

Speech by Mr Mark Rosevear, Principal

The words, 'school spirit', mean something different to each person. I believe one way spirit is fostered is by meeting and sharing experiences together. That is why we are here today, the whole school and our guests, to celebrate the school's 110th anniversary. We need to come together more. This is why I have involved Years 5 and 6 in this year's Interhouse Day on Wednesday. How can we have an event for the whole school without our oldest students? I do not think we can, and I hope you all enjoy yourselves so that we can build on events such as these in the future.

Many of you know that The British Schools was originally two different schools, even if they were next door to each other, and the school was in Pocitos. Then there was a boys' school and a girls' school, with a mixed kindergarten which happened to be in the girls' school. Over the years, the numbers of students increased and this meant we needed more physical space. By 1958, the 50th anniversary, the School had become too big for one site, so the Senior School moved to our current site in Carrasco. In 1965, the Junior School moved here as well, but it was not until 2007 that both schools came together formally as one under the title of The British Schools. We are very fortunate to have all our space and buildings, which enables us not only to have good classrooms to learn, but excellent facilities for sport and the arts as well as other activities.

This is the 110th anniversary of The British Schools, which means it was founded in 1908. It is interesting to see what was happening in the world in 1908.

- There were various events that were crucial to the buildup of World War 1, including Austria Hungary seizing Bosnia, a German Naval Bill, and talks between the Tsar and the King to make more plans in case of attack. For those of you who know history, 2018 marks 100 years since the end of that life changing conflict.
- Henry Ford introduced the Model T Ford car, which made mass transport possible and has been named the most influential car ever built. Some people criticised Ford's development of the motor car. When he was asked why he didn't listen to those people, he famously replied, 'if I had asked them what they wanted, the majority would have said a faster horse'.
- A Mr and Mrs Jacob become the first people to drive across the United States. It took them 35 days.
- The SOS Morse code signal, which has saved hundreds of thousands of lives, was introduced.
- Albert Einstein presented his quantum theory of light.
- Mr Claudio Williman was the 20th President of Uruguay.
- Herbert Asquith, the man who would eventually lead Britain into World War 1, became Prime Minister, while William Howard Taft became the 27th President of the United States. He probably did not send a tweet to say he was 'really smart'.
- Orville Wright became the first man to fly a plane and remain in the air for one hour.
- River Plate, a team that no longer exists, won the Uruguayan football championship, with Montevideo Wanderers the runners up.
- The 1908 Olympics were in London, and 15 a side rugby was one of the events. Australia beat Cornwall in the final – and that is not fake news.

Whenever there is an anniversary, inevitably people think about the past. Sometimes words such as tradition, history and culture are used interchangeably, and sometimes incorrectly. Traditions always change. In Europe as little as 300 years ago it was a tradition to burn witches on public holidays. Now we tend to go shopping, play sport or go to the beach, which shows how much more civilised we have become.

History is important, for it helps us to understand how we have arrived at the place we are currently at. The past was the past, and it was different. It is good to learn from the past, but we cannot live in it, nor can we recreate it. We use it to fashion the present and thus the future. We don't know what the future will bring, but we must try to prepare ourselves for it as much as we can. We can then look forward to the next anniversary, with both excitement and confidence.