

Wellesley Haddon Dene School

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

2024-2025

A Word from the Editor

Welcome to our Wellesley Haddon Dene Humanities department newsletter, formally the History Department letter. We've expanded to now include Geography and Religious Education. This year we have continued to develop our new curriculum and I continue to look for ways to incorporate even more into our syllabus. We aim to give all of our children a diverse range of lessons and to expand their knowledge of the world and the cultures and people around them.

I am looking forward to this year as we seek to showcase our department across the school, aiming to deliver some great experiences for the children. In this newsletter you will find more details about our curriculum and information about what our children have been up to.

Mr Sam Kearns
Humanities

Curriculum 2024-25 includes the following topics:

- Year 6 - Medieval Period 1066-1485, Islam, Early Christianity, Map Reading, Settlements and Farming.
- Year 5 - Invaders and Settlers to Britain - Romans, Anglos-Saxons, Vikings, Ancient Beliefs & Mythology, Plate Tectonics and Volcanoes, Sustainable Living.
- Year 4 - The histories, religions and geography of Greece, India and China.
- Year 3 - The histories, religions and geography of Africa and the Americas.
- Year 2 - Early History: Dinosaurs, Stone and Iron Ages. Creation Stories, Weather and the Wonders of the World.
- Year 1 - Discovering the World: Our Country through Time, Explorers, Travel and Transport. The United Kingdom, the Continents of the World, Heroes.
- EYFS - Now and Then: How our Grandparents lived, Holidays, Toys and Games. Where we live. Nativity, Helping others and kindness.

Baby Dinosaur Born!

Year 2 this term have been studying dinosaurs as part of their humanities learning. We've had roarsome fun with pre-history and one lesson particularly which included the making of dinosaur eggs. Amazingly, one morning the children arrived at school to find that one of the eggs had hatched! The children were so excited trying to find the baby but it wasn't until the afternoon that it was finally located in the cupboard of Mrs Murray's office. Thankfully, no fingers were lost. Despite the fact that Paleontologists suspected that Dinosaurs were birthed from eggs this was not actually confirmed until the 1920s when whole fossilised nests were discovered in Mongolia.



Black History Month

October is dedicated to Black History. Last year the focus was on Black Women and their contributions to the world. This year's Black History theme is 'Reclaiming Narratives'. If you'd like to learn more then please follow this link: <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

Black History, and the contributions of Black people to our society, have been incorporated into many of our lessons over this month. In English, Years 4 & 5 have studied poetry by Benjamin Zephania and Year 4 completed written work on 'Telling Your Story'.

Also, Years 4-6 watched an online national assembly, whilst in Humanities Year 4s learned about Black culture in Ancient Greece and Year 5 learned about Black legionaries in the multi-cultural Roman army.

In Year 3 the children created a class mind map of themes and key words and then used these to write poems. They also listened to music by black artists. In Year 1, the children learned about Rosa Parks. For Black History Month in Reception they learned about the poet Joseph Coelho. They explored the differences between cities and the countryside and used their senses to do this. The children spoke about how these two different places could have different smells and sights and also how you could hear different things, e.g.,

Bravery

- Brave
- Respect
- Acceptance
- Voices being heard
- Equality
- Reclaiming narratives
- You can follow your dreams!

By Eliza Martell

Peace

- Pride
- Equality
- Acceptance
- Celebration
- Empowerment

By Ezra Jeffries



animals and birds in the countryside or traffic in a city. They made comparisons to where they lived. Year 2 looked at ppts and books to discover the meaning behind the celebration month of Black History. They discussed the awful way Black people were treated and how some key figures changed things by standing up for their rights. They briefly discussed Key people such as Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela. They have just completed colouring some pictures of them which will be oiled and stuck to windows as “stained glass”.

Harvest Festival

This term’s harvest festival service was a lovely affair. Reception to Year 6 took part and everyone got the chance to sing. We were also overwhelmed by the generosity of our parents when it came to donations of food. We cannot thank you all enough. Rev. Hoddar of St. Peter’s Church gave a thoughtful sermon and afterwards delivered the food to the local food bank.



Halloween



In the build up to Halloween, some of the children got to learn about the origins of Halloween. They learned about the Celtic festival of Samhain and the Christian Festivals of All Saints Day and All Hallows Eve, where the name Halloween derives from. They also were fascinated to learn that the scary pumpkins were actually originally carved from turnips and were meant to keep away nasty spirits! We were also treated to a spooky assembly by Year 1! The Halloween disco organised by the PFA was a great success. A special mention must go to Mr Pullman, our resident DJ and all of the hard work of the PFA in decorating and organising the hall. It was such a good party and the kids absolutely loved it.

Year 5 - Romans

In Year 5 we focus particularly on the Romans, Saxons and Viking invaders in the history aspect of our studies. However, with the famous

destruction of Pompeii by volcanic eruption it gives us a good excuse to study volcanoes in greater detail as part of our geography lessons.

For the Year 5s, Roman Day is a popular event each year. A good chance to dress-up (for me anyway!) in Roman clothing and enjoy a day of themed lessons. The topics covered include: Life in the Roman Army, Maths and Science as well as Art. The highlight of the day has to be the Roman Lunch which our amazing catering team put together using authentic Roman recipes. You can view the menu below.

Did you know that our modern word 'salary' comes from the Latin word 'sal' which means 'salt'? Salt was so valuable that Legionnaires would sometimes have their wages paid to them in salt.



Menu

STARTER

Ova Spongia ex Lacte (Eggs & Honey)

Olives

Garlic Mushrooms

Mains

Isica Omentata (Hamburgers)

Dormouse (Chicken)

Root Vegetables with Honey

Dessert

Libum (cheesecake)

Biscuits

Fruit

Bonfire Night

“Remember Remember the 5th of November!
Gunpowder, treason and plot!”

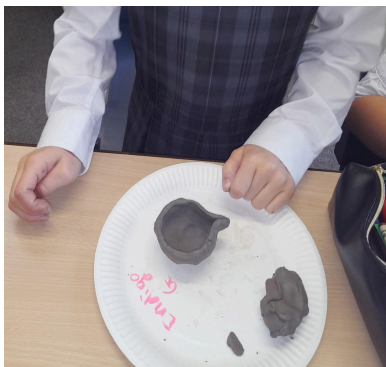
Familiar words for many of us, which Year 3 recited during their excellent assembly. Well done to all of them for such an informative and entertaining performance.



Later in the afternoon, Years 1 & 2 had a visit from Mr. Guy Fawkes himself who told them the story of the Gunpowder Plot and why we still celebrate the events of the 5th November 1605.

Many of us are aware of the story but some people don't realise that Guy Fawkes was not actually the leader of the plot. He was the first caught as he was the 'bomber'. The actual leader was Robert Catesby who was shot at Holbeche House, where some of the plotters had holed up intent on starting an uprising once Guy Fawkes had delivered them the news that the King and Government were dead.

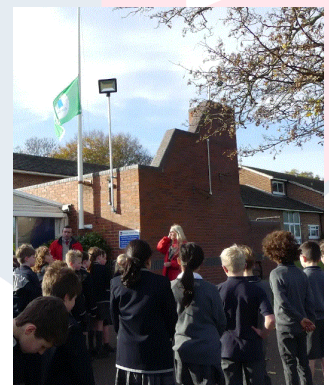
Diwali



The Hindu Festival of Light is a colourful event in the religious calendar and all the children enjoyed learning about the story of Rama and Sita. They also enjoyed creating 'dijas', clay lamps, which are traditionally used by Hindus to help light up their houses. According to Hindu tradition the people of Atoyah lit lamps in their windows and along the road so that Rama and Sita could find their way back to the city in the dark after their long exile.

Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day (or Poppy Day) is always a tricky concept for the children to understand, especially the youngest of our community. However, it is very important for all of us to take the time to remember the cost of war, especially in today's climate. We aim to tackle this day with sensitivity and with respect. The children were amazing. They listened well during the morning assembly which informed them as to why we have this day. When the wreaths were laid, and later, when we held our 2 minute silence, the children acted with great humility. Our school has several memorials to the fallen. Ex-pupils and teachers of Wellesley House and St. Peter's Court took part in the First and Second World Wars and were killed. The Herbert Day memorial prize was commissioned by Mr Day to commemorate his son Herbert and this prize is still presented to the Head boy and Head girl to this day.



Year 3 - Africa

Year 3's winter term is focussed on the study of Africa. This includes lessons based on Africa's geography as well as the different aspects of its history and diverse culture. In one of our lessons we studied African masks and how each tribe might well have a different colour scheme or appearance which links to its own heritage. The children got the chance to create their own and you can see some of their efforts to the right.



Final piece - For Christmas:

Christmas is a time when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. We all enjoy the chance to come together as a community and we engage in many forms of worship including a Nativity, Christmas show and a Carol Service. It's the time of year when we can really enjoy ourselves as a school.

Father Christmas may also be making an appearance (if you've been good!) at a PFA Santa's Grotto. However, who really is this figure? Some say he is a myth or doesn't exist (candidates for the naughty list?) but history seems to have plenty of evidence about this figure.

His first recorded appearance is as Nicholas in 270AD. He was a bishop in Myra, Turkey who did kind things to care for women, children and sailors. His works earned him a Sainthood and he is now remembered as St. Nicholas...His picture is somewhat familiar looking...(see picture right).

News of St. Nicholas's good deeds made its way all the way through Europe, where in the Netherlands they called him Sinterklaas. The Dutch believed that Sinterklaas would arrive at the homes of children on 6th December (the feast day of St. Nicholas) and give presents to good children. When Dutch immigrants went to live in the Americas in the 1600s they took their beliefs in Sinterklaas with them. After about 200 years the name 'Sinterklaas' evolved into 'Santa Claus'.

Back in Europe, Captain Christmas was a central figure to celebrations in England. He sounds like a Marvel Hero but his role was to ensure that everyone had a great time at Christmas parties. Unfortunately, after 1649 such parties were banned by Oliver Cromwell's Puritan government (another candidate for the naughty list). However, not to be thwarted, Captain Christmas made a glorious come back years later but was now



known as Father Christmas, which sounds much more like a loving kind old grandfather figure than a military/superhero party animal.

Evidence of both Santa Claus and Father Christmas' deeds and history might seem to have diverged geographically but by the 1850s it became clear to all that these two figures were one in the same and by the beginning of the 20th Century the figure that we recognise today as Father Christmas was cemented into our heritage.

So there you are, evidence points to the very long history of Father Christmas and as someone whose opinions are based on historical evidence, I have to believe in Father Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

Mr Kearns