
Principal's Newsletter

5 July 2019

Dear Parents,

This glorious picture of Sean in front of the butterfly mural he painted in the Biology garden is an intimation of our fluttering away into the summer. It captures in artistic form the joys of the end of summer term and the celebration of a job well done. We are slowly becoming a school of gardens. Ms Lewis with the help of some parents has established an extensive garden complex next to the Prep and Pre Prep and Ms Shaw and Ms Miller have led the transformation of the overgrown grounds behind and in front of the biology buildings into gardens. The Louise Reeves memorial garden beckons us outside the MV Hall. The garden behind the Sixth Form centre is next up on the list of areas to be developed. Gardens are expressions of the human instinct to civilize, create order and beauty with rather than against nature. They are expressions of a learning environment which wants to create community, and inspire. Long may our gardening continue.

Headlong we rush toward those final assemblies on Wednesday, jamming frantic activity, study, marking, reporting, assembling, and celebrating in the remaining days.

The Preparatory School celebrated its prize giving. This occasion never fails to inspire but was particularly joyous this year. In part this was due to the beautiful sunflowers which graced the Sports Hall, created by Mrs Scott. In part it was because of the energetic direction of the growing choirs by Ms Clark. But the speakers have also changed in their approach. A decade ago these occasions contained orations by the great and the good. The young Prep School pupils sat in stupefied silence, their eyes screaming boredom, the mist of oblivion descending on the learners of the school. Mr White, the poet and illustrator represents a more interactive approach, leading us in participatory poetry, slamming and jamming, and eliciting whoops of delight from his young audience. It has, in short, become THEIR day, a time to celebrate their achievements.

We welcomed the 2019 Year 7 cohort, for their induction day on Wednesday. They immediately impressed us with their willingness to support each other and join in everything we had planned for them. We welcomed their parents on Thursday, seeking to build the kind of close relationship between home and school which marks the same meeting held on Wednesday for new Reception parents.

We still did not feel we had welcomed enough people on campus that day so we also held the Middle School Diploma presentation ceremony. About 75% of Year 9 achieved the diploma at three different levels from Pass to Maxima cum laude. The diploma seeks to recognize pupils who have exhibited a good or excellent attitude to learning, who have made substantial progress, and who have committed fully to involvement in the school outside the classroom. This occasion marks that magical transformation of Year 9s into Year 10s, the most anticipated and welcomed transformation in every school, as pupils seem by some alchemy of human development to return to us as young mature scholars when they begin Year 10.

Today, we are holding our senior school sports day. This serves as another intimation of the approach of summer holidays. Records are falling right, left and centre in the sunshine. Pupils are usually dismissive of this competition on the day, until the starting gun is actually fired. Suddenly, running for your house does really matter. There will be winners and losers but the most winningest of all our winners, as Mr Trump might say, are our Imagineers who have had a most successful term. Our two Year 9 Imagineering teams enjoyed success in the Unilever Bright Futures Competition and then again this week at the Big Bang North West regional final with one of our teams being selected to represent the North West in the national Big Bang Scientists and Engineering Fair in March. Ruari W (Y11 Howson's) is also celebrating after being awarded a prestigious Arkwright National Engineering Scholarship. Arkwright scholarships are given to a limited number of GCSE students who have demonstrated their intellectual ability and problem solving skills through an application, an examination, group tests and interviews with academics and industrialists.

You can read more about these Imagineering triumphs on the College website [here](#).

Not all has been sunshine. I was contacted by the traffic wardens who had made a complaint to the police about the abuse they received from one of our parents. The individual concerned had parked on zig zags, called the traffic warden every possible term of abuse in front of the Prep and Pre Prep children and parents, looking on, one suspects, in both horror and amazement.

We really want to solve these parking and safety issues, but the problem is further exacerbated by the local authority's lack of available crossing guard lollipop men and women which prevent us from providing one.

Mr Hammersley is finally getting a proper Chaplaincy centre over the holidays. A room will be furnished and decorated for Chaplaincy purposes. It will serve as a place for prayer and quiet reflection for pupils and staff. It will be named the Tinling room, after an OL who in the 19th Century was part of the movement which established the Christian Union at Cambridge, along with another OL Alfred Martin Maynard. You can read more about that [here](#).

Congratulations to Libby H (Y9 Howson's) who, following trials in June, has been selected for the U15 England Hockey Performance Centre.

Congratulations are also in order to Mrs Cassidy whose work on our careers provision this year will shortly lead to us achieving the National Careers Standard award (an accreditation based on the Gatsby Benchmarks) following a successful assessor visit this week. These benchmarks are unrelated to the novel that bears a similar name and which has in the past formed part of the GCSE syllabus. They are based on a report which outlined what best practice in careers education across schools would look like. We are one of very few schools who have rapidly achieved this prestigious accreditation.

This afternoon, the Old Huytonian Guild, the alumnae of the girls school which formed part of the College foundation, will meet for the last time. They have given some wonderful archival material to the school which is now displayed in Godwyn House. Work in that building will continue over the summer, and when we return refreshed in September, Mr Bishop and Ms Clark will have a new music centre with a new rehearsal space. For many of our employees, summer is just a time to keep working to improve the school.

A reminder that school finishes for the summer holidays at 12pm on Wednesday.

I wish you and yours a happy and restful summer.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal