Message from the Head

Well football may not have come home (yet), but the summer of 2018 will, I’m sure, last for some time in our memories! Such beautiful weather, day after day. Students (and teachers) have battled on facing the novel problem of swelteringly hot classrooms. Outside of lessons, it has been a ‘summer to remember’ for Vesey Cricket. What a time for Vesey Arts too! We have had our first Music Tour in over a decade, a breath-taking art exhibition over two nights at the stunning Argentea Gallery in St Paul’s Square and Year 7 performing Shakespeare in ‘open air’, not on the Cedar Lawn, as in Vesey days gone by, but at the Cricket Pavilion.

It has also been a momentous term because the Class of 2018 are leaving BVGS (pictured below). They have been such an outstanding cohort of students, who have flourished here and given so much to our community in the classroom and beyond through Sports, Music, Drama, Leadership and, above all, being an impressively mature and amiable group of young men and women. We wish them all the very best for the future as Old Veseyans. We look forward to welcoming all our Upper Sixth Leavers and their families to our Speech Day at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on Friday 30th November, 6.00 for 6.30 till 8.00pm.

Finally, this summer will see some very fine members of staff moving on to pastures new. So it will be farewell to the legendary Mr Steve Baugh, Mrs Jane Heaviside, Mr Ralph Brocklebank OV, Mr Alex Morgan, Mr Martin Collinge and the dynamic duo of Mr Dan White and Mr Joe Williams. We will miss them all. It is also with sadness that we say ‘goodbye’ to Dr John Craggs DL, our Chair of Governors for the last six years. However, it is a source of pride for all of us that John was awarded an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honour’s List in June, for ‘Services to Education’ both here at BVGS and at the University of Birmingham. At the same time, we welcome Mrs Joanna Davis as the new Chair of Governors and we wish her every success for her time in office.

Whatever you are doing over the coming summer, have a wonderful time.

Dominic Robson
Headteacher

Congratulations and thank you

Dr Craggs MBE, DL

We are delighted Dr John Craggs has received an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours for Services to Education. It is a huge commitment being a Chair of Governors for six years and John has given a lot to Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School alongside his other regional and national commitments to the University of Birmingham, the NHS, the Armed Forces as well as his duties as a representative of the Queen in the Midlands as DL.

Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School has made great academic progress over the last six years and at the same time the School has expanded and seen considerable infrastructure development, including the Richards-Randon STEM Block. There have been huge improvements exemplified by a glowing outstanding OFSTED inspection in 2014 and BVGS now being recognised as a national leader in a number of areas including mental health and fair admissions/widening access, developments for which John has always been a strong advocate. John has also been a great supporter of our traditions and history and was instrumental in organising the brilliant Jerrard VC 100 celebrations in March.

For all who attended these, you will know this was a very powerful event, which had a profound impact on all our students present.

Thank you Dr Craggs for your service.

Thank you to the Class of 2017-2018

One of the hallmarks of our School is the quality of our student leadership team. The Class of 2017-18 were no exception to this rule. Student leaders play a significant role in the life of our School whether it be sitting on interview panels, touring visitors around the site, meeting ‘Shaggy Dogs’ (our elderly Old Veseyans) or even speaking at the Reform Club on Pall Mall in London. A student leader at BVGS has a rich and interesting experience and we know that whether their audience or context, they will not let us down. So a big thank you to the Leaders of 2017-18:

William Hennessy (School Captain), Sophie Lloyd (School Captain), Matthew Price (Deputy School Captain), Nickeal Sidhu (Deputy School Captain), Louis Kill-Brown (President of the School Council), Tanya Takavarasha (Vice President of the School Council), Sehj Kaur (Vice President of the School Council), Sheamol Obeda (Charity Captain), David Green (Charity Officer), Charlotte Frazer-Morris (Charity Officer), Essie McGlynn (Mental Health Officer, Caleb Woodall (Mental Health Officer), Olivia Dean (Mental Health Officer), Joseph Perrin (Blue House Captain), Edward Elliman (Blue House Officer), Damilola Sowunmi (Blue House Officer), Declan Mee (Gold House Captain), Tom Hooper (Gold House Officer), Alice Graham (Gold House Officer), Phoebe Abbott (Red House Captain), Ben Abbott (Red House Officer), Balamrit Sokhal (Red House Officer), Olivia Hastings (White House Captain), Roshan Siddique (White House Officer), Ben Miles (White House Officer), Luke Topley, (Purple House Captain), Mohammed Rohil (Purple House Officer), Catherine Hobbs (Purple House Officer)

