

5 July 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

And so, after an incredible centenary year - 365 days in which LWC's community kept coming together for wonderful events such as The Centenary Festival, The Beckwith, the Christmas Carol Service, the 100 Challenges, the Parents' Ball, Giving Day, Speech Day and the Leavers' Ball to name but a few, time is called on this period as the pupils pack away their now slightly-outgrown uniform, flop on the sofa and breathe.

Speech Day shone a light on all that is good about LWC, and I hope you enjoyed the musical performances from Liv (who needs to go to the West End when hearing singing like that?), Will, Oscar and our wonderful Concert Band, as well as the superb speech from Richard Nugee and our terrific Heads of College, Freya and James.

The summer is approaching, and us Brits are busy travelling to or thinking about those journeys to the sunnier climes of Southern Europe and beyond (or maybe North Cornwall...). Although travel restrictions have eased, there is still the packing pressure of what will be confiscated at the airport – deodorant, water, toothpaste, sun cream, and perfume. You name it – pack poorly, and you're in for a rocky ride in that passively-aggressive scanning zone. Charm, a friendly smile and a humorous quip will only get you so far... so we head to the in-airport chemists for our mini toothpastes and washing products, regretting not collecting the shower gel bottles in those hotels we stayed in the year before.

These days, the search for the perfect, summer-beach-ready body is not enough. Teeth must match. I blame the rise of Teams / Zoom meetings from those Covid years. We are all TV presenters now... The perfect smile from across the Pond has made its way to our drizzly and windswept isles, and we are chewing it up, quite literally – notably those of us who had the joys of crooked 1970s and 80s teeth... malocclusion for those who want the correct phrase.

At present, the nations which top the pearly whites' charts are;

- Denmark, Germany, Finland, Sweden, UK.

Whilst those on the dental naughty list are;

- Poland, Bolivia, Australia, India, Philippines.

The growth of clear aligners is here, of which Invisalign is one such product – in fact, it is one of the fastest growing stocks in the S&P 500, and now that dentists can welcome us back to their converted Victorian villas in urban areas, we are starting to embrace our corrective plastic friends. We are seeing more and more pupils and parents at LWC taking the plunge too – in fact, I was one



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of those individuals, though remain scarred by the pre-Invisalign teeth removal. The low moment (as I remember, though didn't feel) was seeing a perspiring dentist with a smattering of blood on his top saying "you and I both need a rest" as he wrestled with a somewhat stubborn tooth in the lower jaw... I can still hear the crunch when it came out. It makes me wince. The 13 months of Invisalign (other products are available) was excellent though, and those poorly angled gnashers are no more.

That is nothing compared to our intrepid friends who head to Turkey (or other such spots) for the cheap veneer procedures – undertaken by grinding the teeth down to small stubs, leading to potentially irreversible damage to your teeth. Now there is a (rather nasty) thought. I won't attach a link to what it looks like...

But as many of us wander the mountains of Southern Europe and look at the historical sites from millennia ago, it turns out the people of that time had teeth that were infinitely better than ours. In fact, modern dental hygiene would have been quite unnecessary for ancient Romans, as research has revealed that they had impressively healthy teeth. Our friends who sadly found themselves buried in the pyroclastic flows of Pompeii in AD79 have been CAT scanned – turns out their teeth were terrific. They never used toothbrushes or toothpaste, but thanks to their low-sugar, balanced and healthy Mediterranean diet, all was dentally well. In fact, it is thought they ate better than we do today in Western society. Things don't always improve with time and technology. There is also research to suggest that the hunter-gatherers of 5000 years ago did too, but though the ancient Romans' healthy teeth may come as a surprise, they aren't the only historical group who are believed to have out-teethed us.

Despite the popular belief that the Tudors had poor dental hygiene (a stereotype largely owed to Queen Elizabeth I, whose black rotting teeth were ample evidence of sugar's impact), most early Tudors had healthy teeth. When sugar production became common in Spain, France and Holland during the 1600s due to the rise of colonialism and global trade, the price dropped and sugar became a common feature of many Europeans' lifestyles. And so, the rise of teeth brushing grew mainstream.

Modern-day tooth brushing as a regular habit became prevalent in Europe from the end of the 17th century. The first mass-produced toothbrush was developed in England in 1780 by William Addis. In the United States, although toothbrushes were available at the end of the 19th century, the practice did not become widespread until after WW2, when US soldiers continued the tooth brushing that had been required during their military service. All this to manage one's pearly whites and prevent mouth decay. We can save the mythology and folklore of tooth fairies for another day. That is a blog in its own right.

But if veneers, polishing, scaling, flossing, sonic toothbrushes, whitening toothpastes, whitening strips, correction, and braces are all in the modern way of giving us those perfect white teeth, will we ever get to a point where we are painting them? For it turns out, scientists have managed to create the world's whitest paint, which can now be used on planes, cars and buildings. This paint reflects 98% of the sun's rays (that's the albedo effect for those of you in the know) and is why the loss of sea ice and glaciers in mountain and coastal areas is so serious as it exposes darker colours beneath which absorb the sun's rays far more and heat up more quickly... Standard white paints reflect 80-90% and absorb UV light preventing heat draining away so a surface can never cool below the surrounding air temperature. Used on buildings, it can cool the surface by 4.5

degrees, providing a very effective way to keep cool. Those coastal areas like The Costa Del Sol will be shining ever brighter, methinks. Better take your sunglasses and keep an eye out this summer.

Our clever scientists have used barium sulphate and hexagonal boron nitride to give us a blindingly white hue. The paint is also so thin and light (weight-wise) it can be used on aeroplanes and rockets. As always, Science finds a way to respond to global challenges.

And as an aside, and in case you are interested, the world's blackest black paint (Vantablack) was developed in 2014. It absorbs 99.965% of light... Wowzers. Reckon you might stub your toe a few times if you painted your bathroom that colour.

I wish you all the very best for the weeks ahead and look forward to seeing our 5th Form (with record numbers staying into those final two years) and Upper Sixth pupils in August as they come together for what we hope will be happy times with the results they have worked so hard for.

We will also be delighted to complete the £1.5m of summer investment in Zanetas (The new Sixth Form Centre), Hendersons (our new Junior Centre), Bramley tennis and netball courts, and boarding house areas to be refurbished, rebuilt and gleaming... just like those straightened 21st-century teeth...

We will also welcome the company of our new staff (more to follow on them in the September letter) and seeing you at;

- The Beckwith & Sports Festival on Saturday 9th September – look out in your inboxes for how to register and sign up for a parent team and;
- Our next LWCGS Golf Day will be 28th September at the Army Golf Course.

Finally, after a record year for us in terms of Philanthropy, do take a minute to read the latest LWC supporter update [Supporter Update - June 2023](#)

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Adam Williams  
**Headmaster**