

Principal's Newsletter

12 May 2023

Dear Parents,



You had to be there, and just like Eurovision, it was difficult to get a ticket. The Palm House glowed in sunshine, we entered into the magic only to emerge more than 3 hours later inspired, edified, moved, and excited. Our pupils showed us what we had been missing since 2018. Five years somehow felt like the blink of an eye, and before us as Chapter 13 leavers were pupils we had last seen performing in this setting in Chapter 8. They emerged like Athena from the head of Zeus, transformed from hesitant violin scratchers to accomplished performers, with personality, soul, artistry. The Preplings stayed up past their bedtime, performing songs with perseverance. Their powers of music memorization aided by Ms Clark's conducting sign language. There was so much to admire and to marvel at. How do Mr Bishop and Ms Clark do it? They have created an inclusive culture of music making involving hundreds, inspiring all. Pupils themselves form groups, choose genres and styles, express themselves, making friendship along the way. As the sun set and we were treated to yet another stellar performance it was impossible not to feel that school itself had somehow resurrected. This was especially true when parents joined the orchestra, adding their own playing to the whole event. If I sound and seem breathless, I am. Thank you Mr Bishop, Ms

Clark, all the peripatetic teachers, the teaching students, the PTA and especially the pupils for thrilling and delighting and inspiring us.



Occasionally, one hears of things at school which are mysteriously moving and beautiful. I attach this rather prosaic picture of flatbread made by Ms Watson and her pupils. When she told me that the pupils had foraged the wild garlic with Ms Shackell in the forest school, the whole story of this flatbread, the creativity of teachers, the cooperation of pupils, the wonder of learning together, the production of something from the flora of our campus makes one say: how cool is that!

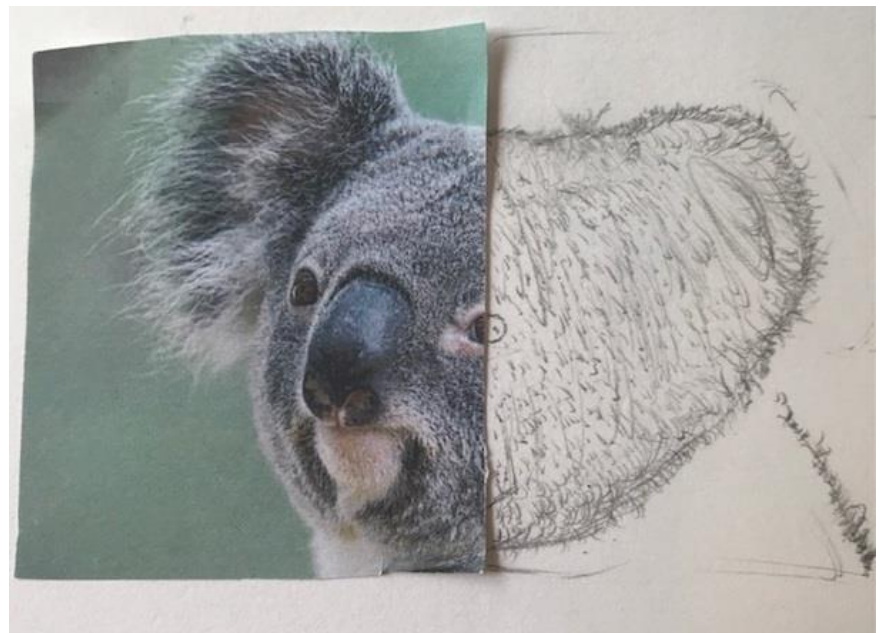
The SATs are over. The death march to Bataan quality of English education, with its infrequent high stakes assessments system which make going to school like competing in the Olympics every four years did not seem to unduly affect the troops I visited before the airborne raid on the exams. Mr Devine was looking magisterially at his charges who were recounting to me that they had felt totally prepared and that the paper was not "that hard". They will however, like all of us, be delighted that they can close the book on an experience like that for about 5 years when they will, unless reforms occur, be taking about 25 to 30 exams in the course of a GCSE series.

Ms McWatt shared a vignette which captures the strange rebirth of normal school life. At the beginning of her A level art exam, she put out her plastic bucket as a matter of course and told all candidates to place all phones and all devices into this bucket. There was a look of confusion on her students' faces. What was this, the confiscation of their most prized possessions. It then occurred to all that this was literally the first public exam this cohort of pupils have ever taken. The routines which are so ingrained in normal school life had passed them by. They had finally reached the point of doing an actual public examination.

King Charles' coronation was watched by many and in the spirit of our environmentally conscious king we are going to plant some orchid trees behind Beechlands. The boarders will undertake this small gesture of commemoration at some point after their [visit to Eurovision village](#) this week and their May [fundraising challenge for Cancer Research](#).

Our artists of the week this week are Bailie H (Ch8) and Kevin M L (Ch8) from their sketching lesson on Kangaroos and Koalas:

"We have been drawing koalas and experimenting with pencil mark making to draw their fur texture. We have looked at making sketchbook studies drawing sections of them and practising drawing a range of different animals from Australia. I find koalas cute but also a little silly looking. Someday I would like to visit Australia and see them in the wild." Bailie H



We were all very pleased with recent recruitment fields. As our school grows, and some of our teachers are promoted to ever more elevated spheres elsewhere, a school begins to recruit and hopes that it will attract the strong fields which lead to excellent staff. Indeed, what is the quality of the school except the combined talents and commitments of its staff, educational and operational, fused by a mission into something greater than even the substantial sum of these parts. One hears terrible stories of recruitment problems in schools from exam officers to estate teams, from maths to RS. We are delighted to report that we are still appointing from strong fields and that the talent of candidates continues to impress.

Our maths challenges for the week:

- Q1. Let G be a non-abelian group of order 111. Can you find the number of elements in G that have order 3?
- Q2. How many digits does $10^2 + 10^2 + 10^2 \times 10^3$ have?

Answers to the last challenges:

Q1.	There are two groups of order 21 up to isomorphism! C_{21} and $Z_7 \rtimes Z_3$. The presentations of these groups are: $C_{21} = \langle x : x^{21} = e \rangle$ and $Z_7 \rtimes Z_3 = \langle x, y : x^3 = y^7 = e, yx = xy^2 \rangle$.
Q2.	In theory... 5×2^{72} if we have a massive petri dish and none of the cells die! (way too many for normal petri dishes though.)

May I wish you a dry, pleasant and sunny weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal