
Principal's Newsletter

15 November 2019

Dear Parents,

Like a tribe of nomads, our musicians have spent decades moving from building to building across the campus. At one point the department was located in Ms Pease's Prep office. It moved to Gladstone, to the old Mossley Vale and then eventually to Beechlands. In these various locations, the adage, popular with cash strapped headmasters and politicians, that facilities are not an important factor in educational quality was put to decades long testing. Beautiful music was made in classrooms which were too small, or too large. Rehearsals took place in spaces that were dark, unprepossessing, and unsuitable. To teach and make music then was indeed to belong to a small band of intrepid artistes and scholars, scattered into spaces unwanted and unloved.

Yesterday, this exile and wandering ended, hopefully for ever. The opening of the Rushworth Centre for Music marked the beginning of a new era of making music at the school. The orchestra welcomed the Rushworth family and other VIP visitors with a fanfare. We listened to Madeleine E (9 Selwyn's) and Evelyn I (9 Butler's) sing the vocal duet 'Shallow', before Alex M (10 Howard's) concluded performances with a rendition of a blues classic on an electric guitar whose amplifier had been lowered to sustainable levels for listening.

Then it was time to visit the practice rooms, recording studio and the two new classrooms where pupils were perfecting various compositions on keyboards and computers.

The energy was palpable and the enthusiasm real.

A similar vibe pervaded the sports hall last Friday night. Emerging out of the apocalyptic rainfalls into the sports hall, one was struck by a great heaving mass of humanity having a wonderful time. There were the stalls from which the houses sought to raise money. The bouncy castles on which the family fun part of the evening was executed. And then, at its finale, an amazingly impressive fireworks display in a steady downpour. The PTA under the leadership of Mrs Young did a brilliant job in bringing us all together to celebrate our school and the much earlier discovery of a plot to blow up parliament, a course of action which must in all circumstances be condemned although the motivation for it can even now be understood.

The fireworks were a hugely successful fundraiser as well. The PTA is selling tickets to its next two events. As the fireworks were sold out, I would urge you to act quickly to secure your tickets for the accurately named Gin Night 2, over 18s only, which leaves little to the imagination, and is scheduled for Friday 22 November at 7.30pm. The first such Dionysia was well received, and I am sure that the taste for gin and good company has not yet been sated. Tickets for the Gin Night are now on sale from the school offices or by emailing PTA@liverpoolcollege.org.uk and are £20. Tickets are also on sale for the Christmas Wreath making on Thursday 5 December at 7.30pm from PTA@liverpoolcollege.org.uk and are £20 each. This workshop is being led by a very talented florist and there are only 25 tickets available (this event is suitable for over 11's).

The next day we played rugby at home against St John's Rigby while our 1st XV battled King William's Isle of Man to a draw, a result repeated against Rossall in mid-week.

The sun then began to shine on our Remembrance Day Parade. Major Ridley and all his staff and volunteers had prepared an excellent parade to the visible delight of our remarkable honorary Col. Walter Clarke. There was a positive step change in the quality of dress, drill and cadet pride. A glorious morning well worthy of the final sacrifice of so many, including the names read out in Chapel from the Roll of Honour of our own school.

The next day we were back in Shaw Street, the old Collegiate building now apartments for the upwardly mobile. A small group of old boys of that school faithfully remember their fallen schoolmates. Our CCF provides a colour party. We could not resist taking a photograph in front of what is rightly ours, the fire place with the names of the founders which used to sit in the headmaster's study and now stands completely out of context along a wall amidst the apartments.

We received desperately sad news of the passing of a former legendary teacher David Welch. Mr Welch was that now almost mythical schoolmaster, a man who spent his entire career and working life in devoted service to one school. His former pupils and their parents spoke with sadness and admiration about his contributions to so many areas of school life.

Of particular interest to Mr Welch had been the scout troops of Liverpool College. These troops which brought staff, parents and pupils together in some adventurous learning (camping with 11 year olds in Sefton Park, for example, would be considered brave by many, foolhardy by more) and great friendship. Many OLs say it was the best thing about their school.

I have a profound regret that Mr Welch did not live to see the rebirth of scouting at the College. He died last Saturday and Monday of this week, pupils in Pre Prep, Prep and some Middle School pupils attended assemblies where they were introduced to scouting at Liverpool College, under the fantastically energetic leadership of Ms Rogers. We can only hope that these new troops will have the same positive influence over our pupils which Mr Welch's scout troops had.

A brief word on the SIMS parent app. It is our intention to continue to hand paper copies of reports to pupils, so we can discuss their performance with them. In the future however, we will not be spending the limited funds the government sends us to run the school to mail these home in envelopes stuffed by overworked administrative staff. You will be able to access all your child's reports, and records, including of sanctions and rewards through the app. Some parents have said that they are disappointed that their children's grades and reports will be on social media. Just to be clear, the app is not social media. It is a completely secure and private way to deliver data about your child to you.

On Wednesday, about 200 prospective sixth formers visited our campus. Our prefects did a fantastic job of touring them through the various parts of our campus. It is enormously motivating to listen to their dreams and plans for sixth form study. It is also motivating to hear of the tight judging in the Children in Need LC bake off contest (results to be announced next week!). This now annual event produces a harvest of brownies and cupcakes unparalleled in school history.

May I wish you and yours a dry and restful weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal