
Principal's Newsletter

24 January 2020

Dear Parents,

There is plenty of material for the newsletter this week. Indeed, a certain amount of editing has been needed to avoid an unmanageable length.

Among these events and tidings, the performance of **Sister Act**, the school musical stands out in the memory and in its pure complexity and scale. More than a hundred nuns in one place is not something I have experienced since my time in the Unites States, and the habits of these nuns made discovering who exactly was playing what part or doing what thing rather difficult. Indeed, after the show, their veils removed, I discovered all sorts of people were in the play!

This letter will go out before the final performance so I must take care not to spoil the pleasure of many. The show is an effervescent celebration of young people enjoying making music, performing, dancing, singing, and sharing the thrill of creating something special together. There are stars, including Lucy C, who in Year 10 is already capable of taking the enormous part of Deloris and delivering a barnstorming performance of brio and personality. The show has so many big numbers that the mind boggles at how they were all rehearsed, particularly the very innovative and often very funny choreography. From a Principal's perspective, the palpable and visible joy of the pupils is its most memorable characteristic but there are also small subplots of participation which deserve commendation. Ieuan M is now in Year 13. His classmates choose to make excuses for not being in plays, including the perhaps somewhat understandable one of being in their final year and having to study a lot, but not he. I love his approach which seems to be: I enjoy plays, so I am going to be in them. I wish all our pupils were courageous and purposeful enough to do at school what they enjoy rather than worrying about what their friend/parent/or their own fear and reluctance tells them. It is a sad fact of an all-through school life that pupils are less and less willing as they go up the school to try new things, to proverbially stick their necks out and actually DO something. The hordes of invading Prep schoolers which populate the cast of Prep/Middle School plays becomes a thin army by the time we get to Year 11. The opposite should be the case. That is why it is great to see the choir with more boys' voices, to see Harry C make his stage debut speaking only Spanish, and to spot other late newcomers, people who have finally decided - I am going to do this.

Hats off to our wonderful staff and volunteers, especially Ms Poole, Mr Bishop, Ms Clark and all others who make these evenings possible and who remind us what our very talented pupils can do when they are encouraged and guided.

Congratulations to Felix H (8 Howard's) who has just been appointed as Head Chorister of the Liverpool Cathedral Choir.

Most Saturdays, one can glimpse the extraordinary opportunities available to pupils. As the football and hockey teams put QEGS Blackburn and Birkenhead School respectively to the sword, and the play entered final rehearsals, I saw some sixth formers in "civvies" strolling through the campus. I asked them what brought them to the school that morning. When I ask these questions the first reaction is always one of slightly disappointed incredulity that I do not myself know all the things that are happening in the school I am Principal of. In this case the ambulators were on their way to a CCF sponsored First Aid course running all weekend. Incredible.

More good news from the sheds that constitute our ancient CCF headquarters. A record 169 cadets completed their DofE award last year with a cumulative total of 2,028 hours of volunteering between them. The DofE organisation estimate this equals £8,213 of social value to our local community in the last year alone. We also receive wonderful letters about our pupils' volunteer work for the award. If your child is not taking advantage of these DofE opportunities for any reason, it would be useful to interrogate within the family why this is so. This leadership training opportunity is too good to miss, and Major Ridley and the team do it so very well.

A highlight for me is the kinetic worship of the Prep School in assemblies and chapels. The school warms up with various life-affirming songs which require hand motions, leg shakings and other movements which get everyone in a good mood, ably propelled forward by Mr Ainscough who must do so holding perhaps the smallest guitar in the world. Indeed, I would ask that anyone who has a good acoustic guitar at home which is not being used, or anyone who wants to give us the gift of a seagull dreadnought guitar, will, by giving it to Mr Ainscough, be encouraging even better singing and dancing and will finally obviate the need of Mr Ainscough to fill these large spaces with a far too small guitar. Can you help?

When I parked my bike at the Prep this morning my ancient velocipede was surrounded by motley coloured small two wheelers. This was for bikeability in the rain, a course to teach children how to bike safely and confidently. More and more pupils are biking to school and it remains the best way to encourage independence and prevent further arterial traffic clogging. Could your child bike to school?

The boarders are off to London this weekend. The vast majority have signed up for the trip which is understandably very popular. They will have time to sample cultural and culinary delights before retuning to their study desks. Works are about to begin on the new boarding house in Beechlands. For this reason, the car park of Beechlands will be closed,

signs will indicate such. I must warn you to heed these signs for your safety. Construction at Beechlands will hopefully be completed by the middle of the summer.