I must also thank other students have played significant leadership roles (in some cases additionally) outside of this team, namely:

Will Poland, William Hennessy and Matt Price (Rugby), Jack O’Hara and Philip Reader (Music) Emily O’Hare (Netball) and Jainan Patel (Hockey), Outstanding!
Leavers' Ball 2018

The Upper Sixth Leaver’s Ball at Villa Park was a huge success. It was a great evening to relax and enjoy each other’s company after a very busy examination season. Thank you to Miss Egan, outgoing Head of Upper Sixth, who masterminded the event and to School Captains, Sophie and Will, and Mr Goodwin for delivering excellent speeches, including a poignant tribute to Mrs Heaviside, who has been such a popular teacher of ‘A’ level Maths and Further Maths throughout her career at BVGS.

Sixth Form Parliamentary Debating

The temperature was hot but the debate was even hotter when students from across the area went head-to-head in the annual schools’ debating competition, hosted here at Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School as a result of us winning the 2017 debate. Debates included whether voting should be made compulsory or whether all state-run faith schools should be abolished. It was the team from Fairfax, who proved to be the most confident in their arguments on the night and walked away with the winning trophy. It was a hard-fought debate and it was a genuinely difficult debate for the panel of four judges – former Sutton Observer editor, Gary Phelps, former Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Paul Sabapathy, Clerk to the Trustees of the Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, Ernie Murray, and current Observer editor, Charlotte Hart – to adjudicate. As usual, the debate was chaired by the MP for Sutton Coldfield, Mr Andrew Mitchell. A big well done to Bethan Davage and Shoaib Sheraz, who represented BVGS with aplomb. All 16 debaters from the evening were rewarded for their efforts with a trip sponsored by Sutton Coldfield College to the House of Commons on Monday 9 July, which actually turned out to be quite a politically turbulent day. Bethan and Shoaib both enjoyed being introduced to the recently resigned Brexit Secretary, Mr David Davis MP, in the House of Commons tea room!
At age 16, Year 11s everywhere have a choice of their future. Most Year 11 students come to BVGS for their Sixth Form education. However, sometimes students choose other pathways because they want to study a particular course or training. Whatever their pathway, we are proud of all our Year 11s and we wish them all the best of luck for their next stage.

A big thank you to Mr Davis, Head of Year 11, and Form Tutors, Miss Lamb, Mrs Diprose, Mr Graham, Mr Cragg, Mr Guy, Miss Field as well as Learning Mentors, Mrs Hodkinson (KS4) and Mrs Arrandale (KS3) as well as Mr Bowen (Deputy Head i/c KS4) and everyone who has helped the students over the last 5 years.

Below are the form photos for 11B, 11G, 11R and 11W. There is also a lovely ‘five years on’ photo, where Mr Belcher got Year 11 to re-create their Year 7 huddle from 2012-13.
Welcome to our friends from Number 4 Middle School, Zhanjiang

It seems hard to believe that only three years ago, Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School had very little understanding of the largest populated country in the world, China. It was in July 2016 with the support of local Birmingham teacher, Mr Phil Hubert, that Mr Russell Bowen, Deputy Headteacher, and Miss Vivienne Green, Head of Mathematics, did a reconnaissance visit to China to see whether a student trip to Zhanjiang might be viable. Thanks to the progressive Headteacher, Mr Chen, and his staff, we felt comfortable to offer BVGS students a Chinese experience to students from Year 11 and Sixth Form. And so in July 2017 a school party from BVGS visited Zhanjiang and experienced new food, culture, skills, beauty and made new friends.

The students returned to England motivated by a strong interest in China. This inspired us to apply to offer Mandarin taster lessons to all Year 7 as well as the prestigious Mandarin Excellence Programme to around 25-30 of our Year 7 students from September 2018. We are very excited about this and have appointed a Mandarin teacher for September, Miss Miao Wang. Miss Wang will be supported by the Head of Mandarin at Queen Mary’s Grammar School, Walsall, Mrs Kim Wang.

This July, we have welcomed a party of 35 staff and students from Number 4 Middle School to BVGS. We have been very well supported by our Vesey families, who have so kindly offered to host our Chinese guests.

It has been an exciting fortnight for our visitors. They have had a number of school-based workshops, including English, Drama, PE, Art, Design Technology, Sciences and Music. Thank you so much to all our departmental staff for their generosity and help at such a busy time of year. Additionally, they have visited the Lord Mayor’s Parlour in Birmingham, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Cambridge, London and Kenilworth, as well as watching Year 7 perform ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ and learning about the joys of cricket (thank you Mr Gray) at the Cricket Dinner.

We will be celebrating the visit further with a concert on Thursday 19 July and in the Leaving Assemblies on Friday 20 July.

A big thank you to Mr Buxton, Director of Music, and Mr Bowen, Deputy Headteacher, and Vesey families, students and staff who have done so much to make the China Exchange a big success!
Primary school design day

We were delighted to welcome a very well-behaved and engaging set of Year 5 students from Whitehouse Common Primary School for our Design Day organised by Mr Brown, Head of Design Technology. An excellent initiative!

Engineering the future

It was good to welcome back Bilal Ahmad (OV 2010), former Eddowes Prize winner and Governor to BVGS. He gave two fascinating talks entitled, ‘Engineering the Future’ to would-be Year 10 and Lower Sixth engineers about the project he has been leading for BP in the Azerbaijani part of the Caspian Sea, extracting natural gas from the seabed and creating a pipeline to Western Europe. This is part of a general strategy to reduce the reliance of the West on Russian energy resources.

STEM partnership with Millennium Point

Judith Armstrong, CEO from Millennium Point, visited school and was shown around the STEM Block where students demonstrated some of the work they are doing in DT. Millennium Point have generously funded a robotics lab and 3D printer for the school. Judith said “I was so impressed with what you are doing, there is so much to learn here.”

University Fair

This year we had subject specific lectures and general ‘personal statement’ sessions delivered by: Bath, Durham, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Sheffield, Loughborough, Imperial and Liverpool universities. Sam Lacy also gave an outstanding presentation on Oxbridge admissions to a very full Big School. Thank you to Dr Reilly for organising these outstanding opportunities.
In Mrs Rowlands’ Art Club this year, Key Stage 3 students have been producing a sensory board for a Sutton Coldfield charity, ‘Square Peg Foundation’. The board will be located in a mobile sensory room from September 2018 and will offer sensory therapy for people with disabilities. Students have been instrumental in both designing and making the many individual components for the board and should be very proud of their achievements. Special thanks to Mrs Gregory who has been heavily involved in sourcing materials, laser cutting and fixing it together in the final stage. Well done to:

James Emms (7P), Cameron Lovell (7P), Dominic Van Loan (8G), Alex Chan (8G), Ibrahim Abdalla (8W), Arjan Shoker (9G), Aadi Chavali (9G), Andy Bath (9P).

Message from a parent:  I just wanted to write to you and congratulate the boys who have created the sensory board for the sensory bus provided by Square Peg Foundation. As an end user of their services and also as a parent of a son at Bishop Vesey, I am really pleased to see that the boys have taken on board this challenge and have created something that will be used by many children in the local community including my middle son who is currently at Langley Special School.

I would like to send a personal thank you to Alex Chan and Ibrahim in Yr 8 who both know my son and would hopefully have had a greater understanding of the needs of children with additional needs.

I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to them all and we look forward to seeing the board on the bus soon.

Visit by Holocaust survivor
Janine Webber and Holocaust Survival Day

Year 9 took part in Holocaust Day on Tuesday 10 July. Students participated in a variety of workshops, learning about the Holocaust from the perspective of different subjects, such as English, RE, Economics and History. They then listened to sixth formers James Horn, Emily Hyde and Ciara Shankey, who gave an outstanding, thought-provoking presentation about their experiences from visiting Auschwitz in February. The workshop in RE was led by Asam Mahmood, Josh Martin, Lucy Windsor and Hashim Mohammad.

The highlight of the day was when students listened to the heart-breaking but inspirational testimony of Holocaust survivor Janine Webber. Year 9’s conduct throughout the day was exceptional, and they took the opportunity to ask some very thoughtful and intelligent questions to Janine.
Plaster casting project

A big thank you to the artist, Benny Semp, who courtesy of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, enabled BVGS to be part of an exciting Birmingham-wide project. Benny visited ten schools around Birmingham making plaster casts of everyday objects in the classroom and around school to bring together in a large scale artwork which will go on display as part of a new exhibition called The Everyday and Extraordinary. It is all about everyday objects transformed into fine art, so Benny want to make casts of the everyday objects of childhood (in and outside of the classroom) when he visited BVGS.

The students really enjoyed the opportunity of working together with Mr Semp.

Art @ArgenteaGallery

What a privilege it was this year to host our annual Art exhibition over two nights at the prestigious and beautiful Argentea Gallery, 28 St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1RB. We are so grateful to Jenny Anderson, Argentea Gallery owner, for allowing us to do this. It was such a brilliant exhibition and there were 36 sales made by our students. Wow! I hope you enjoy looking a small fraction of the art displayed over the following pages. Thank you to Mrs Heer, Mrs Rowlands, Mrs Gregory, Mr Davies and Mr Swindells and all the staff for your hard work in making this amazing event happen.
**Valetes**

**Steve Baugh** joined Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School in September 1990. Educated at Dartmouth High School (now Q3 Academy), Steve went on to study Geology at Queen’s College, Oxford University. After a brief spell working as a logging geologist on oil rigs in the North Sea, Steve became a teacher. BVGS was his third school and he came to us with quite an academic pedigree: a member of MENSA, an Associate Member of the Institute for Geologists and a Fellow of the Geological Society.

At first, Steve taught Physics, Chemistry and Biology before becoming a Geography and Geology teacher. He made quite an impression on his students. As Keaton Samra, studying Geology at Southampton University, put it, “Steve is one of the most inspiring characters I’ve ever had the pleasure of calling my teacher. A light-hearted and yet driven approach to everything he seemingly does were traits that radiated onto his students with such profound effects.” Tom Reershemius, formerly Deputy School Captain, who is studying Geology at Oxford, said, “There must be hundreds of Geologists and Geology students who owe their careers to Steve. The time and effort he puts into pupils are second to none. We might not agree about the lithology of some outcrops in Sutton Park, and about his taste in music, but Steve’s the best teacher I ever had.”

Outside the classroom, Steve has been equally impressive. He has been a Governor, has run rugby and cricket teams, produced numerous Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, including directing a certain Catharine Deeleay and musicals such as Guys and Dolls and Grease, and has led so many trips at home and abroad to Costa Rica, Cuba, Iceland, India, Mexico, South America.

He is an absolute legendary member of the Vesey Community and we will miss him. Good luck Mr Baugh.

**Jane Heaviside** began her Vesey career 23 years ago. At the Leaver’s Ball, the Sixth Formers gave her a beautiful tribute in recognition of everything she does for the students. As a top Mathematician and Further Maths teacher, Mrs Heaviside is always in demand to go through questions, to soothe, reassure and encourage. Her patience, kindness and generous commitment throughout her Vesey career have simply been inspirational to generations of students and staff. She will be missed as a calm, diligent professional with an excellent sense of humour, who has a kind word for everyone. It is so sad to see a Vesey legend leave us but we wish Jane every success.

Steve Baugh’s third school was BVGS, where he came as a student, joining Blue House. He came back to Vesey as a teacher of Chemistry (under Martin Lea’s leadership). Since then he has led a Change Team on Student Leadership (which led to the current prefect system), he was appointed Head of Blue House in January 2011 (a post which he still holds now), and then he stepped up as Head of Year 7 in September 2011 (taking over from Lynn Penny). When David Iddon offered him the opportunity to stay with this year group all the way to Year 11 he jumped at the chance and he made a fine job of nurturing these boys into the fine young men who have just finished their A-Level this summer. And now, he is heading off to Q3 in Great Barr to be Assistant Vice Principal – i/c Pastoral Care and the House System, where I am sure that he will go from strength to strength.

**Ralph Brocklebank** has had an exemplary career at Vesneys, firstly as an exceptional student, and more recently as an exceptional teacher. Ralph first arrived at Vesey in 1996 (as a student, joining Blue House). He came back to Vesey as a teacher of Chemistry (under Martin Lea’s leadership). Since then he has led a Change Team on Student Leadership (which led to the current prefect system), he was appointed Head of Blue House in January 2011 (a post which he still holds now), and then he stepped up as Head of Year 7 in September 2011 (taking over from Lynn Penny). When David Iddon offered him the opportunity to stay with this year group all the way to Year 11 he jumped at the chance and he made a fine job of nurturing these boys into the fine young men who have just finished their A-Levels this summer. And now, he is heading off to Q3 in Great Barr to be Assistant Vice Principal – i/c Pastoral Care and the House System, where I am sure that he will go from strength to strength.

