

This year is the 75th anniversary of the last year of World War 2. Some dates, such as VE Day on 8th May, will be celebrations; other dates have been, and will be, commemorated in a very different spirit.

Monday 27th January was Holocaust Memorial Day and marks the date of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Soviet Army. Throughout the week the College held assemblies and Year 7 Religious Studies lessons focussed on the 'Shoah' or calamity of the Nazi's attempted genocide. The Holocaust is a grim reminder of what humans are capable of doing to each other and that is exactly the reason why we are required to teach it. Understanding the Holocaust is essential in helping students realise why we must treat others as equals and protect the vulnerable. Students never forget learning about the Holocaust and I hope that continues to be the case. If we succeed in that, perhaps the Jewish prayer of 'Never Again' will be fulfilled.

February was also LGBT History Month. In the 25 years I have been teaching, the shift in attitudes around LGBT issues has been nothing less than monumental. Legislation such as the 2010 Equality Act and new media attitudes have been significant in influencing change. Students who identify themselves as LGBT do so in an environment that is unrecognisable to the one that existed a quarter of a century ago. On the whole, schools and communities are much more at ease with themselves as a result. In fact the shift has been so great, that part of the point of LGBT History Month is to remind and educate students that some of our great historical figures, such as Alan Turing, had to contend with levels of prejudice that meant their contributions and identities were hidden.

LVC places huge value on enriching the students' curriculum and we are fortunate to have staff that supports that ethos. During the February half term over 120 students went on the LVC ski trip. It is a major organisational feat led by Mr Kerley, the Head of PE, and 15 other staff who gave up their break. Even before everyone gets on the coaches the LVC administration and finance teams spend hundreds of hours sorting out everything from protocols to finance. To see the students' faces when they return is wonderful and the trip is always amongst the students' top memories.

By the time you may be reading this, 40 of our Year 10 students will be on their GCSE 'Chateau' trip in France for a week. There is, quite simply, no substitute for being immersed in another culture to accelerate students' language acquisition. Having said that, as with the ski trip, it doesn't just happen. Once again the support staff at LVC have been putting in the hours with Mrs Fenn in the Finance Team bearing the brunt of the work. Schools at their best are genuinely extraordinary places where dedicated staff make special things happen for our young people – we are fortunate to have such staff working at LVC.

Mr Doug Brechin

Assistant Principal