, guns and equipment from the period of the Great War.

**Year 8 Barton Hills Trip:** All Year 8s spent a successful morning at the Barton Hills National Nature Reserve in late September where they learnt about why the area is protected, how it is managed, how the landforms develop and most importantly why there is a natural spring at Barton Hills and if it produces tasty water. Mrs Christou, who organised the trip, was delighted with the enthusiasm of the students and their reports demonstrate how much they enjoy learning in the field.

**Glyndebourne:** Once again, a group of students from Years 10-13 had the opportunity to go to the world-famous opera house at Glyndebourne in Sussex, this year to see a performance of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. Glyndebourne, which hosts an international festival every summer, puts on regular performances for schools and this was our third visit.

**Open Day/Evening:** Open Days took place on Wednesday 22nd September and Tuesday 28th September and both were very well-attended with approximately 150 families visiting each day. Parents were very ably guided around by 6th Formers and all were very impressed. Year 6 parents were also invited to visit the school on the evening of Wednesday 22nd September from 18.00 to 21.00 hours when departments laid on special displays, performances and practical hands-on activities; this was an extraordinarily busy evening with over 900 visitors. All feedback was extremely positive and the main concern from parents was that “We might not get in“. Thanks to all the staff (teaching and non-teaching) who went the extra mile to make the days and evening an exciting and stimulating experience for our visitors.

**Year 7 Meet the Tutors Evening:** This was well-organised by Ms Konanec and Ms Oliva and very well attended by over 140 parents. We carried out a survey on the evening (see below) and were very pleased with the results with an average of over 98% responding positively to the questions. More surveys will be coming out soon so please respond wherever you can. We are always keen to keep improving!

**Sixth Form Options Evening:** In the last week before half-term there was an opportunity for parents and sons to meet with staff to discuss the likely best choice of options for their Sixth Form study. As I said at the evening the Sixth Form Consortium in Hitchin is able to offer a very wide range of courses, but still builds its timetable around the boys and girls preferred choices. We very rarely have to disappoint any students by requiring them to change their courses.

**Author Visits:** AUTHOR! AUTHOR! Rogue Reading: author Mark Walden visits HBS. On Wednesday 22nd September, an evil genius invaded the Hall of Hitchin Boys’ School. Well, perhaps Mark Walden is not a mastermind for malevolence but, as creator of the organisation H.I.V.E., he single-handedly led a group of over 200 young minions into a revolution – to realise it is often the villain that makes a good book rather than the hero. To celebrate the release of the sixth book in the series, Zero Hour, Mr Walden entertained and educated his audience about the conflict-driven plot and stayed to sign nearly a hundred copies of his books. Feedback from boys has been very positive and the library’s copies of “H.I.V.E.” books are still in constant circulation along with many adventure series by other authors.

**Arts Award:** Having started to offer Arts Award in the Summer term last year, the first four students (Tim Cranfield, Andrew Jones, George Eva and Cameron Mulvey) passed their bronze award this September. They will be moving on to silver awards and a second group of students are starting to work towards bronze. More details about how to take part are available from the Music Department, any art form can be included.

**Music Grade Exams:** Last term all 9 students entered achieved either merit or distinction in Associated Board exams. Instruments ranged from Grade 1 piano to Grade 6 clarinet and trumpet.

**G&T at The Priory School:** On 24<sup>th</sup> September a group of 30 Gifted and Talented musicians and choir members took part in a workshop run by the acclaimed vocal group *Dieci*. They learned a variety of vocal techniques and pieces and then joined with *Dieci* in a concert that same evening. It was good to see lots of parental support there and the concert was a resounding success.

**Year 12 Conference:** A group of students from the Year 12 went to the Mid-Herts Music Centre for a conference in October run by the Herts Music Service. They took part in workshops delivered by professional musicians to help them get started on their A-level studies and develop their skills in all aspects of their course. They experienced a performance masterclass and got hints from a professional composer about how to write and develop their own original music.

## Sport

**Tennis:** After winning the Junior Boys' Hertfordshire Schools' Tennis Championships in the summer, Hitchin Boys' School then progressed to the National Schools' Championship where they represented Hertfordshire in the regional rounds. Having now had two easy regional victories we have now qualified for the quarter finals of the National competition to be played at Gosling Sports Centre in the next few weeks. To achieve a last eight or better in a National competition is a tremendous achievement and the team should be very proud. **Junior Team:** Christian Farrugia, Toby Nicholson, Seb Walton-Adams, Harvey Walton-Adams, Kieran McQue.

**Biathlon:** Congratulations to Dominic Stephens (Year 9) for representing Great Britain and achieving an amazing 12th place in the World Junior Biathlon Championships in Dubai during half-term.

**Rugby:** A full rugby report will be given at the end of the rugby term; however, special mention must be made to the Year 10 rugby team. They have made a tremendous start to the season winning 6 out of 6 games, scoring 269 points and only conceding 37 points! They have also progressed into the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the National Schools' Daily Mail Rugby competition where they face stiff opposition from Bedford School. Watch this space.

**Senior Football:** Mr Dawson reports a superb start to the season as the team embark on trying to win the first trophy since senior football came into existence in 2008. With possibly the most talented squad of players yet seen at the school, the season began with some degree of enthusiasm after some productive training sessions on the rugby pitches! Matthew White of Year 12 was picked to be captain for the year and put in a captain's performance in the first game of the North Herts District League when the school comfortably beat local rivals, The Priory School, 5-1. A brace from Jason Ridler after early goals from Jake McKee and Ben Morris saw Hitchin Boys' out of sight before Jhai Dillion scored the goal of the game from left wing. Next was a challenging match against Barclays school and after a gruelling game of high quality football, notably in midfield, the match was settled by a neat finish from the industrious Rhys Waterman with only one minute remaining. After a 100% start to the season the next match in the league is against Marriotts school on 17th November.

**Table Tennis:** Congratulations to Ben Smith, Yinka Ajala, Toby Nicolson, Janiv Shah and Harvey Walton-Adams for winning the North Herts District Table Tennis competition. They now move onto represent the District at the County championship at the end of November.

**Swimming:** The school has entered three very strong swimming teams in the Division 10 Schools' Relay Gala taking place on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

## Representative Honours

The following boys are to be congratulated for representing Hertfordshire in their respective sports:

<b>Rugby:</b>	Russell Attwood, Tom Webb	Hertfordshire U16 Squad
	Michael Waters, George Eva, Harry Chater	Hertfordshire U15 Squad
<b>Football:</b>	Jhai Dhillon, Jason Ridler	Hertfordshire U16 Squad
	Max Taylor	Bedfordshire U16 (Captain)
<b>Badminton:</b>	Austin Ephgrave	Hertfordshire U12 Squad
	Andrew Baird	Hertfordshire U13 squad

## YEAR 7 PARENTS' TUTOR MEETINGS

### Results of Parental Survey (Percentages)

<b>Review of Transition process (June to Nov)</b>	<b>%Strongly Agree/ Agree</b>	<b>%Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</b>
The information received from the school in summer was useful	100	0
The New Parents Information Evening in July was useful	100	0
Meeting my son's Form Tutor that evening was useful	100	0
Meeting my son's Form Tutor tonight was useful	99	1
The timing of this evening was appropriate	95	5
<b>Experience of Hitchin Boys' School</b>		
My son likes the school	98	2
My son has settled in well to Year 7	98	2
My son is making good progress in the school	99	1
Behaviour in the school is good	96	4
Any difficulties have been well-managed	99	1
The teaching is good	99	1
My son knows what is expected of him at school	99	1
My son is receiving regular homework	99	1
My son is motivated to do well by his teacher	99	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school	99	1
The school expects my son to work hard and achieve	99	1
The school is well led and managed	99	1
The school works closely with parents	97	3
There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons	98	2
My son has been involved in activities outside lessons	91	9
Average	98	2

## CALENDAR

(NB please always check the website and/or Learning Platform for announcements).

