



PRESENCE

The voice of Edmund's people in the English Network



I dare you to love them all!



Welcome to issue 5 of Presence magazine, where you can read the voices of Edmund’s people from around the English Network

We have a packed edition, full of exciting news from our schools and ministries as well as camps and the education office whose collective work, in mission to live out the Charism of Blessed Edmund, continues to flourish.

Very much to the fore you will notice an emphasis on developing the strength of our international focus: Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders. ‘EREBB’ allows the sharing of our common ideals and the creation of joined-up strategies to create a better future for all and for our planet. Since my visit to Peru as a delegate at the EREBB Leadership Symposium in June, the office has been working closely with leaders in Edmund Rice education across the globe to facilitate closer ties between schools and communities, expanding their experiences and opportunities. We have class links, exchanges emerging with Uruguay and Australia, alumni internships and immersion opportunities and we hope to offer teacher visits in the summer to Argentina.

Our Social Justice Action plan, developed as a European EREBB region, has taken off in schools across the UK and Ireland with our joint focus on 3 main campaigns:

Environmental	- Plastic pollution	#ERplasticfree
Domestic	- Homelessness	#ERendhomelessness
International	- Education for Girls	#ERgirlseducation

This plan has also been adopted by the wider Edmund Rice community through social media and our leadership group. We can clearly see how many voices for justice are being listened to.

Our Colleges have been greatly inspired by the work of Ard Scoil na Mara, Tramore who came over to our Schools Conference and to meet with ERI groups to share good practice on reducing plastic pollution in their school and wider community and to make joint plans going forward. In this issue you can read about their work and also pick up some tips on how to eliminate single use plastics from your life. We look forward to the forthcoming EREBB Congress in South Africa next April that carries the theme ‘Schools for the World’ and is going to be formulated around the sustainable development goals.

Facilitating the creation of a new advocacy group with our college students and the Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool; ‘Young friends of Whitechapel’ has been truly inspirational. This forum will allow students to become really well informed about the homelessness issue and causes. They will learn to present these findings publicly and how to campaign and advocate effectively, professionally and on a large scale to make the lives of homeless people better and to affect change in policy to ameliorate the problem. Their first joint campaign is already fully planned and roles have been accepted by different schools, look out for the 12-month awareness and fundraising campaign happening right across the network, driven by Young Friends of Whitechapel next year. #ERendhomelessness #Youngfriendsofwhitechapel

We were delighted to present the Edmund Rice Charism Awards for Leadership to adults in the network prior to the summer garden party and to hear about the allocation of the student equivalent in our schools; read on for more details.

Many annual events have been held recently:

We began with the induction days with Year 7; this year we put together a video featuring 15 Edmund Rice schools from all over the globe who sent new students in the Colleges a message of welcome and belonging. You can see it here: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=UEiO1_-MLVE

We have delivered our new staff and governor induction as well as the Schools Conference and our ERI Youth Ambassadors gathering.

It continues to be a privilege to facilitate events, spread your news and promote exciting ways we can continue our dedication to a transformational Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition.

God bless,
Ann Nichols, Network Facilitator

‘WE ARE MERELY SERVANTS: WE HAVE DONE NO MORE THAN OUR DUTY’ (Luke)

As I write my introduction for the latest magazine, I want to take this opportunity to commend and recognise all the great work that is going on in our Network

There is no doubt that we are living through turbulent times, politically and environmentally; we have a world where so many people think that having a great life is having everything, often at the expense of our planet and other human beings.

We need to cultivate contentment with what we have. We really don’t need much.

For Jesus, welcome and respect came first, before conversion. This is how he treated those on the margins; he sought them out, he encountered them and he treated them with respect, sensitivity and compassion. This is what we are called to do.

So many of you, in the Network, are setting such a great example of living lightly, giving generously of your time and talents so that what is negative is being transformed into what is positive.

I read a great quote recently from Robert Swan:
“The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it”.

The only people who can ‘solve’ the crisis we find ourselves and our world in, is ourselves, by working in partnership with our brothers and sisters throughout the world to ensure that all peoples can ‘have life and have it to the full’.

Thank you for all you do, to redress the balance of our world. As we approach Advent may we all reduce, reuse, repair, rebuild, refurbish, recycle and restrict our abuse of our world, our planet and fellow human beings.

Have a blessed Christmas.

Roisin Maguire, Director of Schools



New Staff induction

On 25th September we were joined at ‘Woodeaves’ by some of our new staff and governors for the Edmund Rice induction day. Edmund’s life and legacy were looked at in a different way thanks to some new resources we used that were kindly shared by Edmund Rice Education Australia. Staff were introduced to the opportunities available to them and their students in schools via the English and Global network and we also discussed the Eight Essentials of an Edmund Rice education. Our guests really enjoyed looking at quotations about Edmund and how they felt these resonated today in their own environments.

We were joined by Brother Ger O’Connell who gave an overview of his life as a brother, touching on his background, becoming a Christian Brother and his roles including at the Life Centre in Dublin, in Sierra Leone and at Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers where he now runs a centre for refugees as well as a youth club. We know that our new staff are always inspired and moved by Ger’s frank, genuine presentation.


In the afternoon, staff heard from Tom Selby, a past pupil of St Joseph’s College who spoke about the impact an Edmund Rice education has had on him. We thank Tom for his continued involvement with the network and we know he energized the newly appointed staff in their roles shaping their pupils as ‘Edmund’s people’.

We look forward to working with you all in the months and years ahead.

The closing words that people left us with were ‘loved’, ‘inspired’, ‘informed’ and ‘excited’.

Other guests included alumni and students from the Cork Life Centre who had travelled to Argentina this summer on the new immersion programme. This new venture, organised by Guillermo Bullrich, ERI regional advocacy coordinator for South America of Defensorio Edmundo Rice concluded with a house building project with the NGO 'Techo' (us.techo.org) whose mission is to bring together volunteers and families living in poverty across South America; transforming slums into thriving communities. It is true to say that the experience transformed not only the lives of the families whose house was built that week but also of our volunteers who contributed to the build and got to know the community they were helping.

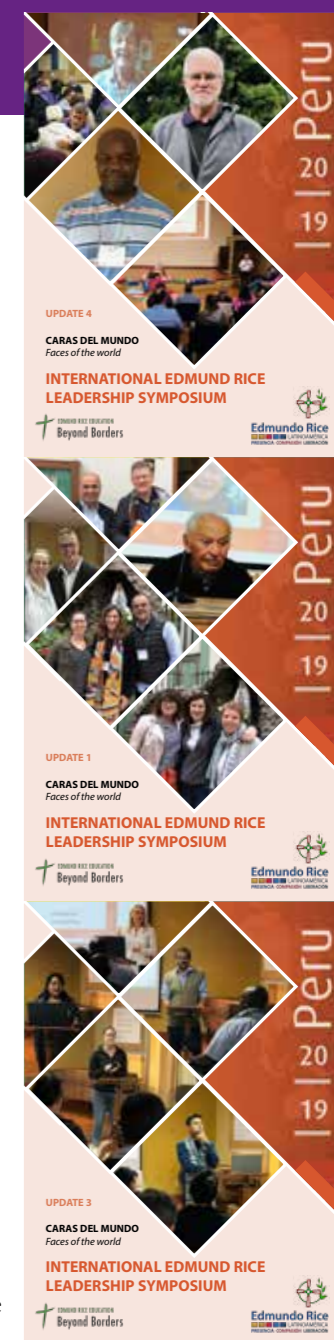
***"I dare
you to
love them
all!"***

A framed portrait of a man with a rainbow halo. The man has short brown hair and a slight smile. He is wearing a purple shirt. The background of the portrait is a vibrant rainbow with a sunburst pattern. The portrait is enclosed in a double-line frame with decorative corner pieces.

International Edmund Rice Leadership Symposium | Caras del Mundo – Faces of the World | Lima - Peru 2019 



Oh! and Macchu Pichu was spectacular.





Heads' Retreat 6-7 June, Wistaston Hall

We were joined by our Principals and associated guests; brothers, ex-Heads and guest Headteachers for our annual Heads' Retreat at Wistaston on a beautiful day.

Mark Davis facilitated the retreat, using his resource 'Voices and Visions'. The experience was described as 'affirming', 'encouraging', 'enlightening' and 'useful' with many deeming it the best retreat they had been at with the Network.

The beautiful and thought-provoking materials were very well-received, and the warm, safe environment of trust and confidentiality created by Mark led to some very moving sharing of personal experiences. We know that participants were left 'wanting more' and it is planned to try to create further similar opportunities for Heads to benefit from this conversational style shared journey through the year.



At the end of June, we gathered at Holy Angels church in Hale Barns to present the second set of Edmund Rice Charism Awards for Leadership to members of staff from our schools and members of the wider Network.

Staff in schools are nominated by their Headteachers and brothers or network members are nominated by their colleagues. We are delighted to receive the citations for nominees, it is truly inspiring to read about the key roles that people in our network are playing as the living breathing spirit of Edmund.

Awarded to those who show particular leadership in promoting the charism of Blessed Edmund, The English Network, with support of the PLT, recognises their contribution with a ceremony each summer followed by a celebratory summer garden party.

The service was led by Tom and we had music from the Head Boy at St Ambrose College. Award winners received a card and an Edmund Rice Network pin from Br George Gordon. Members of their families and the English network then joined us at 'Woodeaves' for our annual summer garden party and end of year celebration.

It was a fantastic ending to such a positive and productive year for all connected to the Network.

This year, the Brothers and the office team wanted to recognise the huge contribution that Eva Quinn who cooks for the brothers at 'Woodeaves' every day, and has done for 39 years, has made to the community and the lives of many brothers who have been and are still resident at 'Woodeaves'.



The Brothers' citation for Eva

Eva, over nearly 40 years you have given a devoted, dedicated, enthusiastic and very faithful contribution, in many different ways, not just in your excellent cooking, to the life of many Brothers here in 'Woodeaves'.

Your contribution, week-in, week-out, year-in, year-out, hail, rain or snow, with hardly a day absent in all that time, has always been given with a constant smile on your face, a joyful heart and an ever-readiness to come to the Brothers' assistance at any time, any day, any date including Christmas Day and without the slightest hesitation.

Our words cannot begin to express our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to you but, nonetheless, we do thank you Eva, from the depths of our hearts and may God's love and presence be with you and may you experience these in your daily life.

We will continue to remember you and your family in our prayers.



Edmund Rice England
Network Garden Party
Summer 2019



Edmund Rice Schools Debating Competition 2019

On the evening of 19th November our Senior and Middle school level College debating teams gathered at St Anselm's College for the second of our annual Debating Competitions.

It happened to coincide with the Johnson and Corbyn TV debate, I know which clash of ideas I preferred being witness to and it wasn't the televised one!

We enjoyed a fantastic evening of passionate, eloquent and insightful debates from all the teams present; St Joseph's College, St Ambrose College and St Anselm's College.

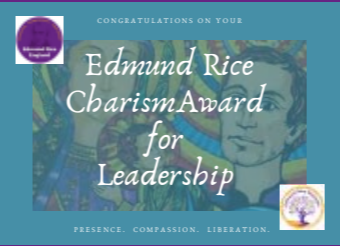
Our topics ranged from the imposition of severe penalties to deter crime, through to the regulation of social media and an outright banning of single-use plastics.

In the Senior debate first round the results were extremely close, with St Joseph's losing by just one point to St Ambrose. Considering this was the St Joseph's team's first competition they performed outstandingly and were defeated by a very experienced opposition.

The winners then went on to debate against the host team. Another well-fought and argued debate was heard with some excellent fielding of questions to follow. Congratulations go to Devan, Noa and Zak who made up the St Anselm's team who were the overall winners of the Senior competition.

At Middle school level both St Anselm's and St Ambrose debated twice, on compulsory voting and single use plastics, the teams were so evenly matched, when scores were tallied up at the end of both debates that the result was a dead heat. Both teams were awarded cups and winners prizes.

Our thanks go to the staff who prepared and accompanied their teams and to St Anselm's College for hosting, in particular Mr Brian Dowse for his organisation.



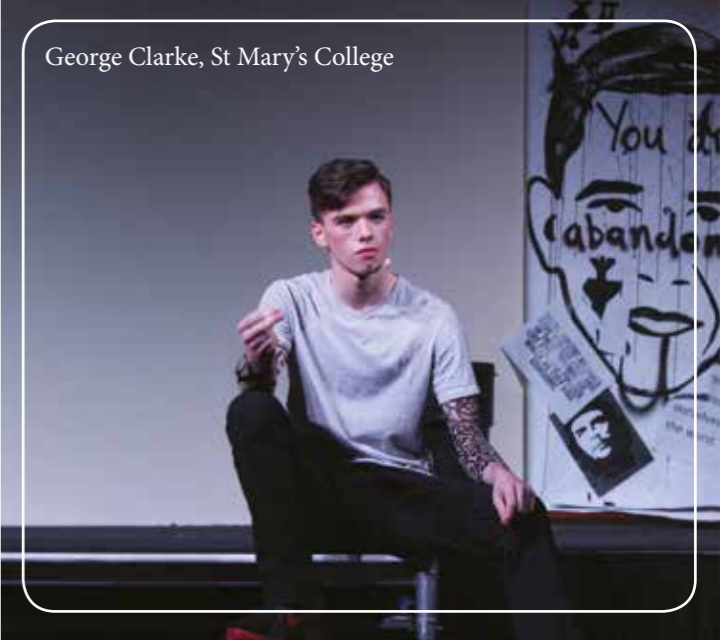
Charism Awards for Leadership - Students

We are delighted to be able to congratulate the students in our schools who received the Edmund Rice Charism Award for Leadership in the academic year 2018 - 19; a student who has been singled out as bringing to life the Edmund Rice mission.

Each student received the award at their school prize giving event and is also in receipt of a congratulatory letter from Br Edmund Garvey, the province leader.



Our warmest congratulations go to:

Preps	Student(s)
St Ambrose Prep	Christopher Preston
St Joseph's Prep	Francesca Mawby
St Mary's Prep	Ava Furber
Runnymede	Vinay Kannan
Senior Schools	Student(s)
St Aiden's Catholic Academy	Kevin Siby
St Ambrose College	Jacob Karinatan
St Anselm's College	Ethan Urquhart
St Edward's College	Byron Mitchell
St Joseph's College	Harry Hudson & Paddy Harper-Scattergood
St Mary's College	George Clarke



Ethan was our Head Boy and involved in everything, he had previously been President of the Friday Club. Ethan led by example and showed a willingness and commitment to support the vulnerable. He is currently studying Architecture at Liverpool Uni.










WELCOME TO
THE EDMUND RICE

Global Family

over 200,000 students in 30 countries

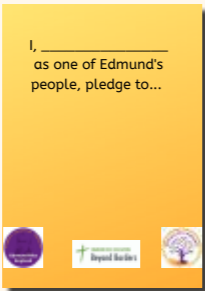


This September, for the second year running, we have visited all our Year 7 pupils to deliver an induction session on what it means to join an Edmund Rice school.

It was a delight to meet our new ‘Edmund’s People.’ Year 7s have mixed knowledge about of Edmund Rice and his legacy in their school, so this is where we began. With a quiz-style interactive session all children quickly engaged with Edmund’s story and that of the Christian Brothers.

This year we emphasized that students belong to a global network, explained what EREBB is and discussed the similarities and differences in Edmund Rice schools around the world. We also introduced our social justice campaigns for this year. Students were left with ‘welcome to the network’ cards and a badge with the new logo.

They also made a ‘pocket pledge’ to promise to ‘change the world for the better.’



Year Heads and RE departments were left with a pack they can continue to work on.

This year, thanks to the contacts made in Peru, 14 CB schools across the globe sent ‘welcome’ videos for our Year 7s which you can see at:

www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=UEiO1_-MLVE





One of the busiest, but most enjoyable, times of my year is always the first few weeks of the summer holidays. That's when young people in Sunderland, Stoke, Manchester and Merseyside get together to deliver Edmund Rice Camps for young children in their local area.

