

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2015



M.P.A
MUSLIM PARENTS ASSOCIATION
HIGH WYCOMBE

Helping to raise standards in education



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On this Joyous Occasion of
Eid-ul-fitr

*May Allah bless you
with Happiness
and Grace your home with
Warmth and Peace*

EID MUBARAK



Eid Mubarak: We have passed the longest day of the year (21 June) and yet it does not seem like summer. Nevertheless, as the schools head towards the summer break the Muslim community is also reaching the end of the month of Ramadan, with first day of the month of Shawaal, when Eid ul Fiter is celebrated, likely to fall on Friday, 17 July or Saturday 18 July.

On the surface Ramadan is a month of abstinence from food and drink from dawn to dusk, which is often met with the bemused remark of *“What, you can’t even drink water..?”* At the most basic level, Ramadan is a relatively strict fast where absolutely nothing is consumed until sunset. However, at the essence of the month is the phrase, (translated from the Qur’an) which states **‘Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint.’**(2:183). Hence, the reality is that the month is one of personal reflection, prolonged prayers in congregation and in solitude, and a heightened awareness of those less fortunate than us. The twenty-nine or thirty days are a way of reorienting our habits and realigning ourselves to the Qur’anic principles of living balanced lives

where our spirituality is raised, and physical desires are decreased.

Giving to charity in whatever form is a focal point during the month and as usual thousands of pounds have been donated to charity during Ramadan by the Muslims of High Wycombe. The mosques have had a collection for a charity almost every other night. This continues on the day of celebration ‘Eid-ul- Fitr’ when providing for those in need is an essential part of starting the day’s festivities. What is celebrated at the end of the month is not quite “thank goodness we can eat and drink all day”, but it is a celebration for having had the opportunity to experience the month of fasting whilst rediscovering our direction. So a very **Happy Eid Mubarak** to everyone.

Remembering Srebrenica: July also saw the 10th anniversary of the 7/7 atrocities committed on the London transport systems when 52 people lost their lives to mindless terrorist action. However, it was on 11 July 1995 that an act of genocide was committed in Europe since the Second World War. This massacre of unarmed men and boys is known as the ‘Srebrenica genocide’. According to Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, David Rohde, in the spring of 1993, the UN Security Council declared Srebrenica the world’s first internationally protected ‘safe area’. With Bosnian Serb forces poised to overrun the enclave of 60,000 Bosnian Muslims. The six republics which formed Yugoslavia since the Second World War started to disintegrate in 1991. The Serb ultra-nationalists drove Muslims and Croats out of parts of Bosnia and Croatia respectively and by the spring of 1993 Srebrenica was one of half a dozen surrounded towns across Bosnia where the Muslims were besieged by the Serb forces. Srebrenica was declared a safe area by the UN, but the international community failed to provide the military resources necessary. By July 1995 there were only 400 lightly armed and poorly supplied Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica, which led to the Serb forces launching a major offensive to take the town, which fell and led to the town being emptied of Muslims, who were then separated into men and young boys and the rest. In the 10 days from 11 July 1995 8,372 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were killed by the Serb forces in a systematic, barbaric, brutal and calculated way, with rape used as weapon of war on thousands of women. This is the Srebrenica genocide. See article by a Wycombe High School girl on page 3.

The Wycombe Sharing of Faiths also organised a meeting at the United Trinity Reform Church, London Road, High Wycombe, on Saturday, 11 July, on the theme of ‘Remember Srebrenica - Living the lessons 20 years on’

This was a well-constructed programme of words, pictures and poetry and explained how Srebrenica, an integrated society that disintegrated and asked whether we can learn from the genocide and victims’ lives? A couple of people who had recently visited Bosnia gave their impressions about the Srebrenica massacre and how it has affected the women and children left without men folk and how the communities are rebuilding but without the trust which existed among neighbours before the disintegration of Yugoslavia. A lot of young people were present and the talk by Sahir Nawaz, a young undergraduate, was much appreciated.

Narrowing the attainment gap: The Bucks County Council's Select Committee Report about the gap which exists between high and low attainment groups in Buckinghamshire has not diminished significantly and practical ways to reduce this gap are still being explored.

Whilst it is true that the LA has grasped the nettle, it is not very clear as to how long it is going to take for the gap to be reduced in a meaningful manner. The 2014-15 Standards report points to slight advancements in raising standards, but in essence nothing appears to have changed measurably.

The MPA is aware that it is not something which can be addressed in a short space of time and yet when you look around the country you find that many schools have been moved from 'special measures' to being considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted and many inner city schools, with substantial numbers of BME children, have not just reached the national average for GCSE success but have done even better. So it is time the usual excuses were not put forward to explain the gap in the levels of achievement of mainstream and BME, especially Pakistani origin pupils. Can we learn something from others?

School Places: this year the MPA has been approached by a larger than usual number of parents who were dissatisfied with the way their children have been allocated places in primary and secondary schools. In some cases young children have been allocated places in schools which are often on the other side of the town and in some cases siblings have been placed in schools miles apart. The Admissions team at the LA seem to think they have done well under the circumstances!

Wycombe High School Honours the Fallen Men and Boys of Srebrenica

On Friday 5 June, two teams of footballers from Y7-9 played a match, refereed by Mr John O'Brien, in memory of the Srebrenica massacre in 1995. All these students were then invited to Westminster Abbey on Monday 6 July to attend a formal service.

The Srebrenica massacre is viewed as the worst European atrocity since World War Two, and is the most recent genocide in Europe, having occurred just 20 years ago. Srebrenica is a small town located close to the east border of Bosnia. In addition to Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina constituted a kingdom known as Yugoslavia.



The Bosnian population are of three main religious groups: Catholic Christians, Orthodox Christians and Muslims. These religious communities coexisted peacefully for hundreds of years, and between WW2 and the 1990s they lived together peacefully.

Tension built up after Josip Broz Tito, the Communist leader of Yugoslavia, died in 1980. This led to the formation of the aforesaid countries, but conflicts perpetually got worse. This then led to a war between the Croats, Serbs and Bosnians, lasting from 1992 to 1995. During this period, Sarajevo, the capital, suffered 1,475 days of military siege; this is almost four years.

Dutch United Nations troops failed to protect the town of Srebrenica in 1995, despite having previously declaring it as a safe zone in 1993; the Bosnian Serb army besieged Srebrenica, which was made up of mainly Bosnian Muslims. 8,372 men and boys were killed in an organised manner, first being separated from women and children, and

cooperated with UN troops while pretending the men would be taken to a safer place where they would be exchanged.

Up to 15,000 males who lacked faith in the deployed Dutch troops attempted to walk through the hills in pursuit of another safe zone and regain contact with those left in the Bosnian Muslim forces. This journey later became known as the 'Death March' or 'The Column'. The majority of these people were unarmed and thence defenceless against the Bosnian Serbs. They were attacked while trying to escape, and then taken captive to be executed elsewhere.

General Ratko Mladic declared, "The time has come to take revenge on the Muslims." His speech displays the 'purpose' of the Bosnian Serbs' siege was to eradicate the Bosnian Muslims situated in the area.



Following their heinous crimes, the Bosnian Serbs dug up the mass graves and reburied the corpses of the innumerable people they executed in many more smaller sites to avoid being charged by the international community with war crimes. However, many mass graves have been located by various organisations such as the Bosnia Missing Persons Institute, enabling people to regain their identities and be reburied with dignity. There are still countless relatives and survivors who await their loved ones to be found in order to honour them with proper burials. The former Bosnian Serb President, Radzan Karadzic, is currently on trial in the international criminal court for war crimes.

The European Union announced 11 July as the official Srebrenica Memorial Day in 2009, so the world can collectively commemorate and honour the people affected by the genocide in 1995. Srebrenica Memorial Day is a time for us to remember those who were killed, as well as their relatives who are left behind. It gives us an opportunity to appreciate the value of tolerance, and ensure we are knowledgeable enough to help create an equal society in future. *Ambar Yousuf Y10, Austen 2*

Listen to 'The World of Education' - Taleem Ki Dunya Every Sunday, on High Wycombe's Awaaz Radio (107.4FM) between 10AM & 12 NOON.

World of Education tries to inform the members of the Asian community in general and the Pakistani community in particular, about the importance of education with a particular emphasis on informing the 'hard to reach' community.

If you are interested in taking part in a future programme or have some topics or ideas about raising educational achievement levels then get in touch with Rafiq Raja: raja@awaazradio.com

Eid Greetings from Cressex

David Hood, Head Teacher at Cressex offers his good wishes to all of the readers of the MPA Newsletter, both for Eid and the remainder of the summer. David has also stated that any reader (and the editor!) would be very welcome to come and see us "in action". You just need to contact the school for an appointment.

Greame Kilner, Headteacher of Highworth Combined School & Nursery Appraises Us About the Last Academic Year

July this year is not only the month in which Ramadan ends, but also the month when schools reach the end of the academic year. Highworth has had both a very successful year, and a very busy one. After over a year of anticipation, we were finally inspected by OFSTED in the autumn term. Inspections are stressful for all schools, and we had a very intensive two days during which the OFSTED team examined every element of our school. However, we were delighted with the outcome - particularly receiving a grade of "Outstanding" for pupil behaviour and safety. We are extremely proud of our pupils. The extremely high standards of behaviour, racial integration and harmony, which impressed the Inspectors, are evident week in, week out. This, combined with their self-confidence is undoubtedly a real strength of our school, and one of the things which makes Highworth such a special place to both study and work.

For many years now, our school has been oversubscribed but this year, for the first time ever, there were pupils who lived inside our catchment area but who were unable to gain a place. Several people have asked about whether we intend to expand, and this was something which our governors considered. However they decided against expansion because they felt it would change the nature of our school and feared that if we admitted an additional year group, the extra 200 pupils would have a negative impact on the very qualities which we hold so dear.

The inspection success carried us through the following months and although we are really looking forward to the summer break, both staff and pupils have retained a feeling of achievement. Looking to the future, our school will be twenty years old next year. We are already considering how we will celebrate the occasion, but I am sure that the celebrations will extend into the local community and hope that everyone who has links with our school be they ex pupils, ex parents, or ex members of staff will join in with the celebrations.

As we approach both the end of Ramadan, and the end of the school year I would like to wish all readers "Eid Mubarak", and all pupils and parents a very enjoyable summer.

Science & Technology Quiz

It is believed that many people do not know answers to the simple science questions. Test yourself and see how many answers you get right.

- 1 All radioactivity is man made! True or False?
- 2 Electrons are smaller than Atoms! True or False
- 3 Lasers work by focusing sound waves. True or False
- 4 The continents on which we live have been moving their locations for millions of years and will continue to move in the future. True or False
- 5 Which of the following type of solar radiation does sunscreen protect the skin from?
X Rays, Infrared, Ultraviolet or Microwaves?
- 6 Does Nanotechnology deal with things that are extremely: small, large, cold or hot?
- 7 Which gas makes up most of the earth's atmosphere? Hydrogen, Nitrogen, carbon dioxide, oxygen
- 8 What is the main function of the red blood cells?
Fight disease in the body, carry oxygen to all parts of the body or help the blood to clot?
- 9 Which of these is a major drawback about the overuse of antibiotics?
A. It can lead to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, B. Antibiotics are very expensive, C. People will become addicted to antibiotics.
- 10 Which is an example of a chemical reaction? Water Boiling, Sugar dissolving, nails rusting?
- 11 What gas do most scientists believe causes temperatures in the atmosphere to rise?
Carbon dioxide, Hydrogen, Helium, Radon, or a mixture of carbon dioxide and oxygen?
- 12 Which natural resource is extracted in a process known as 'fracking'?
Coal, Diamonds, Natural Gas or Silicon?

Answers on the bottom of Page 7

Highcrest Earn Holly's Gratitude

Highcrest teamed up with Holly the hearing dog to raise £125 at Tesco in town this month in our latest initiative to raise some money for local people. The group of 13 Year 8 students helped fill shoppers' bags at Tesco in the Eden Centre in aid of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Highcrest has been supporting the Saunderton-based charity this year, and this was the latest event in a series of fundraising initiatives that have raised hundreds of pounds. We attended the store along with volunteers from the charity who brought along Holly, a 20-week-old black Labrador currently in training to be a hearing dog. Dan Chandler, Head of Learning for Year 8, said: "I was both impressed and proud of the pupils who demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment in trying to raise money for a charity close to their hearts."

Student Billy Perfect, 13, said: "It's fun. I volunteered because it's for charity and I think you should always try to help." Lisa Bishop, Community Fundraising Manager for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, said: "The children at The Highcrest Academy have been enthusiastic fundraisers for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and it has been a pleasure working with them this year. We rely entirely on the generosity of individuals and groups, such as Highcrest, and I cannot thank the school and Tesco enough for supporting this bag pack."

In other news, we have been extending our cultural experiences by visiting Rome! The trip went for five days and some eager Year 8 pupils registered first to allow them to attend with the predominantly Year 11 group. The staff and students were exhausted with temperatures hitting the high 30s and many were awestruck by the sights Rome had to offer – the Colosseum and the Pantheon being just two.

Educationally, pupils have been working extremely hard for their exams and the next stages of their education. Exams have gone well and our Enrichment day on 16 July, following on from Sports Day and Celebration of Excellence, will reward the pupils for all of their efforts this academic year. A special "well done" goes to Mazhar Choudhury who has secured a top Engineering Summer School place with Cambridge University. We wish him luck, everyone a happy summer holiday and a Happy Eid. Kind regards and Eid Mubarak.

Bradley Taylor, is Performing Energetically at Two Schools

There has been much to celebrate over the past year at Chiltern Gate and Maplewood Schools. Maplewood is set on a course to move out of special measures at our next anticipated visit from HMI around October half term time, and Chiltern Gate has had news that one of the buildings is going to undergo a refurbishment which will include a change to the front of the school by September 2016. Both schools have undergone a period of change and growth, and we look forward to increasing our overall numbers after the summer holiday, opening 3 new classes.

There have been many happy occasions throughout the school year, but the school fete we organised before the period of Ramadan was such a highlight, with families from all communities coming into school and enjoying a truly inclusive afternoon. For the first time we are also marking Eid within school, and plan a celebration involving parents from all faiths on Monday 20th July. We continue to strive to welcome families from all communities into our school, and wish our Muslim friends a very happy Eid and happy summer holidays.

Bradley Taylor Headteacher. Chiltern Gate and Maplewood Schools.

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Would you like to get involved with the MPA?

Do you have an article you would like to submit?

Then please get in touch via our website mpawycombe.co.uk

Islamic Hijri Calendar

The Hijri calendar is a lunar calendar, consisting of 12 months of 354 or 355 days. As it is a lunar calendar, there is an annual drift of 10 days, which means that it is not synchronized with the seasons, with the dates being repeated every 33 years.

The current Islamic year is 1436AH (After Hijra) The Hijra calendar starts from the time the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) left the persecution of Makah and migrated to Madina.

Jane Jefferson, Oakridge School Head Shares Some Ideas for Raising Standards

It has been wonderful both to watch the children grow academically and share moments of personal achievement with them. As a school we are always complimented on the way the children conduct themselves when they are on school trips and when visitors attend our school.

We are all very excited about our school 'Mela' this year. I would like to thank the parents that have worked with our school staff to make this event possible.

We are already planning a number of information sessions for our families during the Autumn term, including an information session on how we teach phonics, a session on supporting your child with their reading and helping your child with their English and maths. Class teachers will also be running an information evening for parents. We will also continue to run our English classes for parents twice a week at school.

As the school year comes to a close I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my families for the support that they have given our school this year. I would like to wish the children that will be leaving us at the end of this term in their new schools in September. On behalf of the staff and Governing Body I would like to wish you all readers of the MPA Newsletter a very Happy Eid and safe and enjoyable summer break. I look forward to working with everyone in September as we continue to raise standards and broaden opportunities for our children.

Do you have something to write about?

If you wish to write about something then please e-mail your contribution as soon as possible. Articles should be or about 500 words; however, if there is something of a more serious nature then please limit it to one page of this Newsletter and e-mail it as soon as possible.

Quiz Answers!

1. False, 2. True, 3. False, 4. True, 5. UV, 6. Small, 7. Nitrogen, 8. Carry Oxygen 9. It can lead to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, 10. Rusting, 11. Carbon Dioxide, 12. Natural Gas

How many answers did you get correct? If you got them all, well done! If you got a few wrong, then now you know the answers to some extra science facts!



Member of the MPA Cllr Mohammed Hanif becomes Mayor of High Wycombe for 2015/16, at the weighing in ceremony in Frogmore on 23 May 2015.

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