



St John Fisher News

23 February 2018

No. 361

Welcome back

I hope that everyone had a good break last week, despite the very cold weather. We have come back to news of more cold weather expected next week but at least the mornings and evening are now getting lighter. We had a very successful staff training day on Monday. We find that this is a good time of the year to stop and refresh our plans. It also enables us to respond to any new initiative that has been introduced nationally since the start of the year. In our case, we have been inspected by Ofsted so wanted to respond to some of their advice. We have moved into the season of Lent during the holiday. Luke will say something further on this below.



A lot happening

Just catching up with my emails alone at the start of the week reminded me how many additional activities we are providing for the students now. There was the Classics visit to Pompeii just before the break, it is Languages Week this week, and World Book Day next week. And the Creative Music Theatre Project is continuing for Key Stage 3. We will report on these and other activities in the weekly newsletter.

MAT Update

There are further meetings this week and next about us joining a Multi-Academy Trust. The Catholic headteachers from Peterborough and March met this week to discuss the proposal further, and our governors are meeting with the diocesan officers next Tuesday evening. The governors then propose to discuss the matter further at their termly full governing body meeting in March, to which they have invited the CEO of the St John the Baptist MAT in Norwich.

Senior Students

Thank you to our senior students who have led the assemblies this week, presenting the ideas the School council have for the coming year. It is good to see their leadership in action and hopefully it will inspire younger students to step up when the opportunity arises.

Sean Hayes

Languages Week

An initiative of the United Nations, the International Mother Tongue Day has been celebrated on 21 February every year since 2000. It is a time to celebrate the 6,000+ languages spoken around the world and to also remember the 43% of languages who are currently at risk of disappearing for various reasons. We are very lucky to have such a wealth of languages within our school community and the Languages faculty organised events throughout the week: taster sessions in a range of languages, a Language fair for Year 8 to give them the opportunity to discover different cultures and a decorate the cupcakes competition themed around languages and countries around the world.

Miss Rodriguez

World Book Day - 1 March 2018

Next week will see many activities taking place in school to celebrate World Book Day. There are competitions such as guess the Shelfie (photos of staff book shelves), designing book covers and finding more out about potential employment within the publishing industry. This will all culminate on Thursday with a visit from author Linda Buckley Archer who will spend time with pupils in years 7, 8 and 9. There is a lot going on to engage and remind our pupils about the wonder of reading and of course there will be an update following Linda's visit.

Miss Stewart

Lent

Lent, the period of 40 days that precedes the celebration of Easter, has its origin in the early days of the Church. People seeking to become Christian, spent several years in study and preparation. They then went through a final period of prayer and meditation for the 40 days before their baptism at Easter. The rest of the Church began to observe the season of Lent in solidarity with them. It became an opportunity for all Christians to recall and renew the commitment of their baptism. Today we use Lent as a time to acknowledge the ways we have turned away from God in our lives, and we focus on turning our hearts and minds back towards Him. Hence the three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These things help us turn away from whatever has distracted us and to turn back to God. At St John Fisher we will be observing Lent in our charity works and through prayer, not least our Reconciliation Service on Thursday 8 March.

Luke Turner

Academic Tutoring: Year 10 - 26 February to 9 March

Classics Visit to the Bay of Naples

Our school visit to Italy left in the early hours of 7 February, with a group of excited students travelling to Stansted airport for an early flight to Naples. By 11.30am we had arrived at Naples Archaeological Museum, ready to begin learning about Roman public and private life in Pompeii and other towns. The museum had an amazing collection of finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum. In particular the wall paintings and mosaics were fantastically detailed and very varied in content, from images of the River Nile, Alexander the Great in battle, to a cat stalking a bird. Seeing all the finds enabled the students to begin to visualise the lifestyle and surroundings of Romans in the first century AD.

Following our visit to the museum we transferred to Herculaneum. This was a Roman town which was covered by boiling mud following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. This meant a great number of the houses had been preserved incredibly well, with many still with intact upper floors. The mud had also preserved a lot of original woodwork, which is very unusual. The rather macabre highlight was the viewing of the 300 skeletons that were found in the boathouses; the remains of people waiting to escape from the erupting volcano, for whom a boat didn't arrive in time. By this point we were exhausted and were relieved to get back on the coach and make our way to our hotel in Sorrento. This was brilliantly located in the town centre and, much to the students' relief, did have free wi-fi!

Day 2 was all about Pompeii. This was a large, commercial Roman town, which was a very busy port. This meant that there was quite a contrast with Herculaneum, in terms of size, but also of what we could see. Whilst Herculaneum was an affluent, residential settlement, Pompeii was a bigger, louder, brasher place. This meant it had a lot of public buildings and a vibrant political, economic and social life. As we began our tour we looked at the 'chalci' - plaster casts of bodies which had been encased in ash. We then visited the palaestra (training ground) and the amphitheatre, which two thousand years ago resonated to the sound of wild beast hunts and gladiator fights. It had a capacity of up to 35,000 so was an impressive building with which to begin.

As Pompeii was a big place we were quite selective about the buildings we visited, in order to ensure that the students saw the highlights. Public areas that were particularly impressive were the theatres and the forum, with its temples, law courts and commercial buildings. We also saw some amazing Roman mansions including the House of the Faun and the House of the Vettii. Students gradually became much more familiar with the style and layout of Roman houses and by the end of the day were confidently identifying rooms and using the Latin terminology. As we walked around Pompeii we were all conscious of the volcano looming above the town, Mount Vesuvius, the architect of Pompeii's destruction.

Friday was perhaps the highlight for many students. By 9.30 we were half way up Mount Vesuvius, ready to make the final ascent on foot. It was a quick, but



quite brutal walk, and the students did achieve it without too much moaning. A well-sited gift shop at the summit lifted their spirits and also provided free coffee for teachers, which was most welcome. However, the pain of the climb was worth it when we got the chance to look inside the 200m deep caldera, with its plumes of smoke and scent of sulphur. The size of the volcano was quite breathtaking and really enabled the students to understand the magnitude of the eruption in 79AD.

After a swifter descent, we made our way to Pozzuoli, which has a huge Roman amphitheatre, the third biggest in Italy, with a capacity of over 40,000. The appeal of this amphitheatre was a well-preserved sub-structure beneath the floor. This housed a network of tunnels, rooms and pulley systems which were used to facilitate theatrical gladiatorial shows and beast hunts. We met a helpful employee who gave us an impromptu guided tour, taking us through tunnels which are normally not open to the public, showing us escape routes that had been built in and revealing aspects of the architecture which were fascinating. Following Pozzuoli we finished our tour at Cumae, home of a Greek settlement but most famous as the location of the Sibyl in Virgil's Aeneid.

Our final day ended with dinner and a quiz, in which the dream team of Cerys, Teilo, Emily and Mr Karia won the spoils. This was a fantastic trip; it was a pleasure to spend time with a group of interested and engaging students, who made the most of the opportunities provided. Thank you to students for their participation and parents for their support. Thank you to Mr Martyn and Ms Roberts who gave up their time to transport us and thank you in particular to Mr Karia for his patience, good humour, common sense and moral support.

Miss Wilson



Follow us on Twitter:
[@sjfpeterborough](https://twitter.com/sjfpeterborough)

Public Speaking Competition

Ten of our year 12 pupils travelled to Ratcliffe College in Leicester to take part in a training session in public speaking on Tuesday. It was a fantastic opportunity and extremely helpful for our preparation for the Catenian Catholic schools competition in March. We look forward to our own competition later this month and the selection of the pupil who will go on to represent the school in March. Special thanks to Mr Chesham for all his help on the day.

Miss O'Connor