Welcome to the first issue of the *Burwood Banter* for 2013. The year got off to a busy start with Year Level barbeques, Information Nights, Parent/Teacher interviews and Senior House Sports. Add to that Junior School Swimming, school photos, a Curriculum Day, visits from the Australian Ballet and the Junior School Easter Hat Parade and the term has gone so fast it feels almost as if it is over before it has begun. It must be true that time flies when you’re having fun! We wish all our families a happy and healthy holiday.

New friends, new clothes, new buddies, new routines and new experiences—our Prep students have taken all this in their stride as they readily settled to life at school. After an extensive Transition Program run last year, our Preps arrived with a very good understanding of what life at school would be like. Already well known to their teachers, Miss Morgan and Miss Webb, the students quickly gained the confidence to mix with each other and the older students in the school, a process which was further enhanced by spending time with their Grade 3/4 buddies. It is hard to gauge who looks forward to buddy sessions more, the older or younger members of the pairings—though the truth is probably the anticipation is equal for both levels.

Attending Assemblies, changing rooms for specialist classes, taking messages to the office, heading off to the garden for Science and exercising the imagination in Developmental Play - in just eight weeks our Preps have outgrown the tag of “new” and feel fully at home in the Burwood Heights family.

It may have broken climate records for the longest March hot spell ever documented, but the sizzling weather had very little impact on the Junior school students as they began their swimming program. The cool waters of the Syndal pool were just the place to cool down and learn what is a vital skill for life in Australia—water safety. Whether a novice or an experienced water baby, all students benefitted from the classes and the protection being able to survive in water offers.
How fast the first term has gone for our Kindergarten children! The Three-Year-Old group were happy to farewell parents and grandparents in order to test their green thumbs in the garden, with watering and picking tomatoes being very popular. They also tried their hands at roller-painting, enjoying the independence of getting their own smocks on, choosing paint and getting down to “work”. The Four-Year-Old group were quickly making new friends and helping each other to trace around their bodies to make life-size self-portraits which they then decorated. Despite being the “littlest” members of our community, they found it a long way to cut all around the tracings to complete their paper “double”. Easier on the fingers was the drumming which took place during the Rhythm Fun incursion, where the children were exposed to the ideas of beat, tempo, pitch and rhythm and—most importantly—fun through music.

Which came first? - the chicken or the egg?

They may not know the answer to this age-old question, but some of our Level Four students know a great deal more about the “real” world after the first two of our Real Life Adventures. Led by Mr Rhyder and Mr Le Ray, the Adventurers, senior students selected after submitting written applications, set out to see examples of science in real world settings.

The first outing took students to an egg farm, an eye-opening and, for some, confronting experience as they saw sheds full of chickens in cages eight rows high and 200 deep. The students saw the packing sheds and learnt why nearly all eggs sold at supermarkets are brown—the white ones are sent away to become powdered eggs for use by large scale food manufacturers. They also had their brains boggled at the thought of counting all the chickens and all the egg boxes, both of which have to be done once a month.

Open-air was the order of the day for Adventure Two, when a second group of students visited Maroondah Dam and its catchment. Not only did students take in beautiful views, they learnt the importance of preserving the catchment area to maintain water quality and volume. They also had the opportunity to build their own small dam on the Yarra, testing the power of even a small flow of water.

As well as learning more about science related topics, the students are also exposed to the fundamentals of economics, as it is up to them to raise funds to help cover the costs of the trips—and there can be nothing
Level Four students have long gone on an “adventure” camp, but this year the adventure took place in an entirely new location – Melbourne! With many diverse destinations literally outside the door of their Franklin Street hostel, the campers were spoilt for choice when choosing places to visit.

Aside from the usual excitements of sharing rooms and being away from home, the students thoroughly enjoyed aspects of the urban environment such as taking the tram, walking through arcades and laneways and exploring retail hubs such as Melbourne Central.

The attractions of the capital were also of great interest, whether it was Parliament House, the Shrine of Remembrance or the Australian collection at the National Gallery of Victoria. Many students found the Immigration Museum fascinating, and those that have come from overseas were glad the days of travelling steerage on a square rigger or second class steamer are long gone. At the Museum they went on a different journey, this time through the human body.

Topping many students “best” list was the visit to Screenworld at ACMI, where the Super Mario brothers reign supreme, while others enjoyed the calm of the Botanic Gardens. Happily, they can now take their families in to the city to explore their favourites together!
Getting to Know You......

Our school year got off to a social start when each year level held a barbecue for families to meet each other and staff. With no rainy Mondays in February, we were lucky with the weather and everyone had the chance to have fun in the garden with friends old and new. Our photos show the Kindergarten children exploring the new environment and testing their skills with new challenges.

HAVING A FIELD DAY!! (and there was track too!!)

Athletic sports of all sorts were the order of the day when Levels Three and Four took part in the annual House Sports in late February. Determination, talent, persistence, encouragement and sportsmanship were all on display as students did their best to garner enough points to see their House placed first.

Excellent performances from Emma, Eddie, Jasmine, Alex, Yasmyne, Mahir, Enola and Heath saw them named Age Level Champions with Yasmyne, Enola, Mahir and Heath sharing the honours as overall Champions. Many students went home with a chest full of ribbons as a reward for their speed, power in throwing or strength in jumping, be it high or long.

The highlight for many of the students and parents who came as spectators was the annual Staff vs Parents vs Students relay. Last year, in an upset to some (no names, Mr Miet), the Parent team won and a student team was second. This year, despite a tenacious attempt by the parents, the staff team again triumphed.

While all students would have gone home happy with their efforts, the biggest smiles belonged to those in Florey who were once again declared House Champions—well done to you all!