<b>November</b>		
Tuesday	9 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Round U15 Daily Mail Rugby competition
Wednesday	10 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Music Concert
		District Rugby Tournament Year 9 (1.30 – 4pm)
Friday	12 <sup>th</sup>	District Cross-Country
Tuesday	16 <sup>th</sup>	Quarter Finals National Tennis Championship
Tuesday	16 <sup>th</sup>	Year 13 Consultation Evening
Wednesday	17 <sup>th</sup>	District Rugby Tournament Year 10 (1.30 4pm)
		Senior Rugby Years 11/12/13 (1.30-4pm)
Thursday	18 <sup>th</sup>	District Cross Country all years (12-4pm)
		Rural Schools Hockey Festival at HBS (1.45 -4pm)
Tuesday	23 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Mock Exams for Year 11
Wednesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Year 8 Consultation Evening
Thursday	25 <sup>th</sup>	U16 County Table Tennis Championship
Friday	26 <sup>th</sup>	Inset Day - School closed
Tuesday	30 <sup>th</sup>	End of Mock exams
<b>December</b>		
Wednesday	1 <sup>st</sup>	Soloists Winter Recital
Thursday	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Strictly Come Dancing Dress Rehearsal
		Year 5 Gifted and Talented Day at HBS (2.45- 4.15)
Friday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Strictly Come Dancing (Evening)
Saturday	4 <sup>th</sup>	Strictly Come Dancing (Evening)
Monday	6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12 exam week ( in afternoon lessons)
		Year 7 15-a-side County Tournament
Tuesday	7 <sup>th</sup>	Yr 10+ Drama (French/Latin)
		12.35pm Meeting for students on Gifted & Talented register in J2
Wednesday	8 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12/13 Progress Checks Exchanged
		Yr 10+ Drama (French/Latin)
		Year 8 District Rugby Tournament (1.30 -4pm)
Monday	13 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Service St Marys
Tuesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	School Carol Service
Wednesday	15 <sup>th</sup>	Year 7 District Rugby Tournament 7 (1.30-4pm)
		Old Boys Rugby (1.30-4pm)
		Christmas Draw PTA
Friday	17 <sup>th</sup>	END OF TERM

### **Parents' Society Ghost Walk – 25<sup>th</sup> November (Evening)**

**A night of ghosts & ghouls on a guided tour of Hitchin followed by some comforting fish & chips washed down with mulled wine back at the school. Keep an eye out for the Christmas Raffle Tickets – coming soon!**

## **SCHOOL EVENTS COMING UP, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DATES FOR THE TERM AHEAD**

### **Exams**

Year 11 mock exams: Tuesday 23rd, Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th and Monday 29th November. The timetable is on the website, in October Newsletters and is going out via Parentmail this week.

January External Exams for Years 10, 11, 12 and 13: Monday 10th January to Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February inclusive. No clashes with Year 10 injections though so don't worry!

Individual timetables for January exams will be distributed to students in the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> November. If students have any clashes they should see Ms Berry straight away this is particularly important for Years 12 and 13 who also have exams at HGS and TPS.

### **Year 10 Work Experience Week (28th March to 1st April 2011)**

The week is arranged by Mr Moore and the Herts Careers Service. To avoid disappointment with allocation in January, we strongly recommend parents/carers pursue private placements if in very specialised areas, such as medicine, law, architecture, accountancy and IT, where supply is very limited. All relevant information will be forwarded to the boys shortly in an extended Assembly. Please keep to the deadlines outlined and contact Mr Moore if you have any queries.

### **World Challenge**

Having just come back from their successful training weekend at the Forest of Dean, the World Challenge boys will be taking to the floor for their second Strictly Come Dancing extravaganza. An evening of light, sound and dancing is promised as the school becomes transformed with the help of Rossco (the team behind Spectechular). Tickets can be purchased from reception for either Friday 3rd or Saturday 4th December. We look forward to seeing you!

### **Calamity Jane**

Just to announce that this is next year's drama production, 16th - 18th February 2011, and that we have a fantastic cast. Rehearsals start week ending 5<sup>th</sup> November. The show includes all years throughout the school, from Year 7 to 6th Form, involving themselves both on stage and behind the scenes.

### **A Week Of Writers – HBS Book Week 2010**

Hitchin Boys' School annual Book Week celebrations begin on Monday 22 November. This year's competition is the House Points Book Reviews – boys can promote their favourite books and earn points for their house. This gives them the chance of winning a signed book by one of seven brilliant authors. We will also be visited by an array of writers during the lunch hour throughout the week:

Tuesday – Chris Priestley (Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror and The Dead of Winter)

Wednesday – Richard Horne and Helen Szirtes (101 Things You Need to Know and Some You Don't and 101 Things to Do Before You're Old and Boring)

Thursday – Pete Johnson (How To Train Your Parents and The TV Time Travellers)

If you already own books by these writers, please feel free to bring them and have them signed. We will also be selling their books on the day, prices to be displayed later. Keep watching the school's website and learning platform for more details.

### **Year 7 Is Booked Up**

For several years the organisation Booktrust has sponsored the Booked Up programme when all Year 7 students across England choose a free book from a list of carefully selected recent titles. This year boys picked adventure stories such as M J Harris' The Joshua Files: Invisible City and

Z Rex by Steve Cole, comical tales like Dinah Capparucci's Warning! Aliens are Invading the School! and of course scary books like the magnificent Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror by Chris Priestley (who will be visiting us later in November – Chris Priestley that is, not Uncle Montague – phew!). Another chance for EVERYONE to select a free book is coming in March with World Book Day when our boys will be able to select from a variety of £1 “back-to-back” books (in other words, two books packed into one) which will see titles from Philip Reeve, Katie Davies, Andrew Cope, Glenn Murphy, Michael Lawrence and guess who, Chris Priestley.

### **School Health Drop-in Sessions**

The School Health team are now holding a Young Person Walk-in at Bedford Road Health Centre on a Monday from 3pm to 5pm.

And finally .....

<b>Congratulations to our STARS OF THE FUTURE as nominated by staff:</b>
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Joel Daramola, 12 GCSEs at A\*  
Ambition - To study medicine

Seb DeTrafford, 4 As at AS level  
Ambition – To study finance at Oxford

Markian Mysko Von Schultze, 15 GCSEs at A\*

Jamie Ridler, 4 As at AS level  
Ambition - To become a computer scientist

James Abrams, Grade 7 Violin  
Ambition – To become a professional musician

Daniel Addison, Grade 7 Violin  
Ambition – To become a professional musician

Khush Barhey, Grade 7 Flute  
Ambition – To become a professional musician

Tom Gimson, Music Grade 8 Saxophone

Michael Moscatiello, Music Grade 8 Piano

Dominic Skinner, Grade 7 Double Bass  
Ambition – To study music at University

Peter Woodin, Grade 7 Classical Guitar  
Ambition – To become a professional musician

Russell Attwood, Hertfordshire County Rugby 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional rugby player

Andrew Baird, Hertfordshire Badminton 2010  
Ambition – To play badminton for England

Colin Bugg, Hertfordshire Athletics 2010  
Ambition – To become a national level athlete

John Chapman, Hertfordshire Cycling  
Ambition – To become a professional cyclist



Ben Cowell, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional cricketer

Dan Cowell, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional cricketer

Harry Cruttenden, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional footballer

Locke Gilmour, Hertfordshire School of Rugby 2010  
Ambition – To represent the Scottish Exiles and Northampton Saints

Chris Hall, Hertfordshire County Hockey 2010  
Ambition – To play Premier League hockey

Tom McNeilly, Great Britain Taekwondo  
Ambition – To represent GB at the 2012 World Championships in Canada and the 2016 Olympics

Sam Owen, Hertfordshire County Swimming 2010  
Ambition – To become an Olympic swimmer

Will Ridgway, Hertfordshire County Athletics 2010  
Ambition – To become an Olympic high jump / 400m athlete

Janiv Shah, Hertfordshire County Tennis  
Ambition - To become a professional tennis player

Ben Smith, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional cricketer

Kim Sobotie, Hertfordshire Athletics 2010  
Ambition – To represent Great Britain at the Olympics

Yong Sung Kwon, Hertfordshire County Swimming 2010  
Ambition – To become a national swimmer

Max Taylor, Bedfordshire County Football 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional footballer

Harvey Walton-Adams, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional cricketer

Seb Walton-Adams, Hertfordshire County Cricket 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional cricketer

Michael Waters, Hertfordshire Rugby  
Ambition – To become a professional rugby player

Tom Webb, Hertfordshire County Rugby 2010  
Ambition – To become a professional rugby player

Tom Worbey, Hertfordshire County Swimming 2010  
Ambition – To become an international swimmer

Jamie Wright, Bedfordshire Swimming 2010  
Ambition – To swim at regional and national level