



Stonyhurst, St Mary's Hall  
Clitheroe  
Lancashire  
BB7 9PU

12<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Dear Parents,

Last week continued at a brisk pace with our usual busy Thursday evening including not only our usual Music Practice and swim, but the opportunity for our Ruds and Figures students to go across to the College and listen to one of our most inspiring old boys, Adrian Flanagan, as he gave a presentation on how he had become the first solo Yachtsman to sail vertically around the world. Those who attended came back with new vigour and determination, knowing that anything they wanted could be achieved, given sufficient perseverance and strength of character.



On Friday, Mr Hughes headed off to Madrid with Mr Crouch, to meet the parents of Spanish Boarders, old and new. Notwithstanding their hard work, and many meetings, they had a wonderful experience, enjoying very generous hospitality. The support of our parents is invaluable to us, and this kind of visit helps greatly with improved communication and understanding on both sides. While they were away, our boarding community continued living life to the full. Saturday afternoon started

off with a Boarders' meeting, where we discussed the forthcoming election of Ruds students to a Boarding Committee. Elections will be held next weekend. We then chose to either go to the regular Saturday Art Activity, where we are making Christmas gifts with Mrs Hines; or practise for the Sunday Evening Talent Show.



Later on, we took advantage of a rare Saturday afternoon without Rugby fixtures and practices to hold our own Boarders' football tournament, organised by our very own Mr Pendleton. Every single boarder who was here at the weekend took part, and the feeling of excitement and determination in the sports hall was tangible. Our two winning teams, captained by



Favour and Lucas, fought hard through the stages of the tournament, achieving victory and the satisfaction of a large tube of Mars Planets to share at the evening film, where most of us settled down together, tired, but happy.





I say most, but not all. Some of our Figures children went out to parties on the Saturday night, returning late, full of excitement and stories about dressing up as VIP's and having real red-carpet treatment. We are



having an increasing number of invitations to parties, and to sleepovers, as friendships grow between our full time boarders and their friends who are day pupils or weekly boarders. It is lovely to see these relationships strengthen, and the confidence of all the children improve as a result.

Sunday morning was very relaxed this week. It was a Boarders' Blandyke weekend, which meant that Father Howell would be celebrating Mass with us in our own



chapel, so after our sleep in till eight o'clock, leisurely breakfast and free time, by ten o'clock, when we would normally have been in smart school uniform over in St Peter's, many of us were still in pyjamas! This did not include, however, the hard-working members of the Children for Children Committee. Bruno, Ian and Nicolas, who did us proud, setting up a stall in the library, with the expert support of Mrs Taylor. All Boarders were allowed a pocket-money allocation of £5.00 to spend on the gifts and toys to raise

money for those less fortunate than we are. They raised £138.00 and we can be justifiably proud of their hard work.

Talent practice and/or free time continued until, dorms tidied, and the tardiest of us dressed, we assembled in the Chapel for a wonderful



family Mass. We had a few brothers and sisters with us during the course of the day, although College Boarding life is as busy as the time we have at St Mary's Hall, and many siblings were unable to stay for long. Most of our Lower Grammar brothers were able to join us for a bit of family time before lunch, before heading off to Rugby matches and outings. We were also very happy to welcome several teachers from SMH, who came along for Mass and lunch. Family



members who did join us (and this time they included a few parents and grandparents, as well as brothers and sisters) really enjoyed themselves, all exclaiming at the excellent



quality of the food, and having a chance to really catch up on all the brother and sister news.



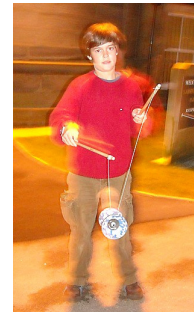


In the afternoon, we had a workshop with a professional actor and singer, Francesca Swarbrick, who really got the children's creative juices flowing. Everyone had fun playing a few warm-up games, building up confidence and

developing presentation skills. Then all of those who had been worried that they didn't have anything to do in the competition, thoroughly enjoyed learning and performing a dance routine to Queen's "We will Rock You." The fun continued until tea and letter-writing provided a respite, before the talent show began in earnest at 7 o'clock.



Francesca stayed to judge the children, together with the other members of our expert panel, Mrs Smith and Miss Allen, who both gave up their Sunday evening to join us in the Centenaries Theatre. I don't think they regretted it for a minute! What a feast of talent and originality we were treated to!



We had popcorn and juice to keep us going – and we needed it because the energy levels were so high! We enjoyed everything from dancing, to singing, violin

and flute-playing, choreographed dances, acrobatics, break-dancing, juggling, Diablo, comedy sketches and basket-ball skills. What an amazing group of young people we have staying here! And what I loved most about all of it, was the level of support the children gave to one another. They really enjoyed seeing one another succeed, and all of the adults present thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

It is not really surprising, given the amount of energy expended over the weekend, that we had a few tired boarders on Monday morning. There has been a nasty virus present around the school, and a few of our boarders succumbed and spent a night or two at the College Infirmary, where they were well looked after, and soon on the way to recovery. We are trying hard to keep our hands washed, and to cover our mouths when we cough, to avoid spreading the bugs, and hopefully all of us will soon be back at full strength. Mr Lewis is certainly keen that everyone remains well as he prepares his teams for the Rugby matches against St John's, Beaumont, this forthcoming Sunday. I will let you know what transpires next week!

With best wishes to you all,

Ruth Hughes  
Director of Boarding

