

ROSSALL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Monday
16th January 2012



Headmaster

Welcome to another series of fish-centred letters to cheer you up at the start of this New Year. One day this week is traditionally recognised as the most depressing day of the year---no one has any money after Christmas, the holidays are a long way away, and the weather is grim. Still, the days are getting longer, the school is getting fatter (15 new boarders this term and 13 new day pupils) and we can continue to be confident about the future, especially in view of the mounting chaos further down the coast. And I am comforted by a valuable reflection from an anonymous Pope : “Stupidity is also a gift from God, but we mustn’t misuse it!”. Have a good term.

We are approaching the Scholarship season, and it’s a chance for me to issue my usual observations about the process, especially the way it works (uniquely) at Rossall. Schools traditionally work out how much money they would earn if everybody paid the full fees. This calculation generates a figure known as the Gross Fee Income (GFI). Clever Bursars and Governors then establish a notional percentage of GFI which can be remitted to provide Scholarships, Bursaries, discounts for particular categories (children of ordained ministers and of serving members of the armed forces) and occasional payments for people who fall on hard times. This calculation will work out at somewhere between 9% and 15%. This gives us guidance about how much we can afford at any scholarship time. Of course, it isn’t an exact science because at Rossall a number of people who seek scholarships are also seeking them at other places, and sometimes an unseemly auction develops. This makes our scholarships different from those at many more traditional schools, where 90% of Scholarship candidates will come whether we make an award or not. In such schools the increasing tendency has been to make small awards---10%, not more than 25%---and make up any shortfall by means-testing the parents (the blue Bursary form). In this context it is perhaps sensible to point out that we award scholarships for excellence not for long service or general niceness, and that we make independent judgements about quality on the basis of any performance we see and also on the basis of our judgement about potential ability. On this basis we make awards and then wait to see who will be able to come. Bursary help is always available for those who earn scholarships.

Rossall is constantly springing surprises. I have just found, in a car park three hundred yards from the sea, a large plaice, nicely camouflaged (black side upwards). There will be a prize for the best explanation for this phenomenon. It’s raining cats and dogs comes from the medieval practice of letting cats and dogs roost in the straw thatches of houses, only to be forced out when heavy rain came. But a rain of plaice? In fact the day was full of surprises. I opened a copy of a Prep School magazine and was flicking idly through it when I saw a piece about schools as battery farms: rather an elegant piece, beautifully constructed and reactionary in tone, very much to my liking. No surprise, really : I had written it six months ago. It made the point that schools ought to be special places and ought to seek to avoid the dead hand of uniformity and over-regulation. Schools ought to be joyful places, full of possibilities. Plaice in the car parks, that sort of thing.

The term is full of good things but less full than I would have hoped: the second postponement or cancellation of Pirates of Penzance has knocked a hole in the term, but there are other goodies: this Wednesday the BBC Stargazing programme will include a presentation at Rossall from Nick Lister; the Friends, fresh from their triumph at the Christmas Ball, are repeating the Burns Night Celebrations, we are celebrating the Chinese New Year next weekend, and the Chapel Choir are preparing for some away fixtures and for a performance of Handel’s Messiah at the end of term. A significant donation---£90,000---is enabling us to plan to refurbish and to extend the cricket pavilion to provide decent changing facilities for

six teams: this is a project we hope to complete before the summer is out. And the big moves in the middle of the school are happening: gradually the offices near my study are being refurbished to provide accommodation for girls in Rose, and Bursary Staff, senior teachers, and secretaries are making their way over to The Hall, which used to be the Headmaster's House: the Bursar and his team are already there. This has turned out to be a huge project and the caretakers have spent the last month tirelessly moving files and furniture up and down some tricky stairs. The new rooms in Rose are spacious and wonderful and the full conversion will enable us to develop Rose and Dolphin as equal houses for day and boarding children in time for September.

One of the reasons I wasn't sorry in 2006 to stop being a Headmaster was the proliferation of policies which had to be devised, disseminated, enforced and inspected. These policies get longer and longer and more and more demanding. The latest one to cross my desk is an e-safety policy which is 32 pages long. The current view on policies is that everyone involved with a policy has to know all the detail of it. Some policies involve hiring extra people. If you hire an extra teacher---for example, someone to teach drama, which we would like to do next year---you can see results. It isn't clear what you can see if you hire an e-safety officer. Yes, we need to be vigilant: but children have their own electronic devices over which we can have very little control.

Good luck for the term, and please keep warm and keep in touch.

Dr Stephen Winkley, Headmaster

SPORTS ROUND UP

WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 9th January 2012

Girls' Netball

Rossall U15's 6 Liverpool College U15's 9

Rossall U14's 4 Liverpool College U14's 1

Boys' Basketball

Rossall U19 53 Blackpool Sixth Form U19 60

U16 Wyre Trophy Final

Rossall 28 Cardinal Allen 36

Boys' Rugby

U18 Daily Mail Vase round 7

Rossall 7 Cheadle Hulme 13

Boys' Hockey

Rossall U12 0 Giggleswick U12 5

Rossall U13 2 Giggleswick U13 3

Rossall U14 1 Giggleswick U14 5

Rossall U15 1 Giggleswick U15 2

Rossall 3rd XI 2 Giggleswick 2nd XI

Rossall 2nd XI 1 Giggleswick 1st XI 1

National Indoor Hockey Championships Finals held at Whitgift School

Rossall U16's were knocked out in the group stages

Rossall U18's were knocked out in the group stages

Boys' Football

Rossall 1st XI 1 Giggleswick 1st XI 2

Events	Week 2	
Monday 16 th January	1.45 pm 3.25 pm	Monitors' Meeting CCF
Wednesday 18 th January	12.00 pm 12.30 pm 1.00 pm 2.30 pm 2.30 pm 5.30 pm 6.30 pm	Depart, Hockey -v- King's Chester: 1st XI (a) Depart, Netball -v- Terra Nova: U13, U12 (a) Football -v- Arnold: 1st XI, 2nd XI (a) Basketball -v- Bury GS: U19 (h) Hockey -v- Malsis: U13, U12 (h) BBC Stargazing Live – A Lecture by Nick Lister (5.30pm and 8.00pm). Tickets available www.bbc.co.uk/tickets Coffee Concert by Yrs 7 – 10
Thursday 19 th January	4.30 pm	Lower Sixth Careers Talk - "Applying to University" (by UCLAN) - Sumner Library
Friday 20 th January	1.45 pm 3.30 pm	Confirmation class for Senior School Inter House Sport: Girls' Swimming
Saturday 21 st January	8.00 am 8.45 am 10.00 am 11.15 am 1.00 pm 2.30 pm 7.00 pm	Depart, Hockey -v- Merchant Taylors: U16, U15 (a) Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 Entrance / Scholarship Exams Hockey -v- Merchant Taylors: U14 (h) Depart, Hockey -v- Denstone:U13(3.30pm),U12(2.30pm) (a) Depart, Netball -v- Sedbergh: 1st, 2nd, U15, U14 Hockey -v- Denstone: 1st XI (2.30pm), 2nd XI (3.45pm) (h) Chinese New Year Celebrations
Sunday 22 nd January	5.15 pm	Boarders Trip: Cheshire Oaks trip House Concert, Rose