St John Fisher News

21 June 2013 No. 185

Feast of St John Fisher

Tomorrow the church celebrates the feast day of our patron saint, St John Fisher. This is the date on which he was executed at Tower Hill in London. Since he and Thomas More were canonised together in 1935 they have shared 22 June as their feast day. This year we are continuing the practice of moving the celebration to the final day of term, 19 July. This enables us to avoid the annual exam season. The following week the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul falls on a Saturday this year, and so will be commemorated on Sunday 30 June. This means that we will not be marking this feast in school.

Dates for the next few weeks

Each year friends say to me 'I suppose things are less busy at school now that the exams are over', and each year this period gets more and more busy. This year is no exception and so I thought I would highlight some of the key dates over the next four weeks:

Tue 25 June – Speakers for Schools
Wed 26 June – Year 9 Spelling Bee
Fri 28 June – Year 13 Prom

Wed 3 July – Year 6 Transition Day
Thu 4 July – Year 12 Taster Day
Thu 4 July – Charity Concert

9/10/11 July – Focus Days

16 July – Installation of Bishop Alan Hopes
18 July – Sports Day
19 July – St John Fisher Day; terms ends 2pm.

The Autumn Term will start for teachers on Monday 2 September, for Years 7 and 12 on Wednesday 4, and for everyone else on Thursday 5 September.

Word of the Week: Skeuomorph

An object or feature which imitates the design of a similar artefact made from another material.

Proposed GCSE Changes

Last week the Secretary of State announced proposals to change GCSEs. The main changes have been mentioned frequently in the news and there were no surprises. Several aspects of the proposals are concerning, especially the intention to rely solely on final examinations. One of the reasons that coursework was introduced was to enable students to show what they could do in tasks that could not be completed in an exam; the fact that this approach suited girls more than boys was seen as helping to narrow the gaps in performance between boys and girls – boys do better in exams.

Another concern is that opportunities for students to take exams early are to be severely restricted. It would be much better to allow students to take exam when they are ready, as we do with the driving test.

But the biggest concern is that not all subjects will be covered by the new, tougher exams when they are introduced, and again RE is not one of the subjects that will be included. The changes are scheduled to come in for the current Year 7, who would be taking a mix of the new GCSEs and the current GCSEs.

Although starting new courses in September 2015 may sound like plenty of time to complete all the necessary preparation, it is unusually tight and will not allow for sufficient trials of new exams. After the debacle of the English GCSE changes last summer it is not surprising that the exams regulator, Ofqual, has expressed concern at the proposed timescale.

The Department for Education has put its proposals out for consultation until 20 August. Parents are able to respond individually and it would be helpful if you would, not least because the government tends to value the views of parents more than those of teachers. If you would like to respond please go to https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations and select 'Reformed GCSE Subject Content' from the list.

Exams Season Concludes

Meanwhile, the long period of summer exams finally ends today. Now comes the long wait for the results: Thursday 15 August for AS and A levels, Thursday 22 August for GCSEs. I would like to thank all of the staff that have been involved in ensuring that the exams run smoothly and correctly, and particularly our Examinations Officer, Joanne Rotondo, and the team of invigilators.

Sean Hayes

Visit to Taizé

On 26 May, a group of students (mostly from Year 10 and 11), accompanied by Miss O'Connor and Mrs Stevens, set off for what we now consider to be one of the most special experiences of our lives. With much enthusiasm, we embarked upon a 16 hour journey that led us to the religious community of Taizé in Burgundy, France. By then we knew the months of organisation and never ending fundraising had all been worth it. We did what many people thought was impossible. Arriving at the village of Taizé brought tears to our eyes.

Like many people who return from Taizé, describing what the experience is like is so very difficult. You have to live it to understand it. The joy and community that exists in that place touched the hearts of every single one of us.

On behalf of our entire group we want to offer our most sincere thanks to all of the people who helped make this experience a reality. We especially want to thank Fr Bruce from St Oswald's and Sacred Heart Churches. Thank you to Fr O'Connor in Stamford and to the congregation of the City of God Church where Mr Akinwumi is the pastor.