Edmund Rice Camps have been running in England for nearly 20 years, and they continue to offer great experiences for the children that attend.

This year, over 200 children came to Camp, spread across 7 different locations. They enjoyed so many different activities, from days out to on-site fun and games.

It's amazing to think that every single one of our 200 young Leaders is a volunteer. They each give up so much to make the Camps a reality and give the children precious experiences that they otherwise may never have.

They become role models to the children and trusted mentors, colleagues and friends for each other.

Camp is not just for the children; the Leaders understand and develop themselves through daily reflection and evaluation. You can see them gaining in confidence, skill and compassion as the Camp develops. We hope they can take these things into their further education or employment.

We are always looking at the services that the Camps provide and are striving to make them as dynamic, creative and fun as possible. Ultimately, every swim session, farm visit and soft play is just a vehicle for the Leaders to interact with the children. Relationship-building is often lacking in families, communities and friendships and our Leaders are committed to ensuring the kids have the skills and example to develop their own unique personalities in a positive way.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the financial support of the Christian Brothers. Neither would it be possible without the support of our schools, both primary and secondary, who provide us with amazing sites and even better volunteers.

We thank them all for helping to build true Christian communities and, in some small way, making happy memories for the children and Leaders.

We have been so privileged to be able to work closely with the Cork Life Centre across various projects in the past few years. In terms of great opportunities for students and young volunteers, one of the best projects has undoubtedly been our ongoing Advocacy Exchange Programme.

Every year, groups of participants from Cork, England and Belfast get together in different locations and spend an entire week exploring a particular social justice issue. Having been to Cork to look at issues around the Right to Education, it was our turn to host the Exchange this year, focusing on refugees and asylum seekers.

A group of 25 enthusiastic participants gathered in Liverpool and enjoyed a week of diverse activities. From, attending a workshop at Liverpool University's Law Clinic, to experiencing the fantastic 'Journey To Sanctuary' Exhibition, to exploring creative media for effective campaigning, they got some fantastic input from amazing contributors. Some of the most popular and memorable sessions involved the group meeting and engaging with refugees and asylum seekers from Asylum Link Merseyside and Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers, organisations with whom our Network works closely.

The aim of the Exchange is not only to inform the participants of social justice issues, but also to inspire them to become change-makers in their communities. We want to equip them with the tools they need to speak out for a fairer world. So the week ended with the young people hitting the streets of Liverpool and taking their campaigns to the general public. To see them speaking so passionately, and compassionately, about marginalised people in our society confirmed that it had all been worthwhile.

Of course, one of the best aspects of the Exchange for the participants is the chance to meet new people and really get to know them during the week. Staying at the Sandymount Centre in Crosby gave them the chance to make plenty of lasting memories and friendships.

We are looking forward to the next Advocacy Week, to be held in Belfast and focusing on homelessness. We'll be looking for new participants from our Sixth Form and beyond. There is no cost to the participants, with all food, accommodation, transport and activities provided. If it's anything like the last two, it will be a week to remember.





Some of the opportunities that I've had in my twelve years working in the Edmund Rice Network have been incredible, and none more so than the chance to visit Buenos Aires with an amazing group of young volunteers this summer.

Through links with Edmund Rice International Regional Advocacy Coordinators in Argentina, we are able to offer an Immersion experience for post-school volunteers who have previously shown commitment to the Network at home in England and Ireland. Cormac McArt (from the Westcourt Centre in Belfast) and I were invited to bring a small group for a 12-day Immersion focusing on advocacy and human rights, particularly the right to adequate housing. So, on a rainy day in August, we gathered in Dublin and made the long journey to South America.

What we found was a vibrant, exciting, colourful city, but a city of disparity, division and deprivation. Out of a national population of 44 million, 14 million Argentinians live in poverty. 8 million live in sub-standard informal settlements, 45% of homes lack basic sanitation, and 8000 people are street homeless in Buenos Aires alone. The crowded barrio of Villa 31, home to some 40,000 people, is nicknamed 'Villa Miseria'.

Our mission was to work with an NGO, TECHO (meaning 'shelter'), who are working constantly to improve living conditions across South America.

With their support and guidance, we purchased materials for the construction of a flat-pack house and, along with 14 other groups of young people scattered across the suburban district of Pilar, set about building a home for a single mother, named Milagros, and her young children.

It was hard work, but one of the most rewarding and memorable things I've ever done.

Handing over the deeds to Milagros and seeing her children cross the threshold was a truly emotional moment. We really felt part of something much bigger and were proud to do our small bit. TECHO have mobilised an incredible 165,000 volunteers and have built 14,814 replacement homes. Their work has inspired us to look at what we can do back home in England and Ireland. We are working closely with the Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool to get involved with their work and campaigns.

Of course, there is much more to Argentina than this opportunity to work with TECHO. We worked with the students at Cardinal Newman College, undertook street outreach, and visited housing projects in the poorest areas of the city. We also sampled a bit of the culture of Buenos Aires including going to a Rive Plate football match.

Everything about the Immersion was incredible; the food, the local people, our new friends from TECHO, and the inspirational people in our group. I know I speak for us all when I say we'll never forget our time in South America. In a very positive way, a small part of me will always remain in Buenos Aires.

I truly can't wait to go back.



Edmund Rice International Geneva Internship

Ciara Church. Former pupils of St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent

Interning at Edmund Rice International was one of the most enlightening experiences, and one I would recommend everyone should do. The month passed so quickly, especially in such a warm and friendly community. Both the Brothers and everyone in the office was so supportive and willing to offer advice and guidance throughout my stay.

The experience surpassed all of my expectations and proved to me just how much good work ERI does and the lasting impact this has on communities across the world. On a day to day basis, my role included attending side events relevant to the work of ERI, writing reports, and keeping on top of general admin. One of the most interest jobs was tracking the progress of the recommendations made to countries of concern. This involved a lot of research, reading local newspapers and trying to get an idea of the situation on the ground.

My favourite activity by far however was attending the side events. This was the opportunity to hear directly from experts, witnesses and human rights advocates on the issues they were passionate about, from the Philippines to Kashmir, all of them had the aim of raising the voice of those suffering in their country.

The interaction between the panels and the NGOs in the room as everyone had the aim of providing support and furthering the cause was empowering to watch. You could leave any room with such a deeper and emotive understanding of an issue that simply is not reported on in the UK. I was particularly inspired by the NGOs making oral statements during the Human Rights Council as they articulated their concerns with such passion and dignity and It was a privilege to be able to advocate on behalf of Peru and Dominica.

As I have recently visited Peru, it was particularly interesting to be able to delve into the issues that the people face from their perspective and appreciate how little you truly experience a country as a tourist. The importance of gaining the information from the ground was highlighted as it is essential to highlight the voices of those unable to access the UN and advocate directly on their behalf. It is only those on the ground that have a full understanding of the situation, ERI's ability to facilitate this is a unique tool that is truly invaluable. Even with today's technology and the ability to carry out in-depth research from Geneva, it is the voice of the locals that is essential for providing accurate information



This was emphasised in a side-event where a government official from the Philippines encouraged tourist visits to disprove the message of the activists. Thus, the message must come from the people, not simply visitors who are unable to fully appreciate the situation in a week's trip.

It has been fascinating to see how different countries interact and the extraordinary levels of diplomacy as countries clash and align with each other. Edmund Rice International has allowed me to be able to go beyond the superficial image countries present themselves as having and explore the human rights violations that people suffer every day and are furiously fighting against. Whilst shocking and at times deeply saddening it is imperative that advocacy continues - if people don't know about the issue's countries try so desperately to cover up, how will the situation ever improve?

It has been a privilege to explore gender issues and the rights of the child as I was lucky enough to be in Geneva during the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. It was amazing to see so many young activists be given the microphone and demand protection of their rights. The work that young activists do is essential and does create real change.

From writing reports, tracking the UPR recommendations and the opportunity to speak at the council, I have gained invaluable experience and skills. I would highly recommend the program to anyone who wants to get involved in Human Rights, the UN or simply discover more about the world we live in.

PROJECTCARRICK



INTERNSHIPS IN OCEANIA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE EDMUND RICE NETWORK IN ENGLAND

- Jan - March, annually
- Work on Ed Rice projects such as; Camps, outreach with migrants & the homeless, retreats & leadership programs
- Tourism opportunities & possibility to extend stay
- Accommodation paid & \$75 AUS per week
- Participant pays travel & insurance
- Must be a camp leader or have been involved in social justice
- Age range 18 - 25

considering a gap year?

ARE YOU AN EDMUND RICE CAMPLEADER?

ARE YOU ACTIVE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AT SCHOOL?

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE NEXT STEP IN THE ER NETWORK?

Apply to participate in Project Carrick (download application form from www.edmundriceengland.org)

Applications accepted all year. Deadline end of July, Participants chosen by interview.

Find out more from: annnichols.ero@gmail.com

PROJECT CARRICK.

TOGETHER IN MISSION.

A life in mission

Brother David Ryan

I was born outside a rural town called Borrisoleigh in Co Tipperary

The small farm my parents ran had a mixture of dairy farming and crops. When I was young, we made our own butter, grew our own vegetables and potatoes and grew corn, had hens and geese. So, we were never short of food. Both of my parents were hard working so the work ethic and earning one's bread were passed on to each of us children. I had two sisters and one brother. We rarely had time for ourselves to recreate apart from Sundays. We did resent this at times. Even my mother dutifully did her knitting, darning or repairing clothes up to bedtime. The prayer life was an essential part to every day with Mass on Sundays, never to be missed. I am so grateful to my parents for a solid, loving and faith filled upbringing with values that affect me to this day.

A Brother used visit our school on an annual basis promoting vocations. I first heard his talk at the tender age of twelve. I was impressed what I heard him say about Edmund Rice and he trying to do something worthwhile for the poor children in Waterford. I stored this impression away in my memory and didn't give it much thought until I heard the Brother again the following year. I must have heard him about 5 times on this topic. I was attracted to the life but didn't want to heed it. I was also impressed by the camaraderie of the Brothers I knew in secondary school. Having left school at 16, I was unable to rid myself of this pull to join the Brothers. I realized that I would have to give it a go before I got tied up in other relationships. God truly hounded me for those few years

My dad really challenged me when I took the decision to join the Brothers at 18. I persisted saying that I would never have any peace if I didn't give it a go. He eventually agreed and gave me his blessing, assuring me of always getting a welcome if I ever left. Another obstacle I encountered was that of qualifying to be a teacher. I wasn't one of the most academic students around. But with the help of others and hard work I got there. I believe that these experiences have been the basis of my understanding of others who struggle in life.

I grew up with a poor self-image not believing in my own worth. I have mastered this weakness fairly well through reading, taking risks and affirmations from others. Fear of failure would be another thing that would hold me back as I like to give everything my best shot.

Developing my life philosophy would have come through learning to be myself, appreciating my own giftedness and refraining from comparisons, coming home to self. I can honestly say now that I am happy in my own skin, which I find very freeing, knowing that God only wants me to use the gifts he has given me for the benefit of others. They were never meant just for me alone.



There are some moments of life that shine out for me that have helped me to be the person I am today. One would be my Liberian experience of another culture. Thankfully I experience something similar today as I teach people from other cultures in Asylum Link. Another contributing factor to how I live my life today would be my experience working in a deprived area of Dublin as a home / school liaison officer, where I was privileged to experience the struggles, problems and resilience of parents. I'd say that developing a reflective approach to living and spending time in personal prayer had a strong bearing on the way I live today.

I believe that Edmund Rice is still very much a man for our time, as he reached out to the people most in need. The vision today is mainly in the hands of the people who work and minister in our network. I see them too taking a reflective approach in their ministry, reaching out across the globe in ways I could have only dreamed of some short few years ago. I love to see students exposed to the vulnerable in our society - immersion away and at home, experience asylum seekers and refugees, giving time to the students with special needs. I would love to see students and others getting the opportunity of visiting prisons; there is a huge need here. Edmund did it regularly.

What inspires me most is encountering people who are caught up with fire in the belly for a cause. Another inspiration for me is to see Brothers in the winter of their lives, who have let go of their resentments and are hospitable, loving and are 'growing old gracefully'. A third inspiration for me is to see the resilience of so many asylum seekers and refugees, who are coping with some horrific personal and family experiences. They now want to better themselves in life and make a contribution to society.

What would I say to someone considering joining the Congregation?

Talk to a trusted friend. Take time away for one of those discerning weekends. Don't rush into it. Take everything into consideration. Be clear of your own motivation. Be aware of what gift you can give. Remember it's a two-way process as you discern the call with the Congregation. Qualify yourself in a specific area. Talk and listen to your God about your situation.

We see our centre as a place of hospitality and welcome in the community and we certainly make full use of it!

On Mondays, we run a drop-in and advice centre for those seeking asylum and refugees, managed by a team of wonderful volunteers: Wilf and Ann Hammond, Sue Browne, May Bassanino (who is our Arabic translator) Medhi (who translates Farsi), Brothers Jim Catterson, Tony Towmey and myself, Ger O'Connell. Here we help our clients to engage with the Home Office, the Job Centre, accessing medical services, housing associations, etcetera.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Jim and Ger hold English classes, attended by about 30 students, while Jim holds a clinic for writing and understanding travel documents.

Our students and clients come from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kuwait. Many of them, especially the Iranians, are highly educated. Presently, in our classes we have a University lecturer, a lawyer, a journalist, a PE teacher, and many other University graduates. On the other hand, we also have some students who never had the opportunity of receiving a formal education. This means that our lessons have to be very flexible, practical and highly differentiated. Recently, it has been wonderful to see a big influx of female students who enjoy the safe environment and company at the centre.

Apart from the classes and drop-in, our centre is also used for a variety of social and religious events. On Sunday, the Eritrean community hold their worship here, we have had events for the bereaved, the newlyweds, celebrations to mark the birth of children, family reunions and international cultural celebrations.

For us, it a truly special, sacred and privileged place to work; where people care, respect and trust one another irrespective of nationality, religion or status, we are often referred to as their 'second home'.

On a daily basis we encounter a range of emotions; from great sadness - when someone gets overcome by loneliness or gets bad news from home or when someone is refused refugee status through to great joy when refugee status is granted or is a client is reunited with their family.

SERV has a close connection with our Colleges, especially St Ambrose (Manchester) and St. Joseph's (Stoke -on -Trent) and also with the local Catholic school, All Hallows. St Joseph's College annually organises a Christmas party for the refugees and their families.



Recently, we had a very worthwhile visit from St Joseph's College rugby team when some of our clients shared their stories and the students were able to get to know more about the refugees and ask them questions.

Current and former pupils from Loreto Grammar School, St. Ambrose College and St Joseph's College, together with local volunteers, organise a wonderful Edmund Rice camp for the young people of Salford every year in July.

Our Christian Brother's community is a place of welcome and hospitality for those who wish to call to see us. Many of our refugee friends do just that and love to bring us their traditional dishes to share, we have enjoyed the most delicious fare from all over the globe. The resilience, kindness and generosity that these people are able to show, even when they are experiencing the most traumatic and desperate times never ceases to amaze us. Some of our Muslim friends, keen to become an integral part of the local community and to be with us spiritually, have also started to attend our Sunday mass at St. Sebastian's.

We are blessed to have with us a visiting brother, Jorge Tavera from Peru during the months of November and December. He is here to experience the ministry at St Sebastian's and also is keen to prefect his English. He might go home with a Tipperary accent!? We are delighted to have his help and his company. It will be particularly nice for Br Tony who spent some years in ministry in South America and will enjoy both the Spanish conversation and cultural interaction with Br Jorje.

If anyone would like to visit the brothers and SERV or would like to volunteer or donate, please contact Ger:
oconnell_gervase@hotmail.com



Brothers Tony, Ger and Jim with Br Jorge.



In our Network submissions through ERI for the UK's UN Universal Periodic Review we have repeatedly raised the government's failure to provide or fund any integration programme for recognised refugees.

There has been no state provision or funding for refugee integration since the abolition of a minimal back-up scheme in 2011. The Government's much vaunted Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Program facilitates access to housing and benefits and tailored mentoring and integration support for selected Syrian refugees taken directly from refugee camps, but nobody else. There is no support for the vast majority of asylum-seekers – from Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan - who have reached the UK by their own perilous journeys (overland and across the Mediterranean, through the Calais 'jungle', then dangerous cross-Channel transit hidden in or under lorries or trains or by dinghy) and then achieved refugee status through the adversarial asylum process. If granted refugee status they have to leave their temporary NASS asylum accommodation and fend for themselves without integration support. As the Refugee Council puts it, 'Bizarrely, at the very point refugees are granted asylum, the Government washes its hands of them, leaving often traumatised and disoriented people to survive on their own.'

They face immediate homelessness and the stress of negotiating a complex and largely incomprehensible benefits system which often defeats UK-born fully-English-speaking applicants, let alone displaced Arabic or Farsi speakers. If you have seen Ken Loach's I, Daniel Blake or Sorry we Missed You, you will know what we mean!

Refugee support thus falls to the accident of third sector provision – a chance patchwork of voluntary agencies like SERV and REVIVE. Without such help refugees would face destitution and homelessness for longer. The bureaucratic complexity of welfare provision creates time-consuming casework, stretching the knowhow and capacity of volunteers like ourselves. The SERV Salford drop-in is a roadside refuge on this map of voluntary provision.

Casework varies according to changing needs and priorities, but currently the focus is :

May Bassanino Universal Credit applications, debt, council tax liability, applications for Travel Documents and leave to remain... and Arabic interpreting!

Sue Brown Refugee Travel Document and driving licence applications

Anne Hammond Homelessness, hostel and housing applications, debt and utility charges, benefit applications, sanctions, and delays

Wilf Hammond Asylum Process and NASS, chasing legal aid solicitors, fresh asylum submissions, tribunal appeals, applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and UK citizenship

Br. Jim Catterson Travel Document and ILR applications, scanning and uploading UKVCAS applications for settlement and citizenship

We are kept busy, particularly as other agencies signpost problems to us. If you have Mondays free to volunteer, please contact Br. Ger O'Connell and join the team!

Wilf Hammond

Update on network campaign



Previous issues have publicised our campaign to secure protection for Fozia and Nawaz, a young couple and their family, threatened with deportation back to Pakistan, where they would face extreme danger of honour killing.

Following the Network campaign in the New Year – mobilising the combined efforts of SERV, the Network Office, St. Ambrose College students, Asylum Link Merseyside, MPs Mary Robinson and Sir Graham Brady, and Granada TV- we can rejoice in a partial victory.

In mid - February the Home Office phoned to say that a decision had been made on their fresh asylum claim (prepared by Wilf Hammond at SERV) and would be issued on 27 March. The message was mixed: the decision would be positive...but with the right of appeal! We interpreted this to mean that the asylum claim, i.e. refugee status, would again be refused but that the family would be granted Discretionary Leave (DL) . Nothing came on 27 March, or through to the end of July, except a requirement for new biometrics.

The letter came at the end of July, refusing asylum and refugee status but granting DL. The multi-page refusal letter was a tissue of specious reasoning, which did not address the new evidence on the honour threat, the insufficiency of protection, or the arguments on why re-location would be unsafe. Instead it reverted to old arguments and early stage irrational tribunal judgements on why Fozia and Nawaz could not be regarded as 'credible'. Maybe the Home Office feels it has to summon up a cloud of refusal reasons because if it allowed one Pakistan honour killing case it would open the way to many others. We could have gone to appeal, but this would have meant another 18 months of limbo and uncertainty, and Fozia and Nawaz have had 10 years of this. So, they accepted DL.

The Home Office doesn't have to explain their grounds for granting DL. The initial grant is for 2 ½ years, with the right to work and welfare benefits, and can be renewed. After 4 DL grants settlement- i.e. indefinite leave - can be granted, so if all goes well it is a 10-year route to indefinite leave to remain. Although the Home Office can refuse renewal, next Summer the couple's eldest children - the twins- will reaching the age of 7 and at that point we will be able to apply for settlement for them. This would then create a Section 4 Human Rights claim to remain with them. So, after thinking hard and long about the options, and taking legal advice, we abandoned the asylum claim and accepted DL. The family have now had to move out of the SERCO Home Office accommodation and are registered as homeless with Stockport Council. They are currently in hostel accommodation, bidding for social housing, so far without success. Nawaz has two job offers in retail customer services.

They are hyper grateful to the Edmund Rice Network, the MPs, and Granada for the breakthrough achieved. The grant of asylum would have provided a 5 year rather than a 10-year route to settlement, but their present situation is immeasurably better than the previous trauma and uncertainty of being refused asylum seekers liable to forced removal back to Pakistan.

We don't know what it was that moved the Home Office to grant DL, whether the submission itself, the intervention of Mary Robinson, the Granada TV coverage, the lobbying of the St. Ambrose group and Sir Graham Brady, all the Network letters to the Home Secretarymaybe a combination of all of this. Overall, it was a great deed of the Network, for which Fozia and Nawaz will be eternally thankful. They would welcome an opportunity to say thank-you in person. I hope we can invite them to a suitable gathering sometime soon.

Wilf Hammond

Asylum Link News



Looking out of the window at the grey, damp skies, the summer seems a long way back. It's comforting to go back to the sunshine and warmer weather. There was plenty going on and Refugee Week in June was another spectacular, with the annual BBQ and the trip out to Wirral Country Park.

Following a visit by the Lloyds Foundation in the Spring, we were put onto the 'Happy List' which celebrates the work of small charities that usually go unrecognised www.independent.co.uk/happylist/here-s-to-all-the-small-charities-you-ve-never-heard-of-a9075881.html

As the summer progressed so did the Choir. We took part in a competition to help raise funds for St Bride's Church repairs and we won! In the category of the most innovative choir, we stood out not only for raising the roof, but for also singing our own composition 'Here', which describes part of the journey of an asylum seeker. The song starts with uncertainty and fear but finishes with feelings of togetherness and strength.

"With my family here I am not alone, 'cause together here, we have all grown. Many nations here, many languages, but together we, have advantages."

It feels particularly poignant to sing the lines in light of things that have happened recently. Sarah Buaye, who is a longstanding member of the choir, got leave to remain after 11 years of waiting. Sarah's the one in the photo with the 'Big Hair'. It's been wonderful to see her confidence grow following the grant of status.

Sadder news was the death of someone from the Woman's Group, Nusrat Jehan, who sadly passed away in October, with terminal cancer. One of the last things she said was 'Thank you for always making me feel welcome. Asylum Link is my family.' Nusrat liked to knit, and she would sit patiently clicking away while the choir belted out Jesu Ni Wango at the same level as a Jumbo Jet.

You can read Nusrat and Sarah's stories here. www.asylumlink.org.uk/refugee-stories/

As we move towards the darkest part of the year, there are more and more things for the Choir to do, the Table Tennis Team are recruiting new members, and we're preparing for the Christmas Party and the Never-Ending Raffle (because everyone gets a prize). It's an incredibly busy time.

In a small charity like ALM, the infrastructure, or the engine if you like, is created by the staff and trustees, but it cannot run without the volunteers and the supporters who provide the fuel to power it. You need both things to make it work, so thanks to everyone for all their help and hard work through the year.



Edmund Rice International Youth Ambassadors Induction Day

October 16

The newly appointed Year 13 Youth Ambassadors from our Colleges gathered in Liverpool to receive a day of induction into their roles.

Starting at the Museum of Liverpool life, students got to know one another through visiting and experiencing reactions to the major exhibition ‘Double Fantasy’. Starting in the museum, students were encouraged to look at the way John Lennon and Yoko Ono advocated for; world peace, gender and racial equality and freedom of speech back in the 60s and 70s. It encouraged the youth ambassadors to look at creative ways to advocate; that music, art and modern culture are all ways to convey important messages of equality, justice and solidarity.

Later we had lunch and the afternoon session at the brother community in Parr Street. Students were sent an inspiring video message from Director of ERL Brother Brian Bond who is based in Geneva. As well as outlining the history and work of the brothers NGO, Brian particularly encouraged them to be brave in their protection of our fragile environment. Students then heard from Hettie Miles, our liaison-link with the Whitechapel Centre, a large homeless charity in Liverpool. Students heard about how they and their colleges are going to be instrumental in a new Youth Forum on homelessness which Edmund Rice schools are establishing in conjunction with the Whitechapel Centre.

They were excited about learning new skills about advocacy, campaigning, presenting and planning as well as being able to help in a much more coordinated and therefore impactful way on this tragic and increasingly serious social issue.

Students planned campaigns they will be heading up in their schools, joined the ERI Facebook Youth Ambassadors page and formed the all-important Youth Ambassadors What’s App group! Students also chose their presentations / research projects that they will be preparing to deliver when they are in Geneva this January.

Here are some of the plans that our ERI Youth Ambassadors are putting into action in their schools already:

At St Mary’s we are looking to help the homelessness issue within Liverpool in any way we can, from campaigning and raising awareness to participating in collections to donate to local homeless organisations. Our aim is to create a positive difference within our area and beyond.



At St Edward’s we are trying our utmost to reduce our plastic consumption, both individually and as an organisation, including by placing ER Plastic Free Posters near water fountains to generate awareness of the scourge of plastic pollution in our oceans. Our school Sixth Form café and dining hall have also removed plastic bottles from sale and we are aiming to reduce waste in the café with the introduction of a discount for those who bring their own cup, as well as serving hot drinks in mugs when people are sitting in either the Sixth Form café or common room. We hope this will play a small but significant part in preserving a clean planet for the future.

At St Ambrose one area we are focusing on is Education for girls as it is a problem often overlooked in an all-boys school. We are also in close contact with local recycling companies and have invited someone in to audit our recycling processes.

Social Justice Action Plan

Our school community commits to the European Edmund Rice Network regional approach to help raise awareness of and take actions in support of local, global & ecological issues.

social justice action plan

TAKING ACTION AGAINST POVERTY & INJUSTICE

LOCAL

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 25

UN Sustainable Development Goal 1: No Poverty

HOMELESSNESS

Share the events and activities your school organises about homelessness using #EREBB #ERendhomelessness

ECO

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 6

UN Sustainable Development Goals: 3, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15

END PLASTIC POLLUTION

Support the movement against plastic pollution to reduce waste & maximise recycling by avoiding single use plastics. #EREBB #ERplasticfree

GLOBAL

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 28

UN Sustainable Development Goals: 4 & 5

RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

Advocate for equal rights to education globally for girls. campaignforeducation.org #ERgirlseducation

WE PLEDGE TO STAND WITH THOSE MADE POOR & THE MARGINALISED & TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR WORLD

#ERplasticfree
#ERendhomelessness
#ERgirlseducation
#EREBB
#ERI

Our joint Social Justice action plan for all schools across the European province has really taken off.

Chocked full of information and activities that schools can easily get involved with, our voices when we are all campaigning for united causes can be heard louder and stronger.

What have you been doing in your schools...

to advocate for better rights for homeless people?
to get rid of plastics in your school?
to highlight the injustices experienced by many girls around the world in terms of accessing education?

Keep the whole network informed by using the hashtags to share your ideas and build your campaigns.

As Edmund’s people we pledge to stand with those made poor and the marginalised and to create a better future for our world.

Luke 14:12-14
Jesus said: ‘When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’

“Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”
(Nelson Mandela)

“None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice”...
(Pope Francis)

“If there is no friendship with them and no sharing of the life of the poor, then there is no authentic commitment to liberation, because love exists only among equals.”
(Gustavo Gutierrez)

24 | PRESENCE The voice of Edmund’s people in the English Network | www.edmundriceengland.org

PRESENCE The voice of Edmund’s people in the English Network | www.edmundriceengland.org | 25

ER Plastic Free
#SOS Save our Seas
A joint EREBB venture



Sixth Form representatives from St Anselm's, St Joseph's and St Ambrose Colleges met with ERI Youth Ambassadors who head up the Peace and Justice group at Ard Scoil na Mara in Tramore to share their expertise on their campaign to eliminate single use plastics from their school and improve their carbon footprint in general.

After the girls from Tramore had presented their achievements so far and how they have gone about it, all the students gathered together to plan ways they could join up their campaigns.

We have been sharing ideas and good practice more widely via social media using our hashtag #ERplasticfree and many Edmund Rice schools globally are joining the campaign

Schools in South Africa, Peru, India and Zimbabwe have begun to seriously look at how they can have a more effective environmental policy in their school and try to get rid of single-use plastics.

Here is an outline of some of Ard Scoil na Mara's Peace and Justice group's actions this year. There may be some ideas here for you to get on board with. If you want to find out more you can contact the deputy Principal Mrs Aiofe Denton: aoifedenton@ardscoilnamara.ie



Peace and Justice in Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore, Co. Waterford:

What we have been up to lately:

- Participated in Focus Ireland Sleep-Out for homelessness in October
- Currently working on the Team Hope Shoebox Appeal, and wrapping these shoeboxes in bio-degradable paper, to reduce our plastic waste.
- Travelled to Edmund Rice Centre and gave a presentation regarding our advocacy group to the Irish American Ambassador and to other various Edmund Rice schools within Munster.
- Preparing a presentation to give to the Board of Management of our school to purchase reusable water bottles.
- Currently working with the canteen to get rid of their single use plastic containers, and to replace these with biodegradable options.
- Installed water fountain where students can fill their reusable water bottles throughout the day.
- Preparing to get a speaker in to talk to our advocacy group about Women's Rights to Education and Gender Equality.

ASIST / Suicide Talk



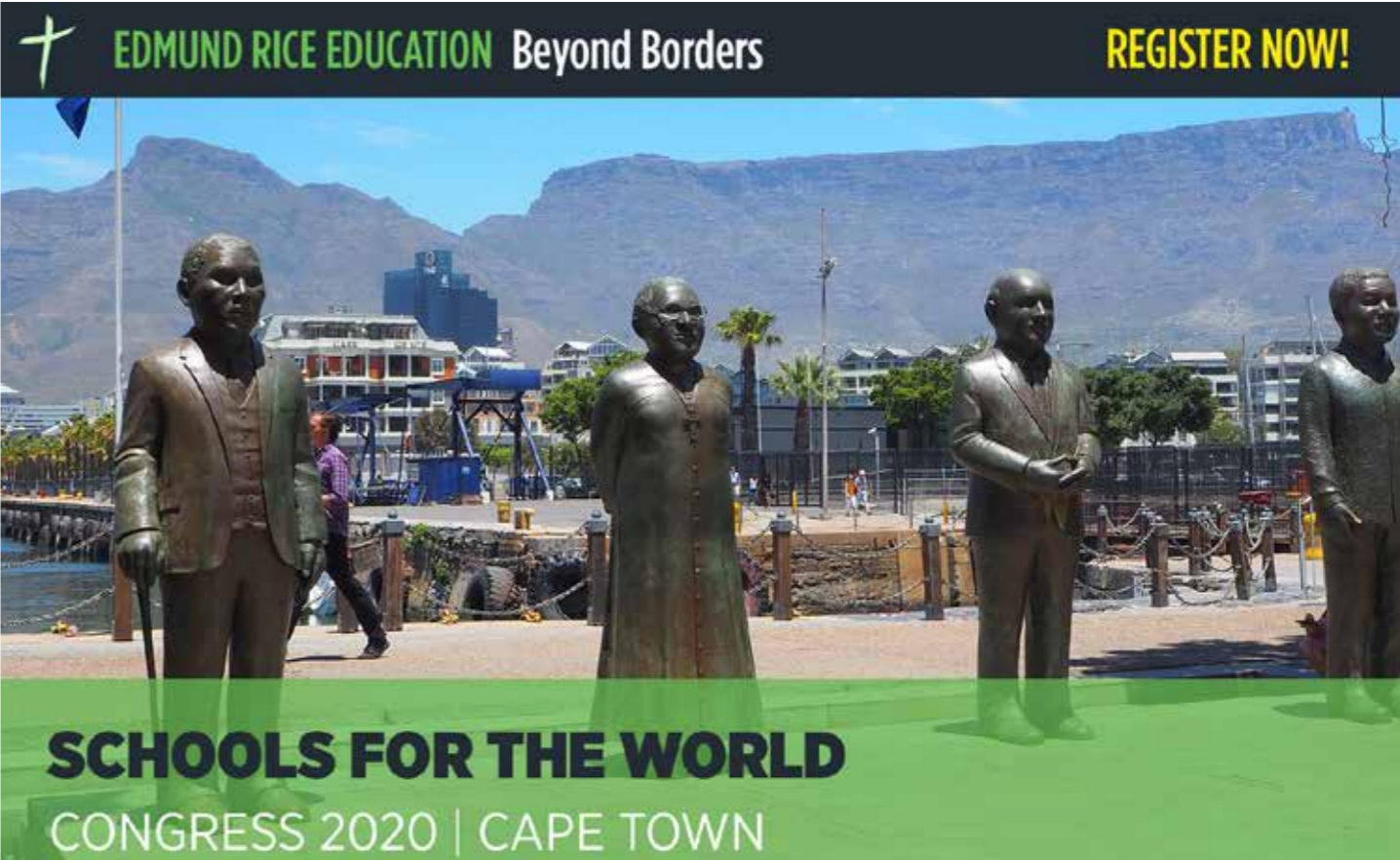
Ann and Tom continue to deliver the 2-day suicide intervention skills training 'ASIST' (Livingworks Education) to groups across the Network

This term we delivered a workshop at 'Woodeaves' that drew its participants from school staff and from Camp Leaders. One of the key reasons for bringing ASIST training into the Network was to equip Camp Leaders with essential skills; on repeated occasions it is to Camp Leaders that vulnerable children reveal thoughts of suicide. By training them we hope to ensure that they know better how to deal with such a revelation.

Our next courses will be in Stoke -on-Trent on Fri 17 – Sat 18 Jan and then on Thurs 18 – Fri 19 June at Woodeaves. Feedback from participants has been so positive and we know that the skills are being used to help those in our communities who are struggling with mental health issues and having thoughts of suicide. #Suicidesafercommunities

Did you know that a 90-minute course can also be delivered to raise awareness of the issue of suicide? It can be delivered to large groups of anyone aged 16+.

Contact Ann or Tom for details.





international
opportunities



Connect with another ER class
across the world, just send Ann the
details & she will connect the
teachers.

School leaver? Participate in Project
Carrick or the Argentina immersion.

For teachers... spend August in
Argentina at Cardenal Newman
College, Buenos Aires.

EREBB student exchange possible
with Stella Maris College, Uruguay
contact Ann for details.

Yr 9 - 11 boys
Term-long exchange with
Waverley College, Sydney.



*Join us
for*

STREET RETREATS



*outreach
community
advocacy*



DOMESTIC IMMERSION FOR YEAR 12S
- BELFAST 4-6 DEC

STREET RETREAT FOR STAFF
- MANCHESTER 27-28 FEB

STREET RETREAT FOR STAFF
- LIVERPOOL 8-9 JUNE



Still Somebody
#ERendhomelessness

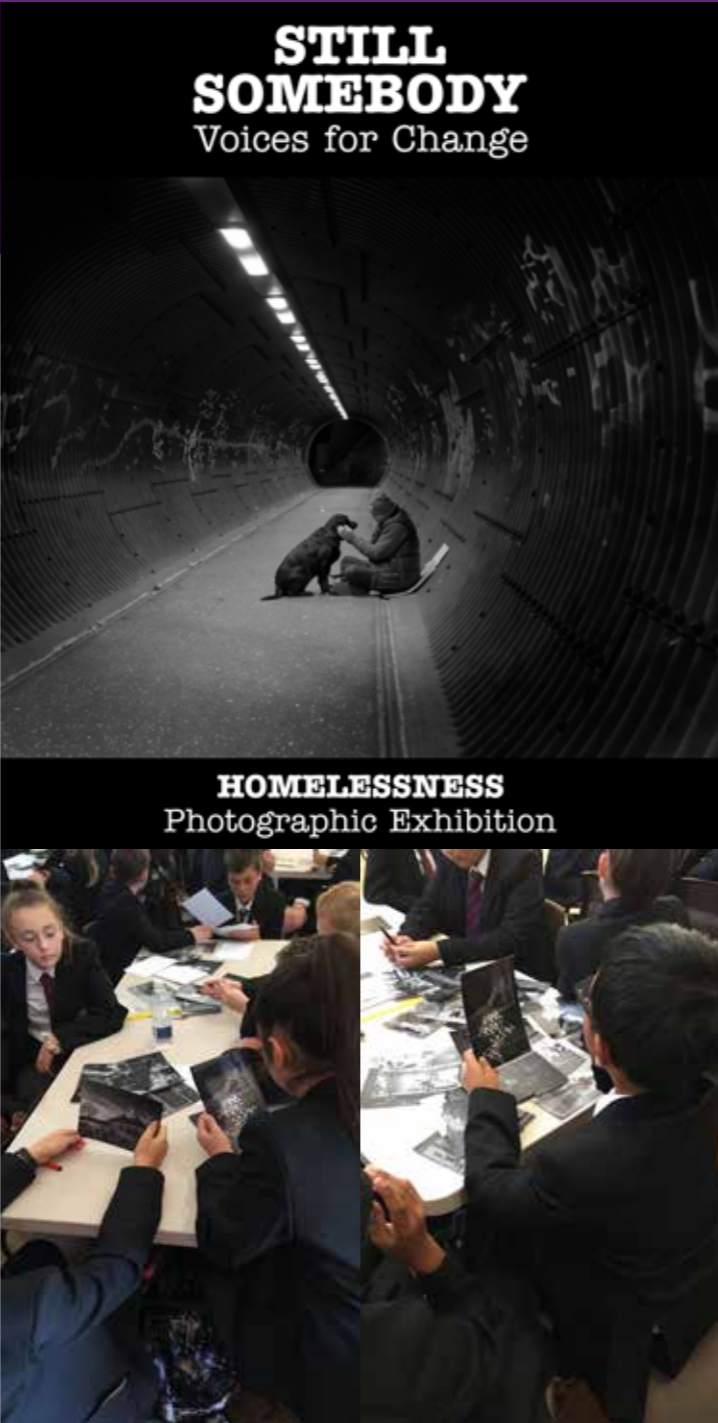
As part of the Social Justice Action Plan we are campaigning to raise awareness of and support positive change for the homeless community across the UK and Ireland.

As part of the campaign we have been loaned the photographic exhibition 'Still Somebody' put together by the Westcourt Camera Club in Belfast, first shown during Homeless Awareness Week in Belfast last winter. As part of the domestic immersion experience for our Year 12 students they were taken to view the exhibition and the impact the photos had on us all led us to devise a way we could allow access to the powerful and inciteful photographs to be used with our English schools.

The result is a transportable exhibition of 30 A2 sized images that each school will loan from the Edmund Rice Schools Office and will put up with our help. Along with the pictures comes a resource pack of activities and ideas of how to use the exhibition for best effect in your community. The aim, we hope, is to get as many people through the exhibition as possible; not just pupils, but parents, staff and guests. It can be the backdrop to many other fundraising and advocacy events the school can be involved in.

Reactions from pupils of both primary and secondary age have been amazing. The photos really speak to the viewer about the story of a homeless person; their past lives, daily struggles and most of all perhaps society's shameful shunning of them as a 'non-people'

Remember a person without a home is STILL SOMEBODY.



Youth Forum on Homelessness
“Young Friends of Whitechapel”

Advocating on the issue of homelessness has been something the Network has been driving for some time now.

Inspired largely by the work of the Westcourt Centre in Belfast, we have learned how to effectively campaign on behalf of the many people who find themselves, for many reasons, without a stable home of their own.

Looking at social and political causes behind the lack of adequate housing and mental health provision, as well as fundraising to provide emergency care and provisions that the wonderful charities working on the streets of our major cities provide has been an important social justice focus in our schools over the past couple of years.

Since last summer we have been working closely with Hettie Miles, a fundraiser for the Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool. She was impressed by both the compassionate attitude and the advanced knowledge of advocacy amongst even our youngest pupils and consequently, our schools have been asked to set up, jointly with the Whitechapel Centre, a youth forum to speak out against the injustices of homelessness.

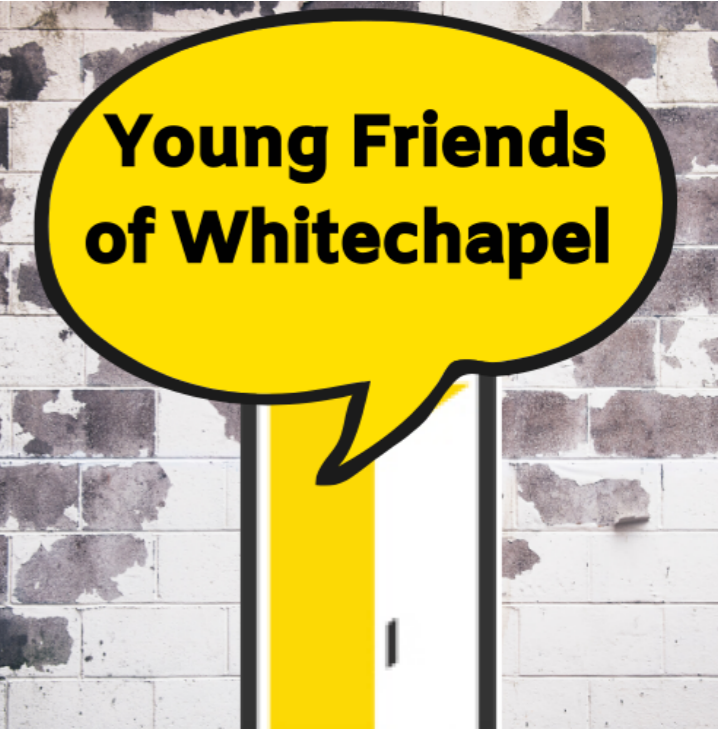
We met for our initial meeting in early November when our key aims and organisational systems were established. Students from St Ambrose, St Edward's, St Anselm's and St Mary's all took on significant responsibilities in the forum. A name was quickly settled on and our first joint campaign; a twelve-month advocacy and collection plan was drawn up.

Roles that have been agreed upon covered important areas such as:

- Promoting social media – hashtags etc
- Producing campaign materials such as letters, flyers and posters
- Co-ordinating all schools to launch media campaigns on the same dates to ensure maximum impact
- Producing creative ways to promote the campaign,
- Speaking to whole school and others in the community about homelessness.

Different students from each school will attend the Youth Forum at each meeting and they will set up committees in their schools.

All students will learn excellent skills such as communication, presentation, planning, fundraising, evaluating and campaigning. Students plan to expand the forum into other schools and to include primary schools too.



SPONSORED EVENTS

Look out for their advocacy work and fundraising; all have signed up to run the Santa Dash in Liverpool on Sunday 1st December for the Whitechapel Centre.



Alumni Juniores

What are they up to now?

Joe Lynam, Former pupil of St Edward's College

I am a recent Business Management graduate from the University of Liverpool.

Prior to further education I was fortunate enough to attend St Edward's College in Liverpool for 7 years. With regards to the Edmund Rice Network, my initial work started in 2016 when I completed my first camp, which has subsequently led to me being a camp leader for 5 years as well as enabling me to work within other social justice issues. Attending an Edmund Rice school has provided me with many opportunities, some of which I didn't recognise where available until I left.

Edmund Rice Camps

After signing up to do my first camp, I was apprehensive; however, the experiences and friendships I have made as a result have certainly had an impact on my personal development. The impact of camp is undeniable, as the children from Holy Family enjoy a week that can have many social benefits for them over their summer and even into the long-term. I could write numerous stories about my whole experience and how I've been inspired by so many past campers. Camp only lasts for five days; however, it is a greatly moving experience, evident in the amounts of volunteers who continually sign up each year.

Pope Francis and the World Meeting of the Families

In the summer of 2018, a group of us from both Crosby and West Derby camps were fortunate enough to attend mass in Phoenix Park, Dublin for the 'World Meeting of Families'. The strong links within the Edmund Rice Network made this possible, with accommodation and tickets already organised for us. Personally, this was an experience that will stay with me, especially considering how close we were when Pope Francis drove past us on his procession.

Argentina Immersion, Summer 2019

Overseas immersion is something that I have always wanted to be a part of and, in August of this year, Tom Murray contacted me with the opportunity of taking part in an Argentina Immersion. The trip was focused around understanding social justice issues such as poverty and homelessness with the final activity being a house construction for a family of four in a village outside of Buenos Aires.



I must note that this is one of my greatest achievements and it left me with a deep sense of pride that collectively our group had built a house, giving a family a new beginning.

The entire immersion had a profound impact upon me as it emphasised how fortunate and privileged I am. This was particularly relevant not only during the house construction but also during the street outreach. During a sandwich distribution, we came across a family of five, three children being under the age of six, who had found themselves homeless due to an unfortunate house fire, destroying their belongings and most importantly their identification papers. I will never forget this unexpected meeting, which made me realise that we should truly be grateful for everything we have.

Although assisting with social justice campaigns was a big part of the immersion, the cultural aspect of immersion means there is a lot of time for tourism. Attending the River Plate vs Talleres match, as well as visiting "La Bombonera", the home of Boca Juniors, were highlights for me.

Our host, Guillermo made us welcome and constructed a programme that had a wide variety of activities that enabled us to get the most out of our time in Buenos Aires. Overseas immersion is something that I would highly recommend to people within the Edmund Rice Network to get involved in. The opportunity to travel to new and interesting places, coupled with the chance to make a real difference were my biggest motivations, and I am so pleased to have seized this opportunity.

Homelessness and the Whitechapel Centre

After my experiences in Buenos Aires I was really interested in raising awareness of homelessness and getting involved with street outreach also. Fortunately, the Edmund Rice Network had contacted the Whitechapel Centre, creating a campaign named "Whitechapel Centres Young Voices." The purpose is to align all the Christian Brother schools within Liverpool and set the task of collecting the top ten most needed items for the centre.

This will occur when each month there is a set item which is focused upon. Alternatively, for those that have left secondary education there is an opportunity to complete street outreach, whereby a group of us would go out and pass on items or just stop and have a conversation.

This is such a valuable lesson, as whilst in Argentina, TECHO, the charity we worked with outlined the importance of just recognising those who are homeless, as this enables them to feel respected and have their human rights acknowledged.

Australia and New Zealand

In January of next year, I will be taking part in the first Project Carrick Internship in Australia. The programme consists of three months of work amongst different aspects of Edmund Rice Australia.

Fortunately, the project enables me to travel around different places including Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne. In addition, the opportunity to travel to New Zealand enables me to experience a different side of work within the network. A core principle behind the project was to recognise some work that I could bring back and implement within the network in the UK. Ultimately, different methods of running summer camps, as well as an interesting initiative in Brisbane called 'Orange Sky Laundry', a van driven by old boy of St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace who assists homeless with the daily task of laundry. I believe this opportunity will enable me to develop as a person as well as making new contacts within the network.

I would like to thank the entire Edmund Rice Network for the opportunities that have been afforded to me. I hope that I can experience new cultures and complete more outreach projects, as well as continue to work within the West Derby camps in my summer.



We would love to hear from other alumni and feature you in our magazine,

Get in touch and let us know what you are doing now.

Alumni Veteres

What are they up to now?

Mike Devlin, Former pupil of St Edward's College

I attended St. Edward's College between 1960 and 1972, first as a pupil at Runnymede, the preparatory school, and then at the college.

