

Principal's Message: Assembly: Friday 12th July 2019

In the 1960s an Australian film maker called Bruce Brown was searching for the perfect wave. He found it at St. Francis Bay and named the waves 'Bruce's Beauties'. In 1966 he produced the classic surf cult movie "The Endless Summer" which launched many thousands of surfboards and put St. Francis Bay on the map. (Click [HERE](#) to view the movie). The video we have just seen is set in the 1960s and I am sure you will all be amazed how things have changed since then. For one thing, the place where this video was filmed is not Cape St. Francis as mentioned in the video but St. Francis Bay. Cape St. Francis is also home to an excellent surf spot known as "Seals".

Over the past holidays I spent the last 10 days at St Francis Bay, and during that time "Bruce's Beauties" were pumping and attracted many surfers who were in the area to compete in the Billabong Challenge at Jeffreys Bay, including top SA surfer Jordy Smith, who is featured in the second part of the video.

For Bruce's Beauties to function the conditions need to be perfect - the tide, the wind and the swell.

I could not help thinking that in many ways surfing is a good metaphor for life. It is true that we often ride the perfect wave of life, everything is in synch for us and we enjoy a perfect ride. Our skills are also at the level where we can make optimum use of that perfect wave. If we relate this to our own situation here at Bishops, some of you boys are on that perfect wave. You have also honed your skills so that you are in a position to optimise that opportunity due to talent, hard work and effort in academics, sport, music, drama or any other activity. You will know what I am talking about - sometimes this is referred to as being 'in the zone'. Not only are you in the perfect place in terms of your performance, but other aspects of your life such as your faith, friendships and family relationships all seem to be in place.

The reality though is that, just like 'Bruce's Beauties' which are a rarity rather than the norm, so our lives are not often perfect. The surf is often choppy and the waves not perfect. The level of skill of a surfer is also very variable; he has to begin as a 'grommet' and along the way will have many a 'wipe out'. The genuine committed surfer will not only surf in perfect conditions. He will go out in all kinds of conditions and test his skills in less than perfect surf. When the South Easter blows the surf is choppy and unpleasant, but this will not deter the true surfer. It is by surfing in difficult conditions that we will benefit when those perfect waves come along. In the process the surfer will not only develop skills, but resilience and determination too.

Life is like that too. We cannot give up when our own circumstances are less than perfect, we need to persevere and overcome. Most often we are confronted by the "choppy seas" of life. The finest steel is tempered by fire. We also have to practise hard and work hard to improve our skills.

The sport of surfing, just like life, has its rules and code of ethics. For example, it is totally unacceptable for a surfer to 'drop in' on another surfer on a wave. It is a sport which has a set of rules which is self-regulated by the surfers. Wouldn't our own lives be so much more productive if we also applied this principle of self-discipline?

It is so true that we can learn most lessons in life from the natural environment around us and I hope that this illustration I have used today will be useful to each of you.