



Reaching out into the community

By Joanna Harper

Towards the end of the Christmas term Queen Mary's launched a new government backed scheme giving sixth formers the opportunity to become involved with helping looked after children with their education. Many people applied and underwent a series of training sessions in which they learnt how to best communicate and handle their role as a 'study buddy'. A key slogan throughout the training was "empathy not sympathy." The number of participants was cut down to a final thirteen who went on to meet the young people. This was done through a social event with food, music and introductory games. Towards the end everyone exchanged contact details in order to arrange future meetings. Hopefully the scheme will be a great future success and offer a vital service to Walsall.

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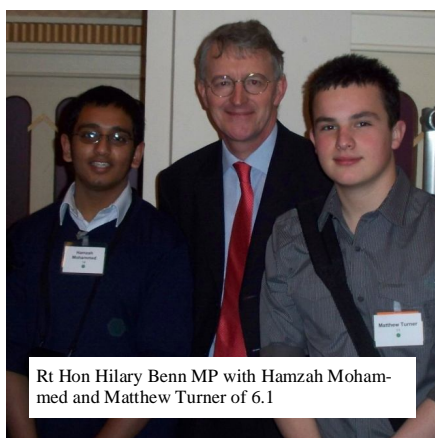
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Students in dialogue with political heavyweights



Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP with Hamzah Mohammed and Matthew Turner of 6.1

By Joanna Harper

On 21st March five sixth formers had the opportunity to attend a national conference in Leeds organised by the Young Muslims Advisory Group. Whilst there they interacted with several well known politicians such as Rt Hon Hilary Benn and Rt Hon Hazel Blears and this important event had a lot of media coverage. They took part in key discussions such as how to

prevent violent extremism and encourage community cohesion. The students reported that it was a well organised and enjoyable day and that they were very pleased to be able to attend.

A letter from **Javid Akram**, Walsall's Ethnic Minority Achievement Consultant:

"The QM students really appreciated the opportunity given to them to participate in this unique event. I was extremely proud of them and how they responded when Hilary Benn MP asked why they had come to the event – confident and articulate individuals. I was privileged to see students from different ethnicities and religions able to discuss, debate and argue controversial issues in a mature and informed manner. They have some really good ideas of what they would like to see in Walsall and I promise to support them in their ideas."



Black Comedy: "A resounding success"

By Matthew Wells

Recently, the school put on a performance of Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy*, a farcical comedy that explores the effect that loss of light has on a group of people. Unusually for a school play it was directed and organised not by the staff but by the pupils themselves. The play consisted of a cast of talented sixth formers with support from the Tech Crew. A lot of effort was put into the production; the pupils had been rehearsing for a year prior to the performances, which took place on the 26th and 27th of February. With Jonathon Farrow playing the lead, ably supported by the cast of James Ferris, James Whitbrook, Laura Wright, Hannah Butler, Kate Morgan, Ed Mott and Edmund Hurst, the play was widely proclaimed as a success, with large audiences on both nights. The director said that the performance went fantastically, and praised both the cast and the tech crew for their sterling efforts, which will hopefully set the benchmark for any future productions.



Bollywood evening brings spice to QM

By Matthew Wells

Towards the end of this term, the QMA's Taste of the East Committee presented a Bollywood Night consisting of a number of live performances. The evening was a huge success. Every ticket was sold and the guests enjoyed a dazzling array of entertainments including a guest appearance from Shinh, a lead singer with the well known group DCS, and two of QM's very own dohl players, Rupesh Patel and Suraj Desai. The event lasted until almost midnight, with the guests dancing on the floor below the stage, and with a variety of food served at the buffet provided. It was a hugely enjoyable event, which will hopefully be repeated in the future. The work of the QMA in organising these events is much appreciated.

Allen wows the audience at the Music Competition



James Allen won the Annual Music Competition with his beautiful rendition of Rachmaninov's Piano Elegie. He impressed the judges and the audience with the dexterity of his playing and the emotional depth that he brought to the piece. He fought off very strong competition from last year's joint winner Hannah Butler, who again showed tremendous expertise on the Saxophone, and James Smythe who dazzled with the cornet. The Intermediate Prize went to Gregg Gollett whose performance of Damien Rice's 'Volcano' showed real talent.

Dramatic victory for quiz team in Junior Challenge

Mr Elsdon reports

Three teams of four pupils visited KES in Edgbaston to represent the school in the regional final of the Junior Quiz Challenge (the schools equivalent to University Challenge). Team C (Bradley Adams, Rahul Gonglore, Jaskaran Koli and Samprit Bains) impressed in the first round by beating KES 1st team and finished 5th overall. Team B (Callum McIntosh, James Gray, Matthew Elliot and John Liu) beat KES 2nd team and Bromsgrove School to qualify for the semi-final. Team A (Jacob Harding, Richard Ng, Liam Allen and Joe Clarke) also qualified comfortably for the semi-final.

Team B lost in the semi-final to KES 1st team, but rallied to finish 3rd overall. A fine achievement. QM A team comprehensively beat KE, Stratford in their semi-final and thus reached the quiz final.

Harding leads team to glory

The final was close run and exciting, but as time ran out the scores were QMGS 580, KES 590. The final starter question had not been completed however our team successfully answered and got the chance to face the bonus questions: Q1—What is the official language of the following Caribbean territories? A) Jamaica. We answered correctly. QMGS 600 KES 590. B) Cuba?. We answered incorrectly, KES got it right. QMGS 600 KES 600. The final question of the night was revealed C) Guadeloupe?. We answered correctly. The final score was therefore **QMGS 610 KES 600** and we qualify for the inter-regional final!

ANSWERS for the interested:

(A. English B. Spanish C. French)

Debating success

Matthew Turner reports

In November 2008 our senior debating team, composed of Matthew Turner and Steven Wood, took part in round one of the Midlands Schools Debating Competition at the Birmingham Midlands Institute. Thanks to weeks of research and practice with Mr Wootton, they succeeded in beating King Edward VI College Nuneaton and proceeded to the second round. After winning the next two rounds, against considerable opposition, they managed to secure a place in the final which took place at the beginning of March 2009. Four schools took part: Queen Mary's, King Edward's VI College Stourbridge, St Edward's School Cheltenham and Cheltenham Ladies' College. The team was accompanied by a host of teachers and pupils who had come to support them, including Mr Swain and Mr Lawrence. The event was very enjoyable and was even attended by The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, who presented the prizes. Our team