I lived in West Derby Village and so I was able to walk to school with my friends who lived locally. I can remember on winter mornings taking a shortcut past Bill Shankly's modest semi on Bellfield Drive, climbing over the wall at the end of the cul-de-sac onto North Drive and often coinciding with a steam engine chugging past on the railway underneath. I can recall very clearly walking through the steam generated by the train.

My first teacher in the prep school was Ms Wilson. I seem to remember that there was a Mr McTavish and I distinctly remember Brother Walsh. We had recorder lessons from Mr Dolman and violin lessons from Miss Hogg. Much to my father's disappointment, since he was from a musical family, I received a mark of 5% in my end of term report from Miss Hogg. In my relatively undistinguished academic year, this was a standout moment. Oddly enough, my own 4 children are all very talented musicians.

Whilst I enjoyed my studies at the college, my exam results did not reflect that. With hindsight, a combination of bone idleness coupled with an exceptional capacity to become distracted by something more interesting than the material to be examined, meant I came away with a rounded education but not always on the right material! I still have dreams about having read all of Jane Austin's novels except the one which features on the exam paper they have just turned over. The result was that I did not achieve the grades required to take up a place at Hull University to study law. I had a similar near miss the following year with Leeds University, but eventually I was offered a place to study law and industrial relations at University College Cardiff.

In the period between leaving school and going to university, I spent 2 years on a business studies course where I indulged my passions for film, literature and music and rather neglected business studies.

I also spent a year working in the Unemployment Benefit Office in Liverpool city centre. 'In' the dole as opposed to 'on' the dole! This was an informative experience and provided the spur I needed to focus on my studies and to give me a sense of direction.

I chose law and industrial relations because from the age of 16 I had wanted to become a solicitor and as I moved into my twenties, I became more politically aware and interested in society and philosophy.

As a product of the scholarship and 11 plus system, I know of many individuals from poor backgrounds who were given a chance to achieve.

My parents imbued me with the belief that everybody deserves equal respect and opportunity. I have held to these values throughout my life. I'd like to think that the Christian Brothers would be pleased. My school report always concluded with "Michael could do better/try harder". Looking back, I have inclined to allow a generous translation to these remarks and say that my frustrated teachers saw a potential in me as yet unrealised and that in the unlikely event any of the Brothers who taught me are alive and remember, they may say "he has tried harder and he did do better".

I haven't been very good at keeping in touch with old school friends but my brother-in-law, Mark Connelly, was in my year at school and is a great friend. He has had a very successful career in the oil and gas industry.

Another great friend, Patrick O'Brian, is an old boy of St Boniface's in Plymouth. My closest professional colleague and a partner in business for many years and also a great friend, Martin Jones, is an old boy of St Mary's College Crosby.

My principal when I was an article clerk and still a friend is Roger Pannone, an old boy of St. Brendan's Bristol. So, I suppose the Christian Brothers connections have followed me down the years.

For the last 15 years I have been chairing the Catholic Diocese of Salford's Safeguarding Commission. This has been both a challenging and rewarding role. As we all know, the Catholic Church has been under intense scrutiny in relation to a series of sex abuse scandals. Dealing with allegations of abuse requires patient, sensitive investigation and a willingness to make tough decisions. There has also been a need to create a safer environment in the church for children and vulnerable adults. This has meant an extensive programme of reform, education and preventative work.

I have also been instrumental in setting up an initiative to provide professional therapeutic support for the survivors of abuse – healing in the community. My work for the commission has been a challenge to my faith and my trust in the church and its hierarchy. I don't see this as a role which is done for reward.



I see it as a debt of honour. I have gained much from being a member of the Catholic Church. Others have suffered unimaginable harm. If I have been able to put something back as a result of the skills and expertise I have been given, then that is a privilege and a duty in equal parts.

I am delighted to get back in touch with the Edmund Rice Network and I am due to come and have lunch with the Brothers at 'Woodeaves' soon. I have to say I am delighted at the prospect.

At some point in our lives we all have a longing to retrace our steps. I have very clear memories of the Brother house at St. Edward's with the handsome windows of the dining room looking out to the tennis courts. The Brothers gathered there for lunch in what seemed to me then the epitome of opulence.

Remembering when my mum rather despaired at my carefully practiced indolence, she would occasionally remark that being a Christian Brother may not be a bad option. I will soon have an opportunity to compare notes.



We would love to hear from other alumni and feature you in our magazine,

Get in touch and let us know what you are doing now.

EREBB CONGRESS 2020

Schools for the World

Building a global community of Edmund Rice education committed to the Sustainable Development Goals



1-5 MAY 2020
CAPE TOWN | AFRICA



MARK DAVIS

working with Edmund Rice England

Sometimes in life you get a sense of things coming full circle. I certainly felt that this was the case when I was asked recently to contribute once more to the Edmund Rice educational project.

It began this summer when I was asked to lead the annual Heads Retreat at Wistaston Hall, where I was able to connect with many old friends and be introduced to some more wonderful people involved in this good work.

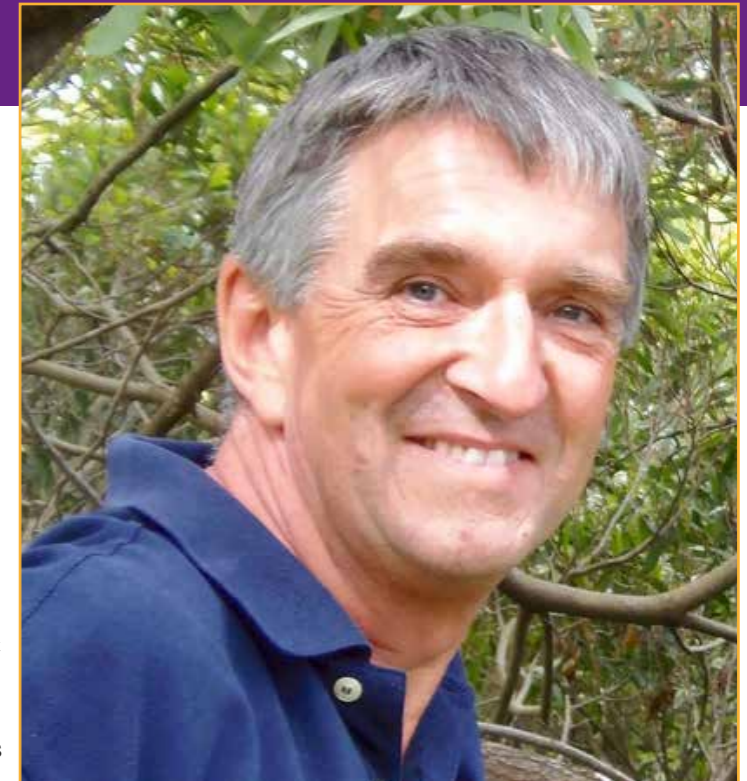
What I offered to the gathering was a series of structured spiritual conversations based on some work I had already undertaken for Catholic educators in Australia. For in 2017 I had been commissioned by the La Salle Academy at the Australian Catholic University to create a formative conversational resource based on Church documents published over the years on the nature of the Catholic school. Launched in November 2018 and entitled 'Voices and Visions' it was designed for use in the on-going formation of teachers, governors and parents involved in Catholic schools throughout Australia – helping them to explore together all that is best in this tradition of Christian education.

The resource itself comprises twelve conversations exploring a chosen theme, each of which is presented in the form of a booklet for individual use. Each theme is presented through an evocative mixture of readings and images, designed to be explored in a conversational way to give access to some of the richness of understanding contained in these documents, while allowing participants to engage with them in an open, experiential and inclusive manner.

In designing 'Voices and Visions' I drew inspiration, with regard to its style and the way it might be used, from the following quote from Pope Francis:

"The Catholic school is a place for dialogue and serene exchanges to encourage attitudes of respect, listening, friendship and spirit of collaboration".
Pope Francis

I'm happy to report that the response of those gathered for the Head's retreat was very positive. They embraced the notion of 'conversation' as a graceful, non-combative way of relating and were able to share some of their own experience in the light of the chosen themes. That such a resource might be of use to Edmund Rice school communities in England was readily accepted, but an important question emerged.



"Would it not be better if we created our own version of this which highlighted the essential elements of the Edmund Rice tradition of education?"

All this brought me back to my early experience of working in a Christian Brother's school, and some work I later undertook with Br. Francis Hall, on leaving my post as Head of RE at St Edward's College in 1991. Together, we set up the Edmund Rice Schools Resource Centre which later developed into the Education Office with which people will be more familiar today. Looking back, perhaps the most important thing to emerge during that period was our crafting of 'The Eight Essentials' of Christian Brother Education – a frame of reference which proved highly significant to many of those involved in Edmund Rice Schools in England since that time.

I think you can see now what I mean about 'going full circle'. After a period of reflection and consultation it has been agreed that it is, perhaps, timely for those involved in Edmund Rice education in England to look again at 'The Eight Essentials'. In doing so, we can assess their continuing value and might see how they might be updated or refined for further use into the future. One outcome of this enquiry might be the creation of a new conversational resource for use in the schools which reflects and explores, in a new and different way, the core elements of Edmund Rice education today.

Mark Davis
'The Shoreline Consultancy'



St Timothy's Community

Refurbishment of residence: St Timothy's Presbytery, the house we live in, was built in the late 1950s. The windows and doors were all built of wood with single glazed glass. It was quite a cold house to live in. Recently we got new double-glazed windows and doors put in. What a difference they are making! It feels like that we are living in a new house. We are very grateful to the Archdiocese for covering the costs of the renovation and getting the job done so efficiently and professionally. We learned a few new scouse phrases during the process as the workers were around for a few weeks. You are very welcome to join us for a cup of tea any time and experience the difference for yourself.

New Story Group: The Brothers set up this group nine years ago in St Timothy's. The purpose of the group was to explore together the new discoveries of researchers, scientists and theologians about our origin as a people, as a planet as a universe and how we might apply the learning to our own lives in the here and now. This is done through the use of YouTube, books and reflection, with some quiet time built in. Some of the original group have passed on, others have moved house. We are always open to extending a welcome to new members. We meet regularly for a two-hour session which includes time for social and refreshments. It is a very appropriate group in the light of climate change. We can all make a difference.

Welcome to Visitors: Our house has always been a place of welcome to parishioners, people connected to our network and to our Brothers across the Congregation. Recently we had a Brother Edward from another community in Liverpool staying with us for two weeks who was recovering from surgery. We also had a visit from a Brother Brian in Dublin who stayed for a week, who explored a bit of Liverpool during his stay.

Parr Street

September: Eamonn spent a pleasant, though rainy, holiday in Ireland. Since then he has been hard at work teaching English to migrants. He also visits Matt often. Michael and Edward went to the European Province Chapter (Part One) in the beautiful retreat house 'Emmaus' just north of Dublin airport. The Chapter was judged excellent and brilliantly facilitated by Br. Kevin Burke from Capetown. Chris continues to do many jobs for relatives and friends. Edward has seen to refurbish-ments of Brothers' graves in Bath, Stoke and Yew Tree in Liverpool. The one for the 19th century in Manchester (Moston) is in hand. He attended the annual day conference of Links on 28th Sept. focussing on food shortage in UK. Sadly, the UK antenna of Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network is unable to continue since members are growing old and we have not been able to attract new members despite trying over the years. The AEFJN will continue in other European antennae, hopefully, even without UK and Ireland. The Romero lecture in Liverpool on 25th Sept. focused on three 'Liverpool prophets' who died in recent years - Fr. Austin Smith, Fr. Kevin Kelly and Fr. Tom Cullinan. Retired Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald (MHM) in our parish is now a Cardinal. There was a good meeting of the ERN core group at The Three Martyrs parish recently and there was emphasis on promoting the charism of Blessed Edmund beyond school affairs. The next meeting is on the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady 21/11/19 at 'Woodeaves'. (Edmund Rice founded the Brothers modelled on the Presentation Sisters in Waterford).

October – November: Edward had a successful operation on his bladder on 24th October. He is grateful for all the prayer and support for this ordeal and especially for the warm hospitality of the St. Timothy's community where he spent a convalescent period in the environs of the lovely Croxteth Park. Shopon, the wonderful Bangladeshi gentleman is visiting England to contact donors about his tireless work to promote the development of his fellow Dalits, the oppressed caste in the Indian sub-continent, mainly by advancing education in the many poor scattered villages. Our Province Leaders met with us on 13th November to discuss the sale of 55 Parr Street. Eamonn continues his indefectible work teaching English to migrants. Michael continues to teach children with learning difficulties. Chris and Mike continue to run a respite club for people with learning difficulties on Friday evenings. Our parish of St. Vincent's sees a new Cardinal in Rev. Michael Fitzgerald, MAfr. Mons. Peter Cookson died on the 8th of November from Parkinson's Disease. He was a much-loved priest, well-known in Liverpool and curator of the Cathedral museum in recent years.



Woodeaves

All are well, being well cared for by Michelle and her team! Some refurbishment has taken place and the house is looking ship-shape.

Br Ignatius has had a minor operation but is recovering well. In September brothers from the English Network celebrated their jubilees:

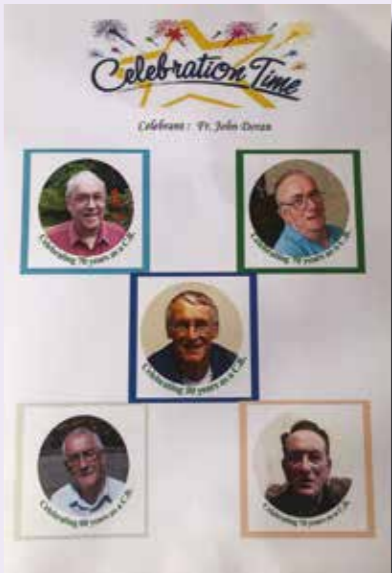
Jubilee Celebration 11th September 2019
Tom Kelly, John Sullivan, Daniel Walsh, Jim Catterson, Mike Hallighan

Brothers and guests celebrated with the five Jubilarian's at Ince Blundell Nursing Home as three of the brothers reside there.

18 brothers were able to attend plus Edmund Garvey, Eddy Coupe, Father John Doran, Joanne and Michelle from 'Woodeaves'. The five brothers were individually feted and congratulated. A Mass was celebrated with Father John Doran (Mill Hill) in their chapel at Ince Blundell.

We then went to The Pheasant Inn, where we had a 3-course dinner and a piece of cake! It was a most moving day for all. It was wonderful to see the joy on their faces.

'Woodeaves' also hosted a wonderful 80th birthday celebration for Br Dominic Sassi, from the PLT in September with lunch out and then cake at the house.



HeadSpace

Mary Cox

Headteacher at St Boniface's Catholic College, Plymouth

I grew up on Northern Ireland and attended Loreto Convent as a child.

My parents were active Alliance Party members, (I get my political genes from them) which led to significant threats to the family, so my parents were forced to leave – we arrived quite suddenly in the North East of England – quite a culture shock from my lovely convent grammar school, to arrive in an inner city comprehensive. St Michaels – no longer in existence. The school was led by an amazing man, Mr Appleton, who accepted all of the children that were failed by other schools. It was quite an eclectic mix!

I had no intention of becoming a teacher – my degree in Psychology led me into Social Care and then working in Housing and homelessness projects, living in Plymouth, London and Hampshire. I've been married to Ian for 33 years – we met at university. We have 3 children, Matthew (29), Samuel (27), Rebecca (22), and now one granddaughter – Evelyn – 3months old, the most adorable time- waster.

My teaching career began after the birth of our first son – a chance advert in the paper looking for someone to teach at an FE college on Access to Care courses. In February 1991, I started as an unqualified teacher doing 2 hours per week at Hartlepool College, and by Easter, I was practically full time. I then taught in Sixth Form colleges for over 15 years. Since then I have been a local authority adviser, leading on the 14-19 agenda for the North East, and being a national lead on careers advice and guidance. I have opened a new school as inaugural Principal, and have worked in Devon, and in Tower Hamlets.

I came to work as the Interim Headteacher at St Boniface's Catholic College, part of the Edmund Rice Network, by chance, and because it felt like the right thing to do. I was previously the Education and Standards Manager for the school, which is also part of Plymouth CAST, a large Catholic Multi Academy Trust which covers Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.

In all there are 36 schools in the Trust, and in the three years prior to my arrival at St Boniface's I had been responsible for the line management of up to 17 of those schools. When the previous Head left unexpectedly, I was aware that the school needed a steady hand, until a permanent appointment could be made. I arrived on Remembrance Day, and the first assembly I attended was a whole school Remembrance Service. I remember it chiefly because a student fainted in the middle of the service, and I had to assist in offering first aid.



I had no intention of remaining at the school at this point, as I enjoyed my previous role. However, 'Bonnies' got under my skin, and so in March this year, I applied and was appointed as Headteacher permanently.

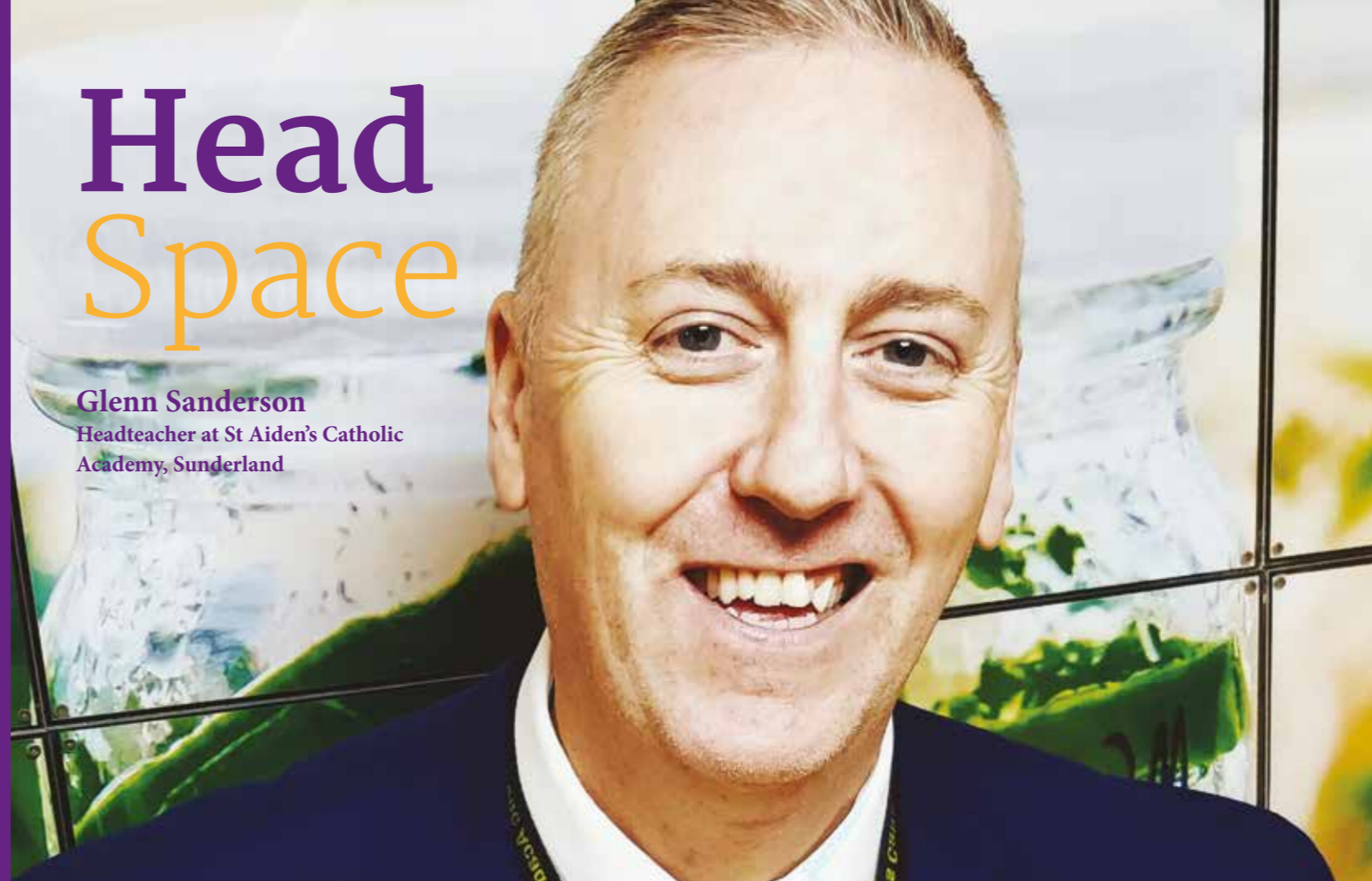
'Bonnies' was a community in crisis, and needed firm but fair management, and leadership. The students were craving consistency, both in behaviour management and in the teaching, they were receiving. They were and still are enormously loyal to the school, which has had a very difficult few years, as it was placed in Special measures by OFSTED in May 2017. Lots of good work had been done, but there was another big push needed. Getting to know the boys, dealing with change, challenge, budget constraints, external negativity, has been a huge challenge, for me and for the rest of the staff. However, our results this year have improved significantly, we have developed partnerships with our other partners, and we are beginning again to engage with the Edmund Rice Network. We are awaiting another visit from OFSTED and hope that it will move us on to a much more positive position. We know things are much better, and this is reflected in the parents and students' comments and strong support for what we are doing. We have a very positive, forward thinking and committed staff, and are going back to basics on what matters most – ensuring that we care for our students and prepare them well for life beyond the school. 'Bonnies' has a proud history in Plymouth, more than 150 years of boys and men who were taught here, by the Christian Brothers. I am the first female head, which is daunting in some ways, but not something that weighs me down.

My vision for the future is to make sure we have ambition for our students, and that we fight for them to achieve their potential. We are working hard to deepen the Catholic nature of the school and are ensuring that this is what leads the school to a stronger and happier place, one that enables staff and students to explore their faith and their value in God's eyes. I love seeing our boys flourish.

HeadSpace

Glenn Sanderson

Headteacher at St Aiden's Catholic Academy, Sunderland



It is with great pride and pleasure that I have this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of St Aiden's Catholic Academy.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to continue serving the local communities of Sunderland and, after a number of years as Deputy Headteacher, to now be leading an Academy with such a rich tradition of spiritual strength and academic excellence. As the father of four boys, I have the privilege of shaping their futures, journeying with them during their formation, through their successes and struggles and providing support for the daily challenges they face. It is with this in mind that I believe I am blessed to have the opportunity to positively influence the formation of the young men I work with and serve. I have always encouraged each individual to embrace the dignity of humanity by promoting an integration of faith, life and culture that forms each young person intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Growing up my parents also told me that there are certain things that are visible: things we can touch and see. And, certain things not visible: things we can't touch and see. We have a choice — only believe the things we see or open our minds and believe.

I believe in Christianity: In God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. My belief is that when we allow the Spirit to work in us, we become more like Jesus. When we are more like Jesus, we become closer to our God and feel whole and connected.

As a young man, I learned the invaluable truth that when I set aside my own selfish interests to help others and serve, I experience a deep satisfaction and happiness. God calls each of us to a particular vocation in life and I consider myself extremely fortunate to be part of a community in which dedication to service lies at the heart of all we do, where we share a common mission to ensure every young person feels whole and connected, where we not only broaden the academic dimension but also the human one.

At St Aiden's Catholic Academy, I guarantee that each young person's journey is one of faith, a journey that develops young men who treat others with dignity and respect, who stand up for the marginalised and less fortunate and help develop communities and relationships shaped on reflection, action, service and prayer.

One of my favourite quotes with regards to education comes from Pope Francis who once said, 'The main element in school is learning to be magnanimous'. This means having a big heart and having a greatness of soul. It means having the very highest of ideals, the desire to achieve great things in response to what God asks of us and, precisely because of this, doing everyday things, all of our daily actions, commitments, and meetings with people, to the best of our ability.

I'm proud to say that this is what we strive for from every individual member our community... to be magnanimous.

A Word from the Governor!

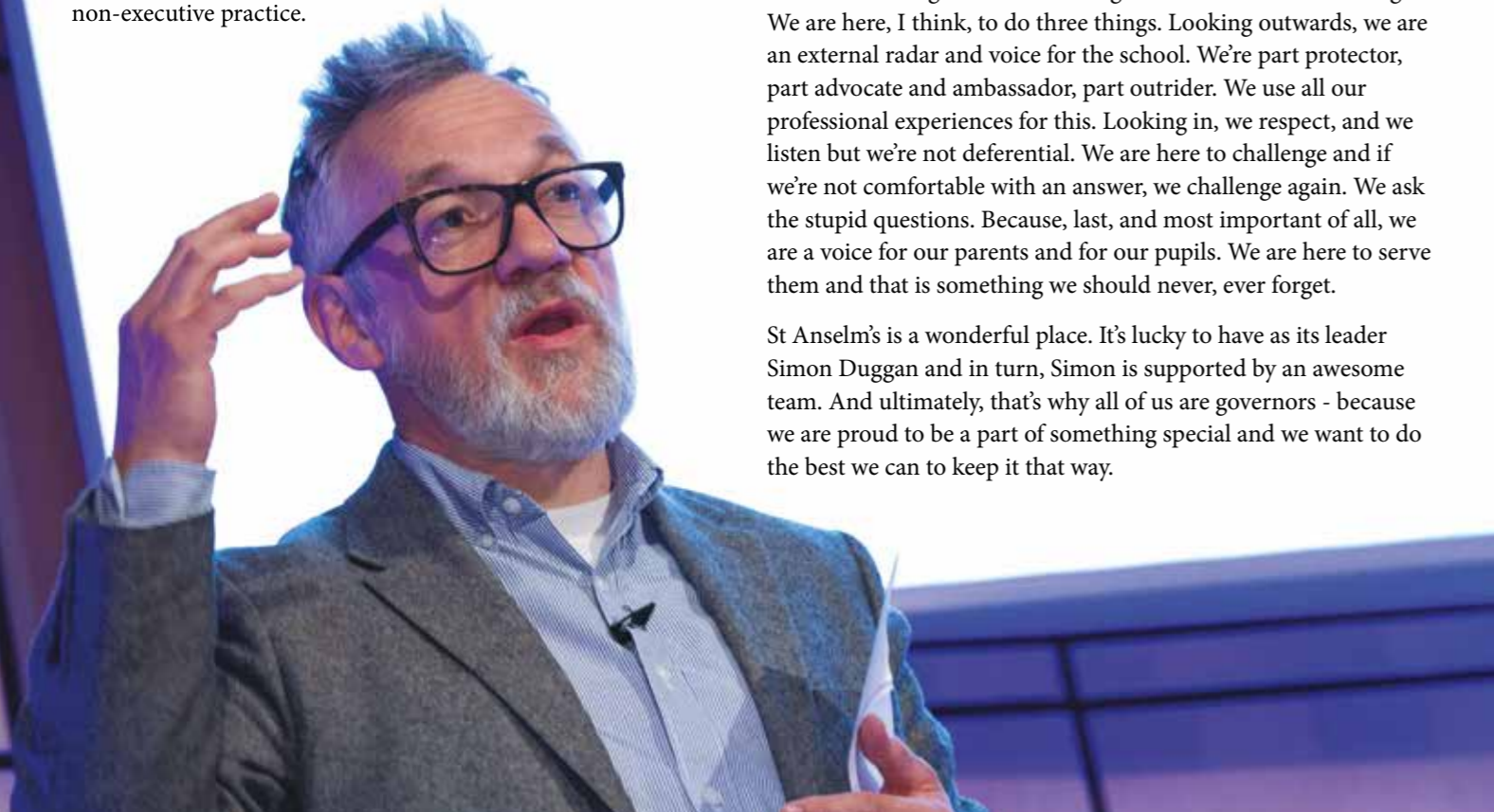
John Greaves, Chair of Governors at St Anselm's College

When I moved to Merseyside from West Yorkshire almost 30 years ago (I'm still doing the very important missionary work I came here to do) I'd heard about St Anselm's College and had met some Anselmians who were relatives and friends of my then future wife, Rachel, and her family.

I genuinely had no idea then how important St Anselm's would become in our lives. And to be honest, my friends from those early days find it extremely amusing that I've ended up in the position now I hold.

But as we know, He moves in mysterious ways and for one reason or another, after being a parent Governor, becoming Foundation Governor, and then chair of Finance and General Purposes, I was appointed as Chair just over two years ago. A fairly decent apprenticeship, certainly no grand plan on my part but what a wild ride it's been.

As I indicated, I'm not an Anselmian - although our three boys, two brothers-in-law and countless friends are - but I think I get what the College is about now and what makes it a very unique institution. I also think that not being an Anselmian and not coming through an Edmund Rice education gives me a perspective that is valuable for the role I perform. As does my thirty-plus year business career that, most recently, as an executive board member of a FTSE-250 business, has enabled me to experience some very good non-executive practice.



Education, and particularly faith education, is at a real inflection point now. And as governors, the role we play is more important than ever.

Funding and investment are still a crisis for us and education, despite everything we know about how fundamental it is to the future of our society, is still a 'league two' issue as far as the national agenda goes. The challenge to our schools to continually do more with less gets greater with every term. And as we all know, constantly cutting corners in education will ultimately only take you in one direction. The demands of performance league tables and the shifting sands of regulation sometimes seem contradictory and divisive.

In terms of faith education, ensuring that we never compromise on the Essentials of an Edmund Rice education, our bedrock, and maintain the Catholicity of our intake and our offering within an increasingly secular society continues to be a challenge, but one we are all aligned behind. And ahead, as if all of this wasn't enough, we're facing the uncertainty of MATs.

So, what's our role in all of this? When I was appointed as a parent-governor, I was given some advice by a more seasoned pro. He said our job was to act as 'critical friends' to the senior executive. As I have progressed, I have come to realise that as a philosophy for non-executive governance in education, 'critical friend' has had its day.

The board that I am part of is not there as, or to be, a critical friend. The benign cosiness isn't right for where we are heading. We are here, I think, to do three things. Looking outwards, we are an external radar and voice for the school. We're part protector, part advocate and ambassador, part outrider. We use all our professional experiences for this. Looking in, we respect, and we listen but we're not deferential. We are here to challenge and if we're not comfortable with an answer, we challenge again. We ask the stupid questions. Because, last, and most important of all, we are a voice for our parents and for our pupils. We are here to serve them and that is something we should never, ever forget.

St Anselm's is a wonderful place. It's lucky to have as its leader Simon Duggan and in turn, Simon is supported by an awesome team. And ultimately, that's why all of us are governors - because we are proud to be a part of something special and we want to do the best we can to keep it that way.

Sue Hutchinson

A Tribute



This term, it is with a heavy heart that we say farewell to Sue Hutchinson as Headteacher of St Joseph's Prep in Stoke-on-Trent.

Sue has decided to retire after a nasty fall in the school playground at the end of last summer term left her with a broken hip and femur. Sue felt this was the time to go and that God was calling her to other things. Sue has been at St Joseph's for twenty-one years and we can say that in the Network she led the way in terms of being the living breathing spirit of Edmund Rice, her enthusiasm and sense of adventure never waned.

Happily, Sue is well on the road to recovery now and although she will be greatly missed by us all and especially by the pupils, staff and governors of St Joseph's Prep, we know that she will continue to be involved in the Edmund Rice Network as a great supporter and friend. We wish her a long and happy retirement and look forward to hearing about her on-going adventures!

The staff and pupils have sent us these beautiful words about Sue:

A Poem for Mrs Hutchinson by a pupil in P5

Your eyes shine bright as you see an owl passing by.
Its eyes give you a sign you will be alright.
It comes to your window and it says, "Good night, you're a brilliant teacher.
It carries on for its plain to see.
I just wanted to say how much you mean to me."

The owl flies off as you look up at the sky and a shooting star flying up high,
You make a wish and your wish went up to the sky
- as the angel Gabriel carried it by
- as she reached to God as he saw her coming.
This wish she has given you was now to come true.



Mrs Hutchinson is an amazing person. Since I have been in nursery, Mrs Hutchinson has greeted me and hundreds of children every morning on the playground. In all weathers she is amazing. She makes me feel safe and happy. This lady is my Headmistress. She fell on the playground and she broke her hip and now she is retiring. She dedicated many years to St Joseph's. She was hard working, polite and honest and she always sees the good in everyone. Her motto is, "Happy children learn." She always thinks of other people before herself. Her passion is owls and nature and she has got a really amazing collection of owls from all over the world. She is a very special lady that I will truly miss.

(Betsy, Prep 4)

I have had the pleasure of knowing Sue since she arrived at St Joseph's Prep school back in 1998 as the Pre Prep 2 teacher. I was her TA at that time. After 4 years circumstances changed and I decided to take a slightly different path, but I still kept in contact throughout the next 7 years one way or another. Fast forward to 2009 I popped in to see Sue as I was looking to change my path of employment, and having talked to Sue, she offered me a position back at St Joseph's as a 1:1 support to a child who was in reception at the time. Of course, I said yes and have continued to work with and support Sue up to the present day, also taking on the role of Edmund Rice co-ordinator at the school.

Sue has been wonderful, caring and a person who you could talk to. I have had some wonderful opportunities given to myself as a result of Sue, not least through the Edmund Rice network, taking my first ever flight to Dublin, this was followed by Geneva and congress with Sue early this year. Sue also nominated me for the first Edmund Rice Award last July (2018), and she was there to see me receive this.

Thank you, Sue, for these opportunities and the continued support you gave not only to me, but to each and every one of us at St Joseph's Prep School. You will forever leave an imprint in mine and everyone else's heart.

(Vicky Kent, TA and Edmund Rice Co-ordinator.)

Prep School News

St Ambrose Prep School

It's been a busy term for the Ambrose boys. We started off with a whole school mass to welcome everyone back to school and prepare to celebrate the next academic year together. I have included a photo of our readers. For harvest, we did a collection of food hampers for SVP and rather than have a snack the boys chose to donate to Cafod, were we raised £93.50. I have included a picture of the Prep 3 boys doing the harvest assembly and the food hampers in the background. Our Head Boy and Deputies have been very busy this week selling poppies for Remembrance Day. Pre prep having been visiting 'Sunrise' to go trick-or-treating with the residents. The residents of 'Sunrise' will also be invited to our Christmas performances and concerts. Our advocacy group have been busy preparing for our Christmas charity drive, where they will be working to collect and distribute new toys to children in our local area. They will also be delivering a whole school assembly for St Ambrose Day.



St Joseph's Prep School

After an unusual end to the school year, we at St Joseph's Prep School started the term with optimism. We welcomed a number of new families to our school. We also continued to pray for the recovery of our Head Sue Hutchinson. As the term got under way in full swing, we learnt that unfortunately Sue would not be returning to school as her recovery was not quiet going as expected. We as a school are still coming to terms with this and will be looking forward to receiving a visit from Sue before Christmas, when we as a school family can give her the goodbye that she deserves. After 21 years at St Joseph's, both as teacher and Head, Sue will be a hard act to follow. We as a school now look to Dan Hood, who is our very capable acting Head for guidance. At the end of the summer term the children celebrated their achievements at our annual Prize Giving. Congratulations to Francesca, who was one of our Prep 6 pupils who won the Edmund Rice Charism award. To round the evening off the children performed The Jungle Book to the audience.

After the shock of this news, the school has continued to provide a wide range of activities for our children. Children from the Prep Department went to visit the Spode China Hall Site to view some of their own clay creations, which were made as part of the British Ceramics Biennial Exhibition at Spode. As a whole school we all created a model, and these were exhibited along with those of thousands of other school children during these exhibitions. The children were able to see some other work by artists featured there too. During September, we held our International Languages Day. The children were able to look at not just French, Italian and Latin, but also Polish, Spanish and other languages. The children were also able to purchase some French items, ruler, pencils etc. and the EYFS had their own French breakfast.

In October, in support of 'World Mental Health Day' the children enjoyed wearing yellow, as well as using yellow props in our photo booth to raise awareness. In addition the Prep Department took part in a live interactive lesson with #BBCTeach focusing on 'The Growth Mindset and Wellbeing' which aims to promote emotional wellbeing and encourage a growth mindset.

As we came to the half term, we spent the week "off timetable" for our annual Multicultural Week Activities. This is when we take the opportunity to look closer at different religions. The children were able to look at Sikhism, Hinduism, and Prep Six looked at the Islamic faith and using their skills cultivated with the help of our Clay School programme to create a representation of the Five Pillars of Islam. We are so lucky at St Joseph's Prep to have a wide range of families from different religious faiths - this allows us to access their knowledge and experiences as they talk to the children. As we enter into a busy part of the school calendar, we also must remember that we are preparing for the birth of Jesus and look forward to the coming year.



Prep School News

St Mary's Prep School

Edmund Rice Schools Netball Tournament

St Mary's Prep hosted the Christian Brothers Prep Schools Under 11s Netball tournament in November. A wonderful bright, crisp Autumn afternoon at St Mary's College Netball pitches was spent together. Well done to Adriana and Anna for being chosen as players of the match.

#strivingforexcellence
#concernforthewholeperson
#edmundspeople



Boots for Ghana

In schools this Autumn we have collected sports kit such as boots, socks and goal-keeper gloves along with school stationary – pencils, pens and notebooks. These items will all go to Ghana to pupils who really need them.

We have worked with 'Pro-Soccer Global' which is an organisation s is run by a former Prep and College pupil Chris McGrath. They support communities in Ghana through football.

We had a great response from current and former pupils and Chris' Dad and friend picked up the donations to be shipped off to Ghana. You can find out more about this charity here:

www.prosoccerglobal.com/psg-ghana/459445146





St Mary's Prep School

Helping others

Just as Blessed Edmund Rice reached out and helped those around him, we are encouraging our pupils to spend time caring for and helping those around them, including in our own school environment.

The Year 6 Edmund Rice group helped the reception class during their first few days in school, they organised and tidied our 'den' area, swept up the autumn leaves and did the checking of Christmas shoeboxes before they were sent off to Romania.

Great work!



Amnesty International Assembly

Recently, we were delighted to welcome Jeremy Swinson from Amnesty Internal UK.

He delivered two assemblies; speaking to our pupils about the survival, protection and education rights of children throughout the world, and in particular in the developing world.

He explained the need to be kind and understanding towards one another regardless of race, religion or our abilities. To our older pupils, Jeremy explained in more detail the work Amnesty International undertakes and its mission to help those in need.



Runnymede Prep School

CAFOD Fun Run
Prep 6 collected CAFOD donations and sold raffle tickets to win a CAFOD football. The grand CAFOD Fun Run was held on a very wet and muddy afternoon, but the weather did not dampen the children's enthusiasm! They really got into the spirit of the event, and we raised a grand total of £467.90 for CAFOD. Thanks to everyone for their generosity.

Mass for the new school year
We began the year with a beautiful mass celebrated by Fr. Taras. It was a very uplifting way to mark the start of a brand-new school year. Children in Prep 6 for worked really hard preparing their contributions and we thank all the children for their lovely singing.

Macmillan Coffee Morning
This year's Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning was lovely! Thank you to everyone who came, bought raffle tickets, or donated via Facebook. This is a cause close to so many of our hearts, the generosity of spirit shown by the Runnymede community is wonderful to see. We raised a whopping £466.12, which is fantastic. Thank you to everyone who helped and got involved.



Blessed Edmund Rice
Jessica Pan in Prep 5 has a real talent for art! Here is her wonderful portrait of the Blessed Edmund Rice. This beautiful piece has been framed and will take pride of place in school.

ESB WINNER!!
Tom Lewis in Prep 5 has been selected as one of 10 Young Speakers of the Year! Big congratulations to Tom, he is in the TOP 10 of almost 12,000 candidates entered for English Speaking Board awards last year! Tom will attend an awards ceremony at Aintree Racecourse, to be presented with his Young Speaker of the Year trophy. His assessor deemed his work and his presentation "truly outstanding". This is a fantastic achievement Tom, and we are very proud of you.





St Aiden’s Catholic Academy

#Godinnature

This Autumn we had the rare opportunity to take all of our staff out of school for a full day retreat. Our focus for retreat was God’s Gifts. In the morning of our retreat we reflected on God’s gift of nature: the awesome beauty and the small signals of God which surround us in our everyday lives. Staff were given the mission to go out into the world and look for God in nature. This was a great chance to really experience the numinous nature of God.

In the afternoon of our retreat we came back together to reflect on God’s gift of us. The incredibly important message of us being made in God’s image with our own uniqueness.

We were inspired by Cardinal Henry Newman’s quote: “God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.”

As part of our reflection we took time to consider the wonderful gifts and talents we bring to our work. This was an opportunity for our committed staff to stop and consider why their individual, and unique traits are so important to the young people we serve. Many staff commented on what a joyful afternoon it was to hear colleagues sharing and discussing the strengths of their co-workers.

As we finished our day, we reflected on our academy mission, to bring God to all the children we serve and to support our local community. We have many great things planned for both our students and our local community in this academic year, which we look forward to sharing with you.



St Ambrose College

Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Sunday many of our college students, together with family members, were able to join with the local community at Hale Barns Cenotaph.

On the following day, at school we held a 2-minute silence to honour those who lost their lives in war on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day in 1919. The last post was played flawlessly by Year 8 student Christopher Stiles who also played the Last Post at Stockport County on Saturday 9th November.



Odd Socks

The College would like to say thank you to all students who contributed and took part supporting fundraising efforts of the mental health charity, MIND in November when Students wore odd socks today in recognition of the day by donating £1.

£253 was raised for this worthwhile charity.



St Ambrose College

Lessons from Auschwitz by Kellan Conaway-Smith

Along with my co-chair of the History Society, Joe Henderson, I was selected to take part in the ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ project and went along to an initial meeting in central Manchester to find out more about the experiences of Jews living in Europe prior to World War II.

During the session we heard the heart-rending testimony of survivor Mala Helfgott, who was forced to flee her home in Poland before being sent to Auschwitz where her entire family were murdered.

She saw such terrible atrocities at the camp that still struggles to speak of them, but clearly feels she must.

Following this was a visit to Auschwitz itself.

We set off for Poland on Tuesday at 4.15am, taking a coach from Krakow to a small town called Magiczny which was host to a strong Jewish community before the German invasion and subsequent introduction of anti-Jewish law.

The Great Synagogue was destroyed, and the Jewish population decimated.

From here, we made our way to Auschwitz.

At this camp, so vast and chilling, we learned about some of the horrific conditions prisoners were kept in and were confronted over and over with striking images of human suffering, including a room filled with children’s shoes which had been taken from them as they entered the camp, never to leave.

I also entered a gas chamber which was eerily filled with the pain and suffering of those who had been put to death there all those years ago.

Our day ended with a poignant ceremony of remembrance and prayer.

This was an incredibly moving experience which I will never forget.



St Ambrose College

ERI Youth Ambassadors

I am Kellan, a Senior Prefect and an ERI Ambassador, I also chair a couple of other societies. ERI had been a group which I was aware of from a relatively early time at St Ambrose, but it was in my first year of Sixth Form that my drive to advocate for important issues really developed. It is my enthusiastic determination to raise awareness of and help aid those in need and important issues which motivated me to pursue the role of being an ERI ambassador. However, over the years ERI has lost its meaning and often is associated with simply raising money for charity, it is in fact, so much more. Which is why I aim to help redefine what it is to be in Edmund Rice International and what we strive to achieve as an advocacy group.

Recently, I attended a meeting out of school, where a group of schoolgirls from Ireland came and told us about how they have significantly reduced single use plastics in their school and community. This is a subject many local schools are passionate about and it is something we do aim to improve. The previous ERI teams have successfully advocated for homelessness, and plastic pollution is an important topic we have tasked our youth ERI groups to focus on, which is why I strive to focus on and raise awareness of, education for girls as an all-boys school in this year.



St Anselm’s College

Music

St Anselm’s Music Department are involved in a range of charitable concerts throughout the year with highlights this year including playing for Harry and Meghan when they visited Birkenhead and the annual Radio City ‘Cash for Kids’ Concert at the Anglican Cathedral.

More recently on Thursday October 10th the College String Group and assorted soloists performed at the second Wirral Arts Festival at Our Lady and St Paul’s Church, Heswall.

In a programme that ranged from Mozart to Cher the singers and instrumentalists gave performances that were both polished and professional, and throughout they were a credit to our College and to the Music Department.

On the night their music-making helped to raise several hundred pounds for Child Bereavement UK.

Time to Change Mental Health Charity

While there has been a positive step change in the way mental health is viewed and talked about in England, research shows a persistent gap between the attitudes of men and women, with men consistently showing less favourable attitudes.

Compared to women, men are:

- Less knowledgeable about mental health, with more negative attitudes
- Far less likely to report their own experiences of mental health problems and less likely to discuss mental health problems with a professional
- More likely to say that mental health problems are the result of a ‘lack of self-discipline and willpower’
- Three times more likely to take their own lives than women with suicide being the leading cause of death in men under 45.
- And in the case of young people, our research found that whilst awareness of mental health issues is improving, understanding is still poor in the 11-18 age group.

www.time-to-change.org.uk

Well done St Anselm’s in their actions to combat this big problem in today’s society



How they are being ‘in their mate’s corner’

As students find themselves under increasing amounts of pressure in this technological age at St Anselm’s we have looked to equip our boys with some tools to support themselves and their peers. We already have a thriving Peer Mentor programme, where Year 12 boys receive basic training and volunteer to spend time attached to a Year 7 or 8 form. Their job is to be a ‘go between’ to support boys with minor issues and to be a role model that they can aspire to. We have also introduced a ‘breakfast buddy’ programme where successful Year 13 students meet with a Year 11 student with similar aspirations for breakfast once a fortnight and help with any issues they might have.

This year we have trained a group of Year 12 students with the Edmund Rice Office in the ASIST programme and Mental Health First Aid. This group will support students who might not yet feel ready to talk to an adult with simple worries and are currently creating a PHSE resource for all students.

We were pleased to share the excellent video ‘Can we Talk?’

The film is made by our fellow Edmund Rice School - St Mary’s Christian Brothers Grammar School in Belfast who are promoting positive mental health throughout their school.

We really recommend you check out their video and read about how they have been highlighting mental health issues and trying to remove the stigma around talking about mental health for young men. Another amazing school in the Edmund Rice Network.

‘Can we talk?’ reiterates the message that there is always someone in St Mary’s to listen should you need.



St Boniface’s College

Space Week

The week of December 16th is a week dedicated to Space and the Universe our Lord created.

During the week, the school will host the NASA Lunar Loan - provided by the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council.

The moon rock will be examined by students, staff and parents from St Boniface’s - as well as their sister school Notre Dame, and the six Catholic primary schools in Plymouth - St Paul’s, St Joseph’s, St Peter’s, Keyham Barton, Holy Cross and Cathedral.

An invitation to our Edmund Rice brother schools has been sent to the ERO office.

Look out for an update in the next edition of Presence or follow along on our school social media feeds @stbonifaces on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.



Year 7 Buckfast Retreat

Over 2 weeks each September, our new Year 7 students accompanied by Year 11 Big Brothers spend time at Buckfast Abbey for a spiritual development retreat.

During the days away, the boys work with our Chaplain - Fiona Hutchings, to explore their faith and look for ways to recognise the Lord’s presence in their lives.

They take part in team-building activities, work with the Abbot and his team of monks to learn about life in the Abbey and eat together the food the Year 11 students make for them. It’s a wonderful experience for all involved.

St Boniface’s has long ties with the Abbey, having had the entire school evacuated there during World War II.



St Boniface’s College

Drop Down Days

To enhance the PSHEE curriculum, St Boniface’s have included four drop down days into their calendar, which are highly focused days allowing students to experience an enriched series of workshops linked to key themes in the curriculum.

- Day 1 - Mental health and wellbeing
- Day 2 - Being financial savvy
- Day 3 - Preparing for the future
- Day 4 - Keeping yourself safe

This month, the Finance Drop Down Day went very smoothly. Students often asked for guidance on wages, how taxes work, saving for mortgages, learning about insurance, and budgeting. The catering department even offered a workshop to create a meal for under 30p a head... and it was delicious and nutritious!

Ch, Ch, Ch, Changes

Inspired by our brothers at St Aiden’s

We’re very excited to have changed our assembly schedule drawing inspiration from St Aiden’s, which allows each form group the opportunity to deliver themed assemblies over a week.

This will involve students a great deal more in the process.

We are also taking this opportunity to drive forward with our newly designed House System.

The Houses at St Boniface’s are named for Plymouth Bishops: Barrett (red), Grimshaw (yellow), Keily (blue).

The colours of the houses are reflected in our school badge.



St Boniface’s College

The Plymouth Coastguard Rescue Team visited students at St Boniface’s Catholic College recently to teach them about HM Coastguard and their role as the 4th emergency service.

Concerns about being safe near the water were made clear, using real life examples of local people who have been involved. The team talked about their duties, the importance of being available and ready to aid those in need, and the impact their job has had on their own lives.

As Plymouth is Britain’s Ocean City, the role of HM Coastguard is ever more present in all our lives.

Year 11 student Owen Godfrey said “I was really interested in the role the Coastguard play in making our coastline safe. Listening to their stories really made me think how fortunate we are to have access to such a service”.

Tombstoning - a popular pastime for some in the summer - was discussed, and repercussions not only on their own safety, but the impact on family and friends. A mixture of storytelling, photographs and newspaper articles, along with a video news report, really helped students understand how dangerous the activity can be.

One fact that stuck with the children was that 50% of adults don’t know to call 999 when they need the Coastguard, and the children were asked to test their parents to make sure as many people know as is possible.

Students tried on their gear - including wading suits, harnesses and helmets.

The team will be returning to the school later this year to talk to the remaining students, and also promote positive coastal activities such as coasteering.



St Edward’s College

This term has seen many exciting and inspiring events unfold at St Edward’s College, Liverpool.

In the Second week of Advent term, Year 7 enjoyed a retreat delivered by the Archdiocesan Youth ministries team, Animate. They learned about the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, Holy Mass and the Rosary in a fun and interactive way.

They were also delighted with their visit from the Edmund Rice Team, welcoming them to the global family of schools and linked organisations, raising awareness of the support which ER groups offer locally, nationally and internationally. They were inspired to become more involved.

The new Edmund Rice Advocacy groups take place as an enrichment activity for upper school students weekly and the well-attended and dynamic groups are enthusiastically involved with visits to a residential care home for the elderly, as well as upholding the tradition of assisting the Missionaries of Charity at the Seel Street convent and soup kitchen on a Sunday.

The St Edward’s Day Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral took place on Sunday 13 October, coinciding with the canonisation of John Henry Newman and pupils and students not only served as Eucharistic Ministers, altar servers and readers, but were well-supported by the college Choir and the visiting Stonyhurst choir.

The Edmund Rice Advocacy group organised the collection for the Hope+ Food Bank, an ecumenical initiative between the two Liverpool Cathedrals, advertising this at House Assemblies that week.

We celebrated our Remembrance Mass on Monday 8 November and Red Wednesday on 28th November. All wore a red item and paid £1, monies raised went to ‘Aid to the Church in Need’.

We are preparing for our Advent Service of Carols and Readings at the end of term. Well done to all who have been involved and to the newcomers to the college for an inspiring and dynamic opening to the academic year at St Edward’s College.

Mrs Anne Fitzgerald

St Joseph’s College

World Scholars Cup

This account is by Mahnoor Kamran from St Joseph’s College, Stoke-on-Trent, one of a team of three who represented the school in the World Scholars Cup. Having won one of the National Rounds the team travelled to Manila in the Philippines to compete in the Global Round against 300 other schools from around the world.

As the sun lay heavy, and the inevitable traffic paved away, the girls from St Joseph’s College and Ms Cooke finally set foot in Manila, Philippines. On the first day, we got the chance to meet a world-renowned poet: Justin Hamm as well as to carry out a scavenger hunt in the Newport Mall - teams were separated from each other and put into groups; what a great way to socialise!

The second day is dubbed as the Triple Death Day. This consists of a multiple-choice questions test (Scholars Challenge), a collaborative writing task and team debates. The girls worked exceptionally hard from 8am to 9pm.

The third day included The Bowl (team multiple choice questions), in which all teams have clickers and lightning rounds, followed by a Talent Show and a Debate Showcase; this is where the top debaters debate in front of 700 scholars- ranging from 14 to 18 years. Mahnoor was selected as a panellist to judge the debate – a huge honour.

A few hours later, the 1,500 scholars got ready for the cultural fair, an event that solidifies diversity and the multicultural participation that the World Scholars’ Cup attracts. It is an event organized where everyone wears their country’s extravagant traditional clothes and puts on stalls and booths, full of food and souvenirs, so we can celebrate our uniqueness., all of which links to the overall theme of the competition – that of marginalization.

Remembrance Day

The beginning of Advent at St Joseph’s College saw the hosting of the Stoke-on-Trent Edmund Rice camp Christmas party.

It was fantastic to see Camp Leaders and participants re-united again for lots of fun and laughter. The event truly embodies the spirit of the Edmund Rice camp, recreated from sunnier days. Much fun was had by all.

Thank you to the leaders for giving up their time to plan and put on such a great event; making further happy memories for children who really value the time and effort of our Edmund Rice Youth volunteers.

Don’t forget to get in touch with Tom Murray if you would like to get involved with Edmund Rice camp; as a student leader or as a teacher who may be able to support the camps with your time or expertise





Year 11 St Cassian’s Retreat

In October 34 students went on a journey to what felt miles away, to a quaint village called Hungerford for a four-day retreat. This was one of the best retreats we have ever been on, and we have been on every retreat throughout the school. On reflection it made us grateful that we’ve had the opportunity to attend five retreats and it felt fitting that St Cassian’s was the last one as the team catered the whole program perfectly to our year group.

We spent lots of time in smaller groups getting to know new people and some time in larger groups thinking about our awareness in the world, our awareness to others, sustainability and living in the now. We had our phones taken of us and this was one of the best parts of the retreat as we were able to actually sit and talk to one another without the distraction or burden of our phones and social media. We have all come back really keen to return to St Cassian’s ‘Yes’ week in the summer and Mr Willis has given us a personal mission to continue to try and ‘live in the now’ and go without our phones for a couple of hours a week.

We would recommend this retreat to anyone; it came at such a crucial time and has given us the space and time to prepare ourselves mentally for our GCSEs.

October 19. Eve & Holly

We began this term with our Catholic INSET day

This was such a lovely way to start the new term; there was a genuine sense of community and togetherness. We spent the day reflecting on who we are and the importance of what we do. In particular, staff were given the opportunity to reflect upon our school mission statement, the Jesuit Virtues, our strap line, the eight essentials and our School pledge. This gave us the opportunity to share and reflect on what we believe, what we prioritise, what we do and who we become, all of which through our mission and priorities are at the core of the Catholic life of our school.

It was especially poignant to hear testimonies from past students who shared proudly what St Joseph’s had meant to them and how the community and its values had instilled a sense of passion and justice in each of them. The past students talked very openly about feeling valued and cared for on an individual level. We ended the day with a closing liturgy that allowed staff an opportunity for prayer and personal reflection, as part of the liturgy we ‘reimagined’ our school badge, each staff member adding their own mosaic of colour to the bigger picture.

“A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones, each telling its own story. Each in communion with the other. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world.”



St Joseph’s College

U15s Rugby Team head to Sale Sharks and the Salford Community Centre

On Friday 8th November 2019 the U14/15 rugby team set off to watch Sale Sharks RUFC take on Wasps in the Gallagher Premiership at the AJ Bell Stadium, Manchester. This was a fantastic opportunity and experience for many students, and it was a great way to build relationships within the team.

The team set off from St Joseph’s College at 2pm and made a visit to see Brother Ger and Brother Tony at St Sebastian’s Community Centre in Salford where they met a number of Asylum Seekers and refugees. The U15s team had a fantastic talk with a couple of Asylum Seekers/Refugees about their journey in life and why they left their Country. After their chat it was great to see everyone take part in a game of pool. The interaction was magnificent to see and certainly an eye opener for our students who held a number of stereotypical views with regards to Asylum seekers/refugees.

Once we had finished having a bite to eat with Brother Ger and Tony we set off and made our way to the AJ Bell Stadium, the home of Sale Sharks, where we then took part in a coaching clinic. The focus of the session was on defence and Georgie, who delivered the session, had the boys working hard. After the session the boys went on to flag bear for the teams when they entered the pitch at the start of the match, what a great opportunity this was and with BT Sport showing the game live, thousands could see St Joseph’s students on the pitch cheering the Sharks on.

Watching Sale get a well-deserved win really did put the icing on the cake for what really was a great trip. A huge thank you must go to Brother Ger and Tony for having us and the support from parents who provided and donated biscuits to St Sebastian’s Community Centre for the Asylum Seekers and any other members of the community who require that little bit of support and warmth in life. Finally, a huge thank you must go to Mr Lane who stepped in last minute to enable the trip to run.

Mr G Barton



Edmund Rice Camp Christmas Party

The beginning of Advent at St Joseph’s College saw the hosting of the Stoke-on-Trent Edmund Rice Camps Christmas Party.

It was fantastic to see Camp Leaders and participants re-united again for lots of fun and laughter.

The event truly embodies the spirit of the Edmund Rice Camp, recreated from sunnier days. Much fun was had by all.

Thank you to the leaders for giving up their time to plan and put on such a great event; making further happy memories for children who really value the time and effort of our Edmund Rice Youth volunteers.

Don’t forget to get in touch with Tom Murray if you would like to get involved with Edmund Rice Camps; as a student leader or as a teacher who may be able to support the camps with your time or expertise.



St Mary’s College

On Armistice Day we held a Remembrance Service on the school yard to remember the victims of war and conflict and to pay tribute to former St Mary’s pupils who were killed in action.

Their names are recorded on a plaque within the school building, where a wreath was laid in their honour. Staff and students observed a two-minute silence to mark the poignant occasion, and the Last Post was played by Sixth Form student Joshua Wright.

The names of former pupils killed in action were read out by pupils and, following the ceremony at school, members of the Combined Cadet Force visited the cemetery at SS Peter and Paul, where they placed crosses on the graves of six former pupils who were killed in World War II as well as the grave of former pupil Gerry Weston, who died in 1972. Fr Gerry was a priest with the Parachute Regiment and died in an IRA explosion at Aldershot barracks in the south of England.

Our pupils were also involved in Sefton’s civic remembrance events on Remembrance Sunday. Members of the Combined Cadet Force took part in the official ceremony at the Five Lamps memorial in Waterloo, whilst the school’s Symphonic Wind Band played during another civic remembrance event at the War Memorial in Alexandra Park in Crosby.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.**





St Mary’s College

St Mary’s pupils go back in time to celebrate school centenary

Pupils at St Mary’s College in Crosby enjoyed a history lesson with a difference recently when they went back in time to celebrate the school’s centenary.

Although the college has been marking its 100-year milestone with events throughout 2019, a special week of celebrations was organised to mark its actual birthday. It was on Monday 22nd September 1919 that St Mary’s - then called the Catholic Institute of Crosby - opened its doors for the first time, with an initial intake of just over 80 boys.

The centenary celebrations included Back in Time lessons throughout the week which gave students the opportunity to learn about the teaching and learning methods of the past. In addition, Year 7 pupils dressed up in period clothes to re-enact the first-ever school day at St Mary’s, and to pose for photos outside Claremont House, the original school building that is still in use as the school’s Bright Sparks nursery today.

Other highlights of the week included a Back in Time lunch for lower school pupils, inspired by the so-called Peace Parties that were widely held throughout the UK in 1919 to mark the end of the Great War. Historic tasty treats on the lunch menu included ham and cucumber sandwiches, buttered swede, crab pot, crumpets with lemon curd and scones with jam. The week of celebrations concluded with a whole-school Mass at St Helen’s Church in Crosby, which was celebrated by Bishop Tom Williams and attended by pupils and staff from St Mary’s College and Preparatory School.

All students had been given a centenary T-shirt as a keepsake which they wore at the Mass, and at a celebration lunch back at the school which followed the service. The festivities concluded with all College pupils and staff being photographed in the shape of a giant 100 from the first-floor window of Claremont House, the building where it all began a century ago.

St Mary’s Principal, Mike Kennedy, commented: “We’ve had some fantastic celebration events throughout the year, and this week of special activities was equally successful”.

“As well as being a lot of fun it was lovely for the whole school community to join forces and celebrate this special and memorable occasion together.”



Reverse Advent Calendar.

For the second year now St Mary’s College has organised a reverse advent calendar charity event.

This year they are collecting much needed items for South Sefton Foodbank, an organisation that the College has long supported and where students have consistently volunteered over the years.

After asking the organisers for the most required items, the school advertises to its pupils and families what item will be brought in on what day. The idea behind such a project is that Advent becomes a time of giving and thinking about others.

The first few days, reported on here, have been a resounding success with heaps of food items donated each day. As students know what is coming next, they are able to plan ahead in terms of what to bring in.

The school has have taken in around 70 boxes of cereal, 80 packets of rice and pasta and 40 tins of soup!

This event continues for 24 days in total, collecting the urgent items required by the food bank.

Mr P Devine

£10 Challenge!

It’s the sixth year that I have decided to run ‘The £10 Challenge’.

This involves students having to convert an outlay of just ten pounds to the largest profit they can, they invest this money in raw materials or stock and then sell it at a profit, most of the gains are donated to charity.

I run this event as it appeals both in my capacity as Head of Business Studies – it is amazing to see how enthusiastic and enterprising some of the students, (mostly the youngest ones!) are and also as a keen supporter of many charities. Usually we run this as one of the College’s Lenten charity activities but this year I thought I would try it earlier in the school year, on the run up to Christmas, whilst the Year 7s are still full of energy! Students have mainly focused on ways of selling sweets this year, very successfully, one pupil has already broken the £200 mark (November week 2).

The winning team is the one that has turned the greatest profit. The winning pupil receives 10% of the overall profit and chooses which charity will benefit from the remaining total sum.

As we ‘gift aid’ the money, the selected charity gets a 20% government bonus and everyone is happy.

All participants get a certificate and house points.



EDMUND RICE NETWORK: EVENTS CALENDAR FOR SCHOOLS 2020

Useful dates

What	When	Where
Chairs of Governors Meeting	20 Jan 5-7pm	Woodeaves
Heads Meeting	22 Jan 2-4 pm	Woodeaves
ERI Youth Ambassadors Visit to Geneva	27-28 Jan	Geneva
Pre-Immersion Student Gathering	1 Feb	St Joseph's
Staff Advocacy Workshop	3 Feb	Woodeaves
Joint INSET day Senior Schools	7 Feb	St Anselm's
ASIST course	17-18 Feb	Stoke
Street Retreat	27-28 Feb	Manchester
Post Immersion Student gathering	7 March	St Anselm's
Network Gathering	10 March 6.30 – 8.30	Woodeaves
Student Council Conference Seniors	12 March am	St Edward's
Student Council Conference Preps	16 March	St Joseph's Prep
Zambia Adult Immersion	4-16 April	Zambia
EREBB Congress	27 Apr- 5 May	Cape Town

Stay up to date with the latest network news and events on our website
www.edmundriceengland.org

or follow us on our social pages

Facebook Edmund Rice England | Twitter @edmundrice_eng | Instagram @edmundriceengland