**Alex Morgan** joined the Maths Department in 2010. He has been an absolutely outstanding colleague – a hard-working, well-organised and talented Mathematician with a dry sense of humour. Students have appreciated and flourished under his care, attention to detail and encouraging manner. Alex has contributed in so many other ways over his time with us, taking students on trips, supporting exam week and leading on Chess. Under his leadership, Vesey Chess has risen to new heights with BVGS winning the Birmingham Chess League. I know the students will miss him but we wish him well as he moves on to the new chapter of his life with his family in the idyllic Brecon Beacons. Go well Mr Morgan!

**Dan White** has thrown himself into every aspect of school life and has established a great rapport with the students. Nothing has ever been too much for him, giving freely of his time and going the extra mile. He leaves to take up a trainee post at Bromsgrove school. Over 90 applicants applied for his job, which shows his calibre. His role as a technician is wholly understated and he has been a fully-fledged member of the department and we could not have functioned so effectively without him.

**Joe Williams’** first involvement at Vesey was in late 2015 when he came to gain a few days experience in the PE department. He made such a positive impression that the school jumped at the chance to have Joe with us full-time. He has been a key member of the PE department throughout his four years with us, leading on basketball and this year the primary school events that we host for the Wilson Stuart Active Society, and making big contributions in rugby, hockey, cricket, athletics and the development office. It has been a pleasure to see at close hand how Joe has developed over his four-year association with the school. He has grown in confidence, as both a teacher and coach.
A Midsummer Night's Dream

When one talks to Old Veseyans of a particular vintage they will talk about House Drama and plays on the ‘Cedar Lawn.’ Alas, the ‘Cedar Lawn’ is no longer with us. However, the beautiful weather of the last couple of months afforded us a magnificent opportunity: could Year 7 members of the Drama Club (led by the wonderful Miss Beth Brown from Centrestage School of Speech and Drama and supported by Miss Ella Mc Grail, Miss Aoife O’Dowd and Mrs Rebekah O’Dowd) take their interpretation of Shakespeare into the great outdoors. The first debate was the venue. Where would be best? We decided ultimately upon the shaded area to the left of our iconic cricket pavilion. It was a brilliant choice.

‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream, William Shakespeare’s most popular comedy was written around 1594. It portrays the adventures of four young lovers and a group of amateur actors, their interactions with woodland fairies and a duke and a duchess. Taking place in a mythical Athens and an enchanted forest, there is a handsome fairy king, a misguided parent, star-crossed lovers, a weaver who is transformed into a half-donkey, wood sprites and elves!

A big thank you to our amazing cast: Quince (Edward Bickley), Bottom (Harry Howes), Demetrius (Ryan Joy), Puck (William Dale), Mustard seed (Wayne Tong), Titania (Thomas Mitchell), Snug (Ibraheem Bani-Saad), Theseus (Abhilash Ganesh-Kumar), Lysander (Jeevan Braich), Oberon (Max McCabe), Flute (Josh Singh), Helena (Sunny Joshi), Moth (George Makwandi), Cobweb (Tom Gault), Hermia (Viraj Gupta) and Snout (Adi Muthukumar).
Summer Showcase

On Thursday 28 June, a 100 or so parents were entertained by our Music Tourists in a wonderful open air concert outside the Clive Richards Music Centre. The Belgium-England football game on the big screen paled into insignificance compared with the wonderful musical items we were treated to. It was nice to see families bringing deckchairs, rugs and picnics and enjoying Vesey Music at its best in the beautiful sunshine. At the end of the evening, students packed up, ready for the Music Tour beginning the next morning.

Maastrict Music Tour, 2018

This has been a brilliant year for Vesey Music and Mr Ashley Buxton, our Director. Our first Music Tour in over a decade was a resounding success with 69 students and 7 staff enjoying performing in Maastricht and at the Three Country Maze. The students and staff also enjoyed visits to a chocolate museum and a theme park.
A summer to remember for Vesey Cricket

As a 10 year old, I remember experiencing first-hand an amazing Ashes series in England, watching Ian Botham at Old Trafford and Headingley heroically demolish the Australians! There was a fantastic photo-book I read that year in 1981 by one Patrick Eager entitled, ‘A Summer to Remember’, a brilliant record of English cricket. The 2017-2018 season was certainly ‘A Summer to Remember’ for Vesey Cricket.

At our recent Junior Cricket Dinner, we celebrated the many successes of our students.

Mr Williams Year 7: The season began with a very tight fixture against a good Queen Marys side in very wet and soft conditions. Unfortunately the result did not go in our favour, but the signs of improvement and development were there for all to see.

Our first win came against a competitive KES five ways team on the back of some excellent fielding and unbelievable bowling from Aditya Muthukumar 7G who took six wickets going for just four runs from his spell. A truly astonishing achievement!

A first round cup win against Fairfax soon followed thanks to some terrific batting from openers Devin Fernando 7R and Rohit Jakhu 7G.

However, the team lost their next cup game to a very strong KES Birmingham side, who had previously beaten BVGS just two weeks before.

The team got back on track, thanks to a fantastic win against Solihull. Excellent bowling from spinner Tom Hanlon limited Solihull and openers Devin Fernando and Rohit Jakhu again starred with the bat, putting on an unbeaten 67 between them. Finally an encouraging bowling display against Kings Worcester ended the season, and has shown how the team has progressed massively throughout the year. Well done boys on a difficult first years cricket.

You have really made great strides on the back of some hard work during the after school sessions. Lots to work on for next year but the foundations are in place. Well done!

Mr White: Year 8

I had the pleasure of taking the u13 cricket season in what turned out to be a very successful season with a record of Played 10, Won 7 and Lost 3. The season began with a comfortable victories over Queen Mary’s, Bablake and Five Ways, before our first loss to a strong KES Edgbaston side in the county cup completed the first block of fixtures.

Following the half term break, the side had a chance at redemption with a friendly fixture against KES. This fixture was not so one sided and with the heroic James Padley defiantly defending his wicket at the death, allowed Jacob Ford to hit the winning runs with 1 wicket and 2 balls remaining. Old Swinford Hospital were up next and after some disciplined bowling (Kearns 2-6 and Bryars 3-14) and excellent fielding, 36 runs apiece for Chauhan and Champaneria saw the team home at a canter, winning by 8 wickets.

The final four games of the season saw a 49 run loss to an Indian touring side and 38 run defeat to Kings Worcester, interspersed with comfortable victories over KES Stratford and Bradford Grammar School; Harry Down scoring 38*, 52 and 60* in the final 3 fixtures and Shailan Srikantan scoring 38* and 54 against KES Stratford and Kings Worcester respectively.

There is a lot to be encouraged about for the future of this team.

There are a multitude of bowling options (Joe Hanley and Shailan Srikantan often impressing) and plenty of depth in the batting with all of the top order contributing when necessary (Rajveer Chauhan regularly playing the anchor role). I have very much enjoyed my time with this team over the last couple of months with this team, the next week will be tough saying goodbyes but I wish the boys all the very best for the future.

Most Improved Player-

There are a number of candidates for Most Improved Player; Tom Philip’s rise from the B team to open the bowling and show serious pace and Abhinav Shanmukham bowling with excellent flight and control, often confusing the opposition.

However, the Most Improved Player is someone who showed plenty of promise and ability in Year 7 and has kicked on the show maturity, leadership and skill with bat, ball and in the field. For him to continue to improve, it is important for him to maintain his concentration levels throughout both innings. If he does this, I have no doubt that he will develop into a fantastic all-rounder. The u13 Most Improved Player is Joe Hanlon.

Player of the Season

It would be remiss of me not to mention Shailan. Highly rated at Warwickshire, Shailan’s bowling has been exceptional and had a big impact when playing for the u14s in their cup run.