There is a **PTA meeting** on Tuesday 28 January at 6.30pm, meeting in the main school reception. There will also be a PTA used uniform sale on Friday 31 January 2-4.30pm in the Rushworth music hall - please note the change of venue. The Rushworth music hall is by the Upper School playing fields (the old Pre Prep hall).

A heads up about the next **Sixth Form Open Evening** on Thursday 6 February from 4.30-6.00pm. Our own pupils are very welcome and we have found that your recommendation to other parents is vital in ensuring we recruit talented and committed sixth formers to join the College. More information on Sixth Form admissions can be found on our website [here](#).

A reminder also that our next **Parent Information Evening** is on Thursday 30 January at 6pm in the MV Hall.

Here are some wonderful reports from Mrs Doran about our involvement with STEM projects this term:

Liverpool College has been selected as the Lead school for the international STEAM Schools project, with pupils from Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 involved. This project involves watching live interviews of experts in STEM. This half term we have had designers, engineers, artists and programmers from Techsports, Pokemon GO, Fortnite, Instagram and even the visual effects team from the new Star Wars movie. All pupils can watch the broadcasts, ask questions of those being interviewed and complete online challenges to boost their understanding of the sectors discussed. However, the really exciting part is that as the lead school, our pupils in Years 10-11 have been invited to become presenters of live shows next half term! [Mrs Doran has emailed Y10 and Y11 parents today with more information about how pupils can apply].

We are also involved in the Engineering Leaders project which was launched to pupils this week. This is a highly unusual event as it involves pupils from Liverpool College across the entire age range, from aged 5-19. Pupils are asked to invent a product that solves a problem, to design it, sketch it and write a letter to an engineer explaining how it works. All participants to the competition receive certificates (Pass, Merit, Distinction) with finalists having their entries displayed in a gallery in Liverpool. Winners of the project will have their designs made by a team of real engineers. It is open to all.

Ms Case from Classics for All North would like to invite you to some events which may be of interest:

- Wednesday 29 January at 6pm at The Athenaeum, Liverpool. Dr Peter Stone (UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection & Peace at Newcastle University) will talk about "The protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict".

- Thursday 30 January 6.30pm at Merchant Taylors' Girls School in Crosby, Dr Ben Cartlidge from the University of Liverpool will talk about "Secrets and Syllabaries: Recording deciphering Linear B" looking at the decipherment of Linear B and exploring some of the meanings of reading and writing today. This is part of the Merseyside Ancient Worlds series of public talks which Liverpool College is part of. This will be of particular interest to those doing GCSE Classical Civilisation as Mycenaean culture and Linear B are part of the syllabus.

Both events are free to attend but you need to reserve tickets on eventbrite. Further information on both talks and links to reserve the tickets can be found on <https://classicsforallnorth.org.uk/events>.

If any students would like to go to the talk at Merchant Taylors' but need transport, please talk to Dr McNamara as she will take a minibus if there is sufficient interest.

I need to make you aware of the closure of the footbridge across the railway line at Elmsley Road for refurbishment. [Network Rail](#) report that the footbridge will be closed from 17 February – 10 May to allow engineers to complete the upgrade.

My brief visit to the Parliament of Houses was revealing. I wanted to discuss my concerns about the way phones are still being used during the school day and how some of our pupils have become addicted to them. Indeed, a suggestion that a person be removed from access to their phone for any duration is met with a mixed response. Some see the phone as a human right, an indispensable force for good, a necessity and a permanent feature of any well lived existence. Other pupils see it more my way. Phones can be a problem, and some regulation of their use in the interest of our common learning is required. I have often pondered what makes 6 year olds so great at learning, why they talk so much more to their neighbours at lunch. I am sure there are child development theories about this but a simpler explanation is that they have not yet eaten of the lotus leaves that are iPhones.

On Wednesday, the Liverpool College Foundation held its annual general meeting. This combined charity supports our school by funding for example the Gladstone and Wilton scholars and approves governor appointments, and monitors with interest our plans and progress. It is always very inspirational to see the affection in which our school is held by people who attended many years ago and who nevertheless remain completely committed to our mission, willing us on to do even more and even better for the young people of Liverpool. The Foundation will soon occupy offices at the school which will hopefully lead to even closer collaboration and increased links with our OLs.

A final reminder that we are currently consulting on changes to our admissions policy from September 2021. The deadline for responses is Friday 31 January. You can read all the details on the College website [here](#).

May I wish you and yours a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal