



Marden High School

Friday 20th June 2025

Dear All

Just before the last half term holiday I was visited by a gentleman who was dealing with the estate of an ex-Marden teacher who had recently passed away. Amongst her belongings were a number of scrapbooks and photo albums dating from the 1960's which contained newspaper clippings, photographs and other information on school trips and musical productions happening at Marden at the time. As someone who lives and breathes Marden, I have found it fascinating to leaf through these old documents, and compare what was happening then to what we do now. Just as looking back through family albums can give people a sense of history, and a sense of belonging, these old documents can help us to understand our place in the continuum of time as it ticks through our lives at Marden. We will be putting together these documents in a display in the main corridor at the front of school, and I will be very interested to see how many of our current students recognise family members or can shed light on the further history of people featured. If any parents would like to have a look to see if they can recognise anybody, I would be happy to invite them in after the school day - anybody who wants to should contact my PA Mrs Scott or me directly. We will be sure to put a feature in the half termly newsletter on our website at the end of this term.

This week, as part of their preparation for becoming a prefect, Year 10 students have been meeting with me in small groups to discuss matters important to our school community. This has also served as a quality assurance process to ensure that students will be able to carry out the role of prefect effectively. This has been a very enjoyable process for me, hearing some brilliant thoughts stemming from their discussions and ideas that will be acted upon in the coming year. As their Head of Year, Mr Swain has also been conducting similar meetings and we both agree that the quality of interaction and discussion in these groups bodes well for next year.

As I am sure you will be aware, we monitor student attendance rates carefully here at Marden, and we are always on hand to encourage children to work towards 100% attendance, and to support our young people and their families with strategies to achieve this. Our own monitoring indicates that attendance rates at Marden are very good, and we have recently had shared with us data from the Department for Education which gives us a comparison with statistically similar schools nationally. This information puts schools into

deciles, groups of 10%, and Marden is in the top 10% in a variety of metrics. This confirms that Marden students really do have excellent attendance, and that the help we are able to give when it is needed is effective. If any parent or carer requires further information about attendance strategies they should contact their child's Head of Year.

The saying 'spinning yarns' is a nautical practice of storytelling, originating in the 17th Century, as sailors told each other tales whilst mending the ropes on a ship with the parallel drawn between the act of twisting fibres into a long thread and crafting a narrative. This week saw the third of five days of one aspect of our Student Development Programme where our year 9 cohort worked alongside students from three other schools to tell the story of Grace Darling. With the story so embedded in the rich history of the North East and so close to home for us, as a coastal school, it was a rich opportunity for students to develop their creative skills, team working and historical knowledge as they wrote the script, composed and performed the music together with designing the props for the shadow puppets and crankie machine. The performance to parents, teachers and fellow students at the Northern Stage, following their work with Hand Of throughout the day was a brilliant showcase of the skills honed throughout this course.

Last week we were very lucky to have a four legged visitor in the form of Breeze, a beautiful black labrador guide dog. The Student Cabinet had chosen the Guide Dogs for the Blind charity as the recipient for recent fund raising, and so it was good to meet Breeze and his owner. The feedback from the students and staff that were present has been so positive. Whilst it costs a huge amount of money, time, and work to train a guide dog, it was clear to all the students how important a dog is to a blind person, not just for guidance, but for the companionship they give. Breeze was an absolute star and the children all appreciated the opportunity to get up close to him.

There will be a full sports report in next week's newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher