



Newsletter no 34 / Spring Term / 2nd June 2017



June	Time	Event
Mon 5 th	All week	R13 Professional Job Shadowing Week
Thu 8 th	All Day 19.00 14.30	R11 Duke of Ed Silver Qualifying Expedition (return Sat 11 th) 'Stretching the Canvas' Exhibition, Ava Gallery, Clandeboye Estate R8 Gordonstoun pupils to Crawfordsburn Scout Centre
Fri 9 th	10.00 15.00	Early Years Declamations, Jackson Hall R5-R9 Declamations, Jackson Hall

Headmaster's Headlines

Open Day: Tomorrow, our final Open Day of the year comes hard on the heels of the allocation of post-primary state school places last weekend, so thank you in advance for sending your child in to school tomorrow smartly turned out as always. Recent successes in marketing and admissions have created the unusual (for us) situation that we now find ourselves oversubscribed in some areas of the school and have even recently had to turn away applicants for some classes, as well as for boarding where we now have run out of rooms for boys. A nice problem to have, but we will not relax our efforts.

R4 for Rory: Glad to see our R4 video of 'Roar for Rory' has gone viral and even forms part of a compilation of clips tweeted this week by the great man himself. A portion of all tickets sales for this year's Irish Open at Portstewart in July will go towards the Rory Foundation, established by McIlroy in 2013 to help children live better lives by raising funds and offering support to children's charities around the world. Great stuff.

Barbarians: I often remark that our boarders have the best of all worlds, enjoying as they do the full, 24/7 Rockport experience. Unfortunately last night the full Rockport experience included standing in the rain at Ravenhill (I know, the Kingspan), watching what was meant to be an exhibition match between Ulster and the Barbarians. To their credit, our pupils did not complain once about the grim weather, or the grim forward play on the pitch. Thanks to the boarding staff for taking them.

Call of the Wild: Speaking of Barbarians, thanks to all those staff whose efforts made last Friday's R5-R7 camping evening such a success. When I visited the scene at 10pm it all looked like great fun, reminiscent of some scene from a Durrell novel (or maybe it was *Lord of the Flies*), although slightly worryingly the children looked still full of beans (or was it toasted marshmallows?) with absolutely no sign of going off to bed. All in all, this provided a memorable experience for the children and I am sure that when you got them home and had washed all that mud and wood smoke from their hair and clothes they had many a tale to tell. Only believe half of them. As I said last week, for many of our children concerned this was their first camping experience (and, it seems, for some parents their first experience of pitching a tent...) but it will be the first of many.

George Vance
Headmaster



Silver Duke of Edinburgh

Well done to the Silver Duke of Edinburgh candidates who successfully completed their pre-expedition assessment yesterday. Students are required to attend a final meeting on Monday at 1.15pm, in CS1, where tents and Trangias will be distributed.



Students should meet at the front of the school at **8.00am on Thursday** morning (8th June). As the weather forecast is predicting rain, please ensure your child has placed their sleeping bag and spare clothing within a dry bag. Many students did not have these during the practice expedition.

We aim to return back to school around 5.30pm on Saturday.

Sarah Parke
Head of ICT & ICT Co Ordinator

Declamations and Public Speaking Competition

This year we are delighted to welcome (once again!) Dr Paul Maddern from the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University as the judge for this year's competition. As many of you will remember, Dr Maddern was to be our judge last year but was not able to make it. Paul is one Northern Ireland's up-and-coming poets and has been a great friend to the school. As a board member with the John Hewitt Society he has been working with staff in the Arts Faculty to provide poetry retreats for teachers as well as students. One of his poems has also been selected for the new GCSE English Literature anthology.

The competition for pupils in R5 to R9 will commence at 3.00pm in the Jackson Building. Parents of competitors will be notified by email at the beginning of next week; however, anyone who would like to is free to attend.

Paul Lutton
Head of Arts and Humanities Faculty

Please support this worthwhile cause!



Barn Owl Survey Workshops

Would you like to help us monitor one of Northern Ireland's most iconic, but threatened species? Come along to one of our Barn Owl Survey workshops to find out how you get involved.

We will cover barn owl identification, barn owl survey techniques and, hopefully, sign you up for the survey this summer in your local area.

The workshops are open to everybody, free to attend and refreshments will be provided.

- 24 May, 6.30pm Brownlow Community Hub, Craigavon
- 25 May, 6.30pm Cookstown Leisure Centre, Cookstown
- 26 May, 6.30pm Waterways Ireland, Enniskillen
- 5 June, 6.00pm Neillsbrook Community Centre, Randalstown
- 6 June, 6.30pm Windy Hall Community Centre, Coleraine
- 15 June, 6.30pm Quoile Countryside Centre, Downpatrick
- 16 June, 7.00pm Kilcooley Community Centre, Bangor



If you are interested in attending, please contact Nina Schonberg on 028 9045 4094 or email barnowls@ulsterwildlife.org

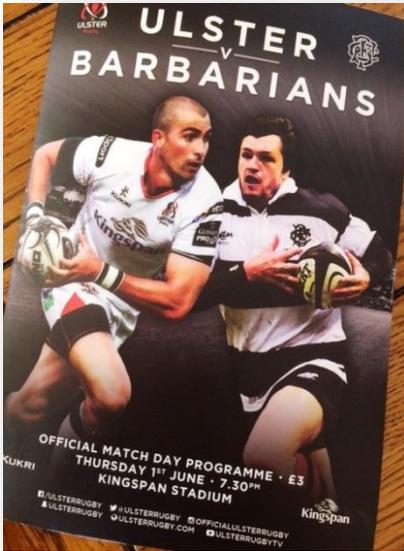
www.ulsterwildlife.org/barnowl

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Post-Exam Treat for Boarders

The boarding pupils enjoyed a post-exam treat of either a night at The Kingspan Stadium (Ravenhill) watching an Ulster XV captained by Ruan Pienaar and Roger Wilson play the Barbarians or a smaller group went to enjoy a more sophisticated meal at Wagamamas with Mrs McGimpsey and Mrs Donnell.

Whilst the Wagamamas group dined in style (and warmth) the rest of the boarders braved the wet and cold to watch Ulster be beaten by a strong Barbarians side. This was not the result that most of us wanted! However, a good night was had by all and a chance meeting with Ulster and Ireland international Tommy Bowe made for a great photo opportunity.

Dawn Toland
Head of Boarding



Declamations

You are warmly invited to our Early Years Declamations which will take place on Friday 9th June at 10am in the Jackson Hall. Tea and coffee will be available in the Jackson Hall from 9.30. Children should wear their summer uniform with blazers.

Lynn Athanasiou
Head of Early Years

End of Term Travel Arrangements

Many thanks if you have already informed me or the office. Could I ask that as we enter our final month and race towards 12noon on 23rd of June, parents confirm outbound travel arrangements by emailing schooloffice@rockportschool.com . It is most helpful to have this information early in order to arrange airport transfers.

Dawn Toland
Head of Boarding
dtoland@rockportschool.com

Whites

The saga continues...my wonderful practically perfect husband thought he would help out and do the washing...yes please...how wonderful, that saves me sifting through the manky laundry basket separating colours etc.

You guessed it, John doesn't like sifting through manky laundry baskets either...whites were grey/green...aaaaaggghhh. It's Sports Day today and on Wednesday I find out the one pair of shorts and the one polo shirt for each child that I've managed keep whitish are no longer :(

Now John KNOWS the washing rules. Doesn't everyone? BUT apparently the rules don't apply when "there's only a couple of weeks left at school and I thought they'd be fine"....because colours don't run during the last weeks of term??

Music and Mayhem

It's been a musical extravaganza in our house this week, Grade 1 violin and prep singing galore. It's been a tough week, for my ears, but yesterday they all sat their exams and enjoyed every minute of it. Well done to everyone for taking part, whether it's a hobby or a passion - music is therapeutic and definitely good for the soul:)

Dates for your diary:**Small Sailors – Tuesday 13th June**

It's fun at sea and on land for the Early Years Small Sailors Day at Ballyholme Yacht Club. We'll be all hands on deck providing hot chocolate, tea, coffee, sweets and refreshments for all the mums and dads coming to join in.

Speech Day & BBQ – Thursday 15th June – 3pm

After the tear jerking speeches and congratulations of Speech Day you'll be ready for a relaxing glass of something cold on the front lawn. We will be providing a BBQ, donations bar, refreshments with bouncy castles and face painting (kids only ☺). We hope you'll join us and fingers crossed for some beautiful sunshine.

If any parent would like to give us a helping hand manning the bar, barbecue or refreshments we would love to hear from you on pta@rockportschool.com

Carol Thompson
PTA Chairperson