
Principal's Newsletter

17 May 2019

Dear Parents,

It is Ramadan and I am speaking to some sleepy and slightly lethargic pupils keenly observing their fast. One pupil has invited me to attend the *Taste Ramadan* event tomorrow at the Pier Head organised by the Liverpool Region Mosque Network, supported by Liverpool City Council. This is a grand scale Iftar (the post sunset meal following fasting) open to the wider community. Ramadan is not only a time of fasting for our Muslim pupils, it is also a time of almsgiving and this charitable food festival will support charity.

The astro is nearly finished. Men keep riding a tractor at high speed across the surface, replacing the fencing, and we gaze longingly at this new possibility for top sport. **LC Sports**, the school's health, fitness and sports company is up and running. Its membership appears to be increasing as various classes and facilities are added to the programme. We will certainly try to integrate the benefits of this company and its programmes more completely in the curriculum of pupils and provide its services more extensively to the families of the College.

The Year 6 and Year 11 have had a blistering week of examinations. They have spent these delectable days indoors, generating a palpable energy writing, thinking, scribbling. The vibe, as they say, has been excellent. Pupils are calmly and purposefully going about their business. There is a sense of perspective, some are still smiling. The death march to Bataan quality of the GCSE examinations is being kept at bay, many pupils will sit more than 23 exams, meaning that this week was merely the beginning of a month of examining, that this is just the beginning for them.

There have also been some early A level shots, in for example Classics, but the full barrage will begin next week.

The Gladstone Scholars have been announced. These are Year 12 pupils chosen by their Heads of House to train to become house and school leaders. They will shortly travel to the [Gladstone Library](#) where they will receive leadership training. This programme is funded by the Liverpool College Foundation.

The Year 13 boarders have already had their farewell boarding dinner with the elegantly organised pre-prandial drinks. Mr Brady surprised his charges with a slightly early exam leave, but we re-gathered the Year 13 tribe in the Chapel today for the traditional leavers' service. These services never fail to stimulate a twitch in the tear duct and a slight lumpiness in the throat. So many of our students have been with us since age 3 or 4, it is like children leaving their home or a small village. What emerges in the context of reflection and prayer of thanksgiving is the affection in which we hold them, and of course, we flatter ourselves that these amiable sentiments are returned. It is striking how little tension there is on days like this, and how fruitful and positive the relationships the students have built with each other and with their school appears to be.

The human capacity to learn is itself a sort of wonder, but the human capacity to live together in pursuit of a common purpose is in some ways even stranger. Many pupils came to us before they could read or write, now they are confidently discussing the poetry of Lorca, the laws of mechanics, the issues of succession among the Tudors. They are able to advance a considered opinion on most topics under the sun. They have their own political voice and their own ideas about what the purpose of the school has been for them. We succeed when we have provided a truly liberal education, freeing each pupil from ignorance and bias and from the horrible herd thinking and herd action which is a mark of the uneducated person. We are very proud of this batch and confident they will make a contribution when they step out of our gates.

The Springtime Soiree is a combination of Woodstock, a Wembley Final, and a garden party. It never fails to inspire, even in the necessitated surroundings of a neo-gothic parish church.

On this occasion I behaved and sat in my assigned seat next to our Chair of Governors, in the front row. Proximity to joy is in and of itself rather vitalizing. Here were the Preplings marching in pinafores and delivering songs with brio. The orchestra, hidden in the choir, played with almost Wagnerian intensity. Discoveries were made. Yassin Y's (Y8 Brook's) playing of some Beethoven was an interjection of transcendent quality. The programme included everything from Year 9 pupils Alex McC, Aoife J, Nefe O, Emily C, supported by Y11 Callum McL, jamming some Bohemian Rhapsody in a setting with two clarinets to John Rutter and a rendition of Agnus Dei. This is surely what school is about and the 250 or so pupils, the volunteers, the peripatetic teachers and especially Ms Clark and Mr Bishop are to be congratulated once again on making our school sing, literally and metaphorically. It seems incredible that any parent or pupil would not wish to participate in this infectious creativity and fun.

Request from Mrs Doran for your support for our **Careers Fair** on Friday 14 June for our Y9, Y10 and Y12 pupils. We are looking for a wide range of professionals to participate in the event. If you are available on Friday 14 June (11am-3pm), or even for an hour within this time frame, we would be extremely grateful if you could get in touch. If you'd like more information, please email sedoran@liverpoolcollege.org.uk. Thank you.

I spent a scintillating 20 minutes giving a Chapel talk to the Pre Prep on Thursday. The theological acuity of these youngsters floors me every time. We tried to conceive of the nothingness by closing our eyes. I asked how God felt when nothing existed. Answer came quickly: bored.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal