

## **Apologies**

Firstly, let me apologise for the gap in the publication of this 'weekly' newsletter. Personnel changes and website problems have prevented publication. I decided to roll a number of weeks together; hence the **Bumper** issue!

## **The Removal of Free Bus passes for Catholic children Consultation 31st October to 9th December**

14<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

### The consultation on the removal of free denominational transport

Further to my letter of 31<sup>st</sup> October regarding the Council Cabinet proposal to remove discretionary free school transport for Catholic families, I find it necessary to provide an update as to the current position.

We were led to believe that the meetings agreed with the Local Authority officers would be open and public.

The attached letter from the LA informs you that this is not now the case. When challenged over the issue, Jane Hall told me that the LA "have moved away from round table events in favour of drop ins."

We are very disappointed that the Council is now adopting this stance especially since we have been assured that this is a genuine consultation.

It is even more important that our families and all parishioners make the Council aware of the impact of their proposed measures on Catholic education in the district.

I urge you to do the following:-

- (1) Respond to the consultation and ask for an acknowledgement.
- (2) Write to your local Councillor asking for a reply. (suggested model letter attached)
- (3) Sign the attached petition which is available in all Catholic schools as well as our parishes. This can be signed by anyone living, working or studying in the District. It demands a full Council debate on this issue.

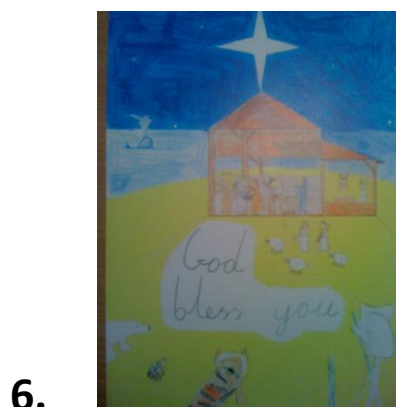
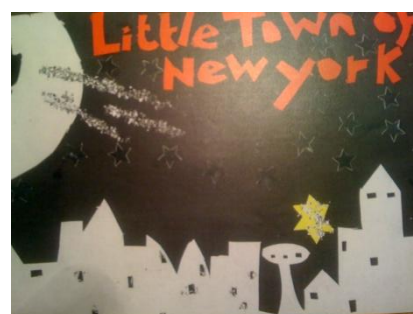
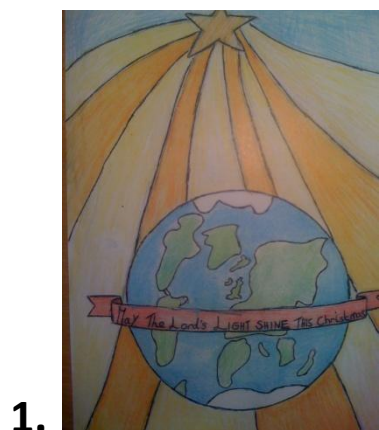
Through concerted and sustained pressure we can let Council leaders know the strength of feeling out there.

It is worth noting that despite the same financial pressures Calderdale, Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds Councils are not removing this subsidy.

**The above is the transcript of the letter sent to you all this week. I urge you to take action to protect and preserve what we have as well as supporting already hard-pressed Catholic families.**

## Christmas Card Competition Winners Judged

There was stiff competition as fifty nine students submitted entries for the annual Christmas card competition organised by Stef Sanderson, Head of Geography. Seven runners up were selected who each received an HMV voucher.



1. James Major, 7L      2. Khalil Abdelaziz      3. Maia Donaldson

4. Eve Rooney, 7F   5. Ella Wilcock, 7M   6. Adam Tomaczewski   7. Declan Kelly, 7C



Overall Winner - Joseph Higgins 7I is awarded a voucher prize and will be the card we send out to our friends and colleagues this year.



## **Parent Focus Group at 5.30pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October**

The first meeting of the group took place with discussions surrounding results, the condition and upkeep of the toilets, fundraising, the proposed changes to free bus passes. New members are always welcome and should request further information from Colleen Parker, my p.a.

## **St Wilfrid's Day Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

I was proud to attend the Patronal Mass in celebration of the Feast day of our brother school with the candidates for the post of Senior student. After Mass our students were Royally treated to a slap up lunch along with other VIP guests. In the afternoon students joined in the celebration on the school field which had the look and the feel of a village fete!

## **Year Eleven parents evening (1) Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

There was an excellent turnout of 82% for the first of our two calendared parents evenings for Year eleven. Parents who were unable to attend should contact Mrs Davies.

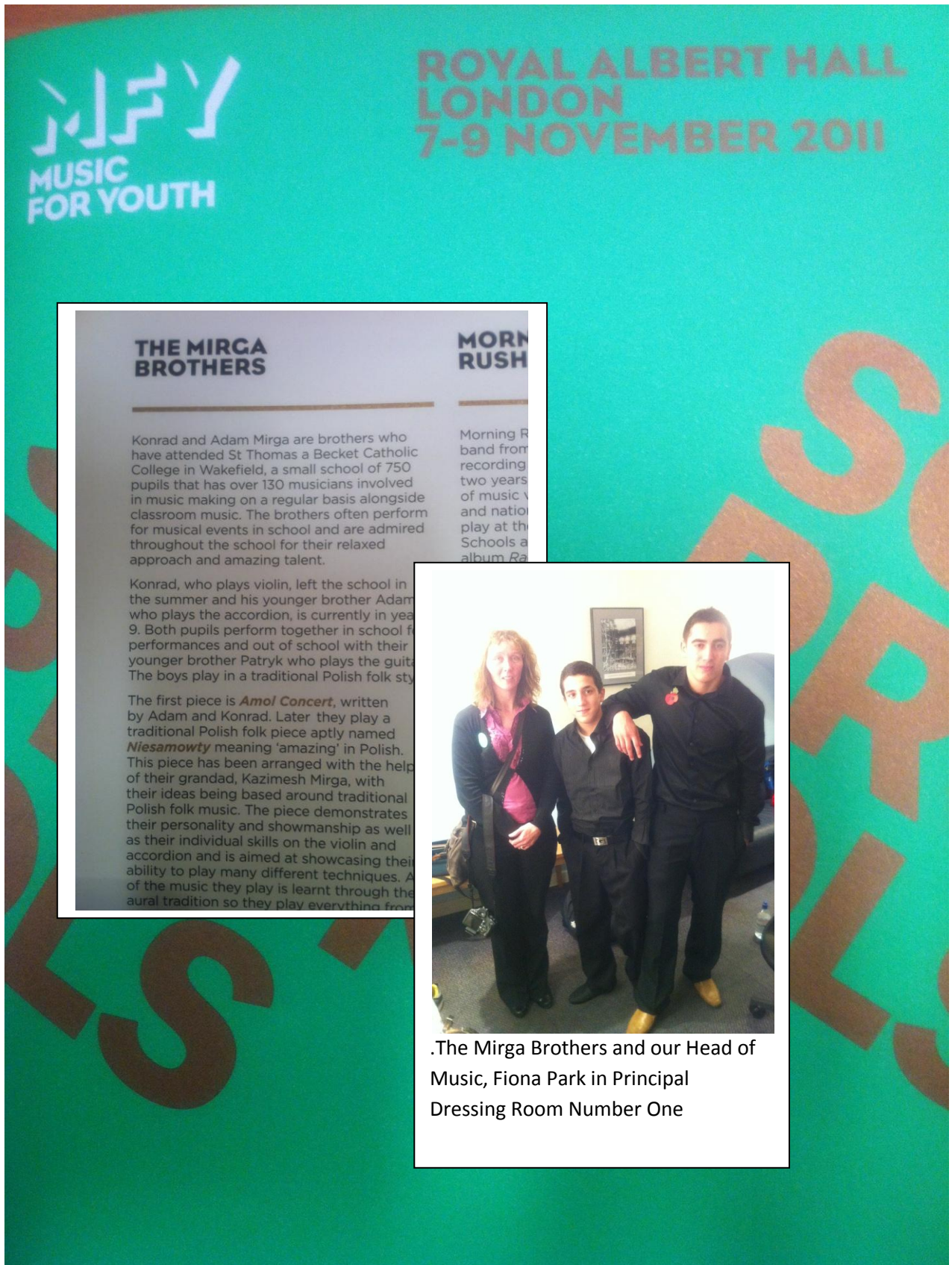
## **All Saints Day Masses 1st November**

"Put your hand up if you want to be a saint?" asked Fr Michael in every one of the three Masses he celebrated with all students on the Holy day of obligation. "Well you can't get to heaven if you don't!" he cried after seeing the lack of hands up.

Happily for the students (and for parents) many students had changed their view after the homily.

Mass is always a special time in school; a way we underline our distinctiveness and highlight real community.

## A Day to Remember - The Royal Albert Hall 9th November



**MUSIC FOR YOUTH**

**ROYAL ALBERT HALL  
LONDON  
7-9 NOVEMBER 2011**

**THE MIRGA BROTHERS**

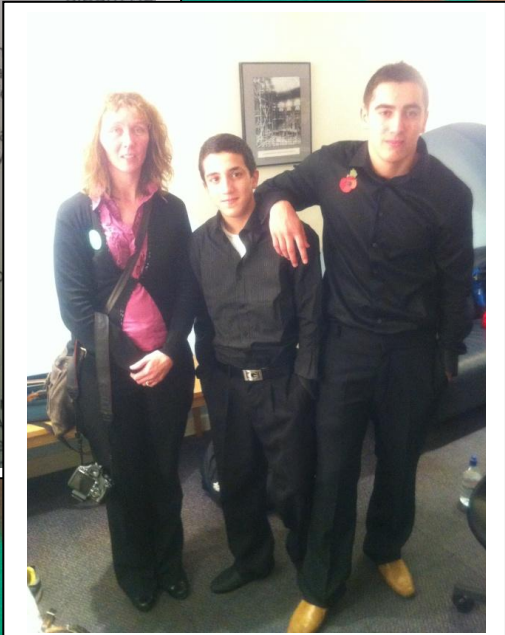
Konrad and Adam Mirga are brothers who have attended St Thomas a Becket Catholic College in Wakefield, a small school of 750 pupils that has over 130 musicians involved in music making on a regular basis alongside classroom music. The brothers often perform for musical events in school and are admired throughout the school for their relaxed approach and amazing talent.

Konrad, who plays violin, left the school in the summer and his younger brother Adam who plays the accordion, is currently in year 9. Both pupils perform together in school performances and out of school with their younger brother Patryk who plays the guitar. The boys play in a traditional Polish folk style.

The first piece is *Amol Concert*, written by Adam and Konrad. Later they play a traditional Polish folk piece aptly named *Niesamowty* meaning 'amazing' in Polish. This piece has been arranged with the help of their granddad, Kazimesh Mirga, with their ideas being based around traditional Polish folk music. The piece demonstrates their personality and showmanship as well as their individual skills on the violin and accordion and is aimed at showcasing their ability to play many different techniques. A lot of the music they play is learnt through the aural tradition so they play everything from

**MORN RUSH**

Morning R band from recording two years of music and national play at the Schools album Ra



.The Mirga Brothers and our Head of Music, Fiona Park in Principal Dressing Room Number One

### The Mirga Brothers play the Royal Albert Hall

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November saw 44 pupils from St. Thomas a Becket Catholic College travel to London to watch Konrad and Adam Mirga, also known as The Mirga Brothers, play to an audience of 5000 as they opened the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final night of the Schools' Prom 2011.

The brothers played a short piece from the organ box, centre stage, to open the evening of music and then again as the concluding act with a piece they composed themselves. The audience were wowed and amazed by the talent and skill shown by these young men and at certain points it was difficult to hear the music above the cheers from the audience!

Konrad, 16 and Adam, 14, participated in the Music for Youth Festival regional heats earlier this year and received stunning feedback from the judges; their Polish Folk Music piece achieved them a rousing round of applause from all who were watching and saw them progress to the Regional final in Birmingham. Again, the judges were amazed by the skills Konrad displays of the violin and Adam on the accordion and were lost for words when sharing their judges' comments. Finally 'The Mirga Brothers' found themselves in Dressing Room No1 of the Royal Albert Hall ready to impress the 5000 strong crowd.

Not a person in the Hall could fail to be impressed by the accomplishment of the boys and were even more impressed when the presenters informed everyone that neither boy can read music but learn all their pieces by ear; working with their grandfather to keep Polish traditions at the heart of the music they create.

It was an amazing day and whilst The Mirga Brothers were doing a sound check rest of the pupils were visiting the Natural History Museum taking part in interactive video presentations and getting to grips with dinosaurs! It was an even better evening and no-one cheered louder than Becket's pupils and staff who had gone along to support two of our own.

Lorna Good

We will be publishing more photos of this special event in the next issue! In the meantime, please check out the **Classic FM** website for more photos and an interview with the boys.

## **Armistice Day 11th November**

Once again the school observed the two minutes silence in commemoration of the 93rd anniversary of the signing of the Armistice. Tutors had led their own reflections in form time and this was followed by a bell, right in the middle of breaktime, to mark the period of reflection.

It was beautifully observed both within the school building and out on the yard where only the sound of a passing London-bound train and screaming land gulls (who thought break was over!) broke the silence.

## Industrial action 30th November

The threat of industrial action is likely as part of a second national day of action by a number of unions. We await the results of all the ballots but I am anticipating some disruption to the normal workings of the school and ask parents/carers to consider a contingency plan for child care. I will, of course, keep you informed as soon as I have a full picture.

## From Good to Outstanding



All teaching staff attended a Twilight session led by Schools Network Consultant, Clive Hurrell.

The focus of the two and a half hour session was to examine the changes to the OFSTED framework which come into effect in the New Year.

The changes, especially to the way lessons are graded, will make it more difficult for teachers to be graded outstanding.

On a positive note Clive felt that the Becket's staff were already well informed about how to deliver outstanding lessons. The trick is to make sure we deliver them!

## Senior students selected

After a rigorous selection process twenty two hopeful Year Eleven students were whittled down to a shortlist of fifteen who were then asked to deliver a five minute presentation followed by questions. Six successful students were offered the key posts with two new posts being created to reflect the outstanding quality of the boys and girls.

Sam Marson is Head Boy with Alex Napper his deputy, Alex Myers is Head Girl, whose deputy is Zoe Kerrins. The two new posts are Head of Key Stage Three, Sarah Shaw, and Head of Key Stage Four, Adena Elliot.

I look forward to working with these astonishing young people in the months ahead.



Left to right - Adena Elliot, Alex Napper, Alex Myers, Sam Marson, Zoe Kerrins, Sarah Shaw.

## **Year Seven Information Evening 3rd November**

There was a good turnout of parents of our Year Seven's Information Evening. Senior teachers Sarah Wilkinson and Paddy Kiernan supported by Assistant Headteacher KS3, John Firth gave parents vital information about how they can access up to date information about how to support their children as well as being able to access the College eportal.

There was also a further appeal for contributions to our Scool Building Development Fund.

### **Governors School Building Development Fund**

**Dear Parent/carer,**

As a voluntary aided school, 90% of all building works are funded by Government Grants. By law the remaining 10% is an obligatory expense to Catholic Schools. The funding is not allowed to come from the school's main budget, leaving it to be raised by other means. If we cannot find our 10% the 90% government funding to which we are entitled will be lost.

We would ask each family to please consider a minimum donation of £25.00 per family to the Governors School Building Development Fund.

Last year we refurbished the reception area, hall and dining room, had a purpose build dance studio and fitness room built as well as painting the whole school throughout.

In the summer we completed a second phase of improvements beginning with modernising classroom and corridor lighting, refurbishing and re-equipping two ICT rooms, Business Studies, Technology and Music, Art and Food Technology.

This year, in the third phase, we aim to modernise all the toilet facilities in College as well as extending the dining room.

We can achieve all this if our parents contribute the equivalent of **50p** a week.

**If all parents contributed 50p a week this would raise £19,890 in a year which, in turn, would help us potentially realise a massive £198, 900 from the Department for Education.**

You can donate in a number of ways:

- By single cheque for the whole year or standing order ½ yearly or ¼ yearly. Cheques payable to 'Diocese of Leeds, at St Thomas à Becket Governors Fund'.
- A bankers order form is attached if you would prefer to pay by standing order.
- If you already pay by standing order please check that it is active/up to date.

You can also help us to raise further funds if you are a taxpayer and complete a GIFT AID DECLARATION. At no additional cost to you this will raise an additional 28p per £1. A GAD form is enclosed for you to complete.

Many thanks if you have already contributed and thank you in anticipation of your support.

John Rooney

Headteacher on behalf of the College Governors.

## Sports Results

### Year 7 Football Match 2

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011

#### Beckets 9 v 1 Normanton Freeston



With confidence in the air from last week's friendly victory over the Year 8's; the Year 7 Footballers were bursting with excitement with the prospect of putting in a good performance in front of Beckets staff and parents. The team were on fire all evening and totally outclassed their opponents who came into the game from an 8 - 1 victory themselves. Within minutes Louis Coates and Jay Sheridan combined down the left to unlock the Normanton defence.

Throughout the game, Beckets confidently passed the ball and retained possession to wear down the ever chasing opponents. By keeping width and depth the Beckets team quickly tallied up a series of one and touch passages of play accumulating in goals from Louis Coates, Jay Sheridan, Barron Kerali and Jake Smith.

In the second half both Jay Sheridan and Louis Coates completed their hat tricks and Jake Smith added to gain a brace.

A fantastic performance by the Under 12's with momentum gaining at the right time for the upcoming 5 a side tournaments.

Man of the match - Louis Coates

Year 8 Football Match 2

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**Horbury 1 v 3 Beckets**



After a long wait the Year 8 Footballers finally got their season back under way, after an embarrassing defeat to the Year 7's last week the Under 13's had a lot to prove against a very good Horbury side on a dark, dingy November evening. The team were focused and knew that only the best performance would result in a victory.

The first twenty minutes were very even but eventually the dead lock was broken by some exceptional play by both Becketts wingers Will McMullen and Aidan Cosimini. After a great passage of play, the ball was delivered into the Horbury box where Terry Sri Shangmugam tapped in his 3<sup>rd</sup> goal in 2 games. 5 minutes later the home side levelled the score to 1 -1 after pressing Matty Davies into an outstanding save but unfortunately the Becketts did not react as quickly as the Horbury centre forward for a simple tap in, to even the score with their only shot on goal. Credit must be given to the defensive rocks that are Mbemba Kuyateh and Luke Armitage, who were solid and commanding all afternoon.

Half time came and went, and with Mr Taberner's words of wisdom still ringing in the Becketts player's ears, Jason Davies finished off a fine move with a deft touch at the back stick. The build up play for Becketts second goal was intricate and controlled with exceptional short passing and movement from Farzin Motavasselzadeh, Ewan Heath and Oliver Flowers.

The final nail in Horbury's coffin came from a volley from the right boot of Terry Sri Shagmugam. The tall Beckets centre forward proved that not only is he exceptionally quick and strong but also possesses sublime footwork and a great first touch. The volley connected to a Ewan Heath through ball, and without thinking Sri Shagmugam instinctively let fly with the keeper just standing and admiring the shot.

Another great performance from the whole squad, both offensively and defensively. The Beckets man of the match was **Ewan Heath**, who shone out in the play making, central midfield role.

### **Advance notice and reminders**

**Presentation Evening for last Year Eleven, class of 2011, 17<sup>th</sup> November**

**Transport Consultation deadline 9<sup>th</sup> December**

**Year Nine Cognitive Ability Tests wc 21<sup>st</sup> November**

**Meeting at Beckets regarding the above 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

**Meeting at St Austin's regarding the above 17<sup>th</sup> November**

**Form period Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November to look at progress towards targets**

**Interim Report (1) to parents – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

**Christmas Dinner 14<sup>th</sup> December – no other meals will be served on this day. Details to follow**

**Advent Service 15<sup>th</sup> December 7.00pm**

**Early closure 1.10pm - 16<sup>th</sup> December**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Rooney', with a stylized flourish underneath.

John Rooney Headteacher