However, my chosen player of the year has been outstanding amongst this side. Although regularly making positive contributions with the bat, his bowling is what has impressed me the most (and surprised him); showing maturity and guile to restrict the opposition batsmen at the end of an innings and having the knack of taking key wickets. He would often enjoying voicing his opinion of the team each week (he would say we had a difference in opinion, I would say he was wrong). That being said, he has been a joy to coach, and been an excellent leader throughout the cricket season. The player of the season is Harry Down.
Mr Davies: Year 9

Fabulous season for the U14s this year, winning 7 of their 9 games. Those statistics only tell half of the story, with a Warwickshire Cup run all the way to the final. Early victories against QM Walsall, Bablake and KES Five Ways before half-term we’re followed by the sides first defeat against KES. The boys bounced back extremely well from this loss in the following two days, beating Warwick by 90 runs in the county cup quarter-final, before we became the first Vesey side to win the Solihull 6-a-side. This was probably my highlight of the season, particularly with beating Solihull in the final, and the boys will support this, when I insisted on us having a photo with our medals and trophy in front of the Solihull pavilion.

This set up a great atmosphere for our cup semi-final against Solihull the following week. Thanks to a fantastic half century from Captain Sachin Dubb and a very disciplined bowling attack, we defeated Solihull by 31 runs. This led to a final against Rugby School, which for 34-overs looked like was going to be a very special day. Excellent bowling from Dubb, Arjun Bala and Shailan Srikanthan restricted the hosts to 121/8 in their 20-overs. We were then 99-1 with six overs remaining and 21 to claim an historic victory. Two wickets in 2-balls and the subsequent panic, saw us finish agonisingly short and lose by 2-runs.

The disappointment and emotion that the boys showed at the end of the game, for me was a fantastic example of the pride and determination that these young men have shown whilst playing for the school this year. It was therefore very satisfying to ‘hammer’ King’s Worcester the following day by 135 runs, to finish the season off in style.

The team got back on track, thanks to a fantastic win against Solihull. Excellent bowling from spinner Tom Hanlon limited Solihull and openers Devin Fernando and Rohit Jakhu again starred with the bat, putting on an unbeaten 67 between them. Finally an encouraging bowling display against Kings Worcester ended the season, and has shown how the team has progressed massively throughout the year. Well done boys on a difficult first years cricket, you have really made great strides on the back of some hard work during the after school sessions. Lots to work on for next year but the foundations are in place. Well done!

Despite the intermittent rain (well it was late April!), there was a good Vesey spirit at our annual Sports Day. Thank you to Mr Doughty and the vast team of staff and student leaders, who managed an excellent event. Gold House triumphed overall and a big well done to Lauren Butler, who smashed the 200m Girls record by 4 seconds with an outstanding time of 25:53. Wow!

It was a pleasure to welcome our good friend, Clive Richards OV, to watch the MCC play the First XI. It was a tough match for our boys but I know that Mr Richards was delighted to meet our new Student Leadership Team, as well as watching some great cricket.

Sports Day

Bronze for Ben

Congratulations to Ben Saunders, Lower Sixth, the current number 1 high jumper in the West Midlands and ranked in the top 10 in the UK for Under 20s. He jumped a Personal Best of 2.01m to win Bronze at the English Schools’ Championships. Amazing work Ben! Roll on next season!

Instantaneously, an idea struck. The most bizarre thought you could possibly get. A movie dialogue. I know, right? Bizarre. It was from an Indian film. It goes like this: "Even if the entire world opposes and declares you as a loser until you accept defeat, no one can defeat you." I wanted to grin but I contemplated. What if this dialogue could help me?

I made a decision: it can. Hope began to emerge. Courage crept onto me. Determination dashed to me. Not "it can't" anymore, it did. I inhaled deeply, then I spoke to myself. "The citizens of Nepal are depending upon me. I can do this!"

I marched up to my coach and mentioned "Sir, I'll do the 1500m". "Hope you win a medal at this prestigious France 2024, son". "Yes, sir. I'll make you and our nation proud."

Suddenly, an official said, "You're next, Paras Mandal". Incidentally, that's my name. I pumped my fist. "Ok. I'll be there."

And I was. At the track, alongside 7 other racers. This was it. The pistol was overhead. 3, 2, 1... BOOM! I sprinted on.

Boos thundered at me. Belief was escaping. "No!" I rapidly muttered, under my breath.

That was it.

Energetic eyes looked at the ribbon. Lagging legs levered its speed. I charged ahead. "Never give up" chants screamed into me. I didn't lose hope.

Back at the contest, I was 7th. How could I possibly win it? Confidence. I deleted the word "limit" from my brain. All boundaries were broken. I pushed myself. The impossible was to become possible.

I ran faster than ever, at the speed of light. It sounds illogical, but I actually did. Only a few feet left. I maintained this pace and bolted on. I was almost there.

An unbelievable thing occurred. Tiring toils, inconceivable amounts of hard work and significant practice paid off. The unprecedented thing flew on top of me. I had triumphed in the Olympics! "You've done it, young lad!" someone said. "Vijaya!" I screamed as I displayed my winning pose.

Nepali flags waved in the crowd. The ostinato arose: "Paras, Paras!" My happiness knew no confines. My heart pumped & pumped as rapid as a rollercoaster ride. Nepali citizens were cheering, all others applauded. I was the water droplet ending Nepal's Olympic drought. I was called upon the dais for a few sentences and smiles. "I dedicate the triumph to my nation. Ho Nepal!" Finally, I was awarded the "Golden Gift from God".

I stood on the proud podium and waved.

Wow! From an Indian movie dialogue to an incredibly massive amount of dignity. It's been an outstanding Olympics for many.

Especially, 1 person.

Me.

Hey, I just forgot the last line of the dialogue - "Never Ever Give Up!"

**Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is top of the class**

This week the annual statistics for the Duke of Edinburgh awards across the country were released. Out of 87 schools in the Birmingham region, the scheme at Vesey's is one of the only schools to have had a 100% completion rate at Bronze award level for 2016/17. BVGS are also fourth in the region in terms of Bronze awards completed and second only to the independent school, KES Edgbaston, for number of students undertaking the Gold award scheme.
Old Veseyan Association

The First Day

Stephen Roberts (1970-77) is today a history professor and author or editor of nineteen books, but forty eight years ago he was contemplating his first day at Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School.

I slept well the night before. I tucked with relish into my special first-day-at-big-school breakfast of a toasted cheese sandwich. I didn’t feel at all nervous. Checking that my hymn book was in the top pocket of my blazer, I set off, equipped with my huge new satchel, my rugby kit and my P.E. kit; I was prepared for any eventuality. As I walked up the Lichfield Road, my father followed twenty paces behind.

We had been told to gather under the bridge. This was to be the first time I had entered this illustrious school - in those days B.V.G.S. rather bizarrely held its open day for new pupils and parents a few weeks into the autumn term.

I was a member of 1 Gold. We had clearly drawn the short straw when it came to the allocation of form rooms. Our form room was known as the terrapin and was a large wooden construction situated in the playground below the rose gardens, with the school glowering down on us. At that point it had clearly seen better days, but it survived throughout my time at the school. Our form master was Mr Chamberlain, who would also be teaching us Chemistry. He was a nice chap. He read out our timetable and issued us with rough books, explaining that these were to be used for noting down the homework set us by the masters. Homework? That was something entirely new to me. I soon discovered that we were expected to devote two hours of each evening to homework (which was to be handed in or tested the next day).

It being our first day we went into lunch first. A standard B.V.G.S. lunch in those days consisted of a decent slice of minced beef pie, two scoops of mashed potato, veg and jam sponge with custard. Amongst the things that BVGS was good at – rugby, drilling Latin verbs into your brain and confiscating Villa scarves – we should not forget school dinners: I ate well during my seven years at the school (except on the days when we were last in and all that was left was spam fritters).

And so onto our first lessons on that first day: French and Biology that afternoon with Messrs. Homer and Nokes. I discovered that there were members of 1 Gold who could actually speak French – my knowledge of the language began and ended with ‘bonjour’. I didn’t have much to offer in Biology either – though I remember my expertise on the lupin, gained from my mother’s love of gardening, proved very useful in the end-of-year exam. Still History was still to come … and that was a subject I adored.

To learn more about Stephen Roberts’ books please see www.birmingham-biographies.co.uk

Paul Rimmer OV

Paul Rimmer and his family paid us a visit this term. Paul won the prestigious Eddowes Prize (given to the student who has made the biggest contribution to the Vesey Community) in 1990. Paul and his family now live in Singapore, where Paul is a teacher at an international school. It was a pleasure to meet him.

Top Award for Clive Richards from Pope Francis

Well done to Clive Richards OBE, DL, who has been made a Papal Knight by Pope Francis! Clive has received this award, for amongst many other things, his services to education, the sick, the vulnerable and to charities throughout the country. His investiture was held during Vespers at Belmont Abbey, Herefordshire.