We are so grateful for the incredible generosity of the Catholic community through Peterborough who gave in such abundance. We want to especially thank our Parish Priest, Fr Paul who was a rock of support in every way imaginable as well as our Headteacher, Mr Hayes. Finally we want to thank Miss O'Connor and Mrs Stevens. Their love and determination to give us this great gift will never be forgotten.

When we began this journey, Miss O'Connor often told us that anything is possible with hard work and a little faith. How right she was. *Balint Brunner (W6)*

Westminster Update

Westminster students continue to excel and the following deserve praise for the overwhelmingly positive contribution to the House they have made this year:

Bethany Bennett	Shannon Butler
Mohammed Dhanji	Josue Ferreira
Ervinas Gaurilcikas	Filip Glapka
Frazer Goodfellow	Tristan Goodfellow
Bekhall Hakeem	Shanygne Horne
Waleed Hussian	Zain Khan
Pedro Loureiro	Thomas Lynch
Ana Gabriela Marques	Luis Marques
Sam Maxwell	Mateusz Mielcarek
Safaa Moradi	Aqil Muhmood
Basera Nasseri	Stephen Noronha
Amy Opie	Jodie Paling
Kenneth Pascual	Sinead Rayner
Tanisha Reedman	Emila Ryczko
Lukasz Siemasz-Jurkiewicz	Nathan Simpson
Jayde Sleaford	Carlton Souza
Morgan Stapleton	Megan Styles
Adrianna Tetnowski	Ashleigh Walker
Afifa Zaman	

Well done to you all. *Mr Clifford - Head of House*

Archery Action

Friday 7 June saw a group of 10 girls from our school archery club run an archery taster session at Sacred Heart Primary School. The girls had training with specialised bows and 'sucker' arrows to ensure no one got shot on the day. I am pleased to say the day went to plan with no stray arrows and the girls were fantastic! The headteacher of the school commented what good role models they were.

The girls were: Adriana Sandarova C5, Anita Bulak R4, Bethen England C2, Farah Qamar R8, Katherine Pollard R9, Katie Vonhof C8, Neringa Koleskovaite C9, Nickisha Laughton R6, Shikiba Hajizadeh W2 and Taylor Flaherty R9.

Very well done girls, the school is very proud of you!

Miss Wood

Duke of Edinburgh Congratulations

Liam Kehoe and Hannah Nawaz were recently awarded their Bronze DofE certificates at Peterborough Town Hall. Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive of Peterborough City Council, presented the certificates.

During her motivational speech Mrs Beasley confirmed that the DofE award is the most recognised award for young people in Britain and worldwide. Employers. including Peterborough City Council, always recognise the award as strong evidence that young people have helped out in the local community and have given up their time voluntarily for local causes as well as showing independence and team skills by taking part in at least two expeditions.

Both Liam and Hannah have contributed considerably to the life of our school and our local community and St John Fisher Catholic High School is most proud of them.

Liam gained his award by helping out at a local school as a teaching assistant, helping children read and write, gave up much of his spare time to put on several school drama productions, he joined a local gym and attended regularly and successfully took part in three local expeditions including a day of orienteering.

Hannah gave up many Saturdays and Sundays working voluntarily in a Heart Foundation charity shop dealing with a wide range of jobs such as sorting clothes and working on the tills. She took up the acoustic guitar and can now play competently, joined a local tennis club regularly taking part in competitions and also took part in three local expeditions.

The award is excellent evidence for employers and universities demonstrating that participants have a wide range of skills and experiences to offer.

Our current DofE group are off this weekend to practice their expedition skills around Rutland Water . The group will cover up to 30 kilometres on foot over two days carrying all their kit including tents, stoves, spare clothes and food. Thunderstorms are predicted so we will make sure we have all our waterproof clothes readily accessible in the top of our rucksacks just in case! *Mr Jones - DofE Co-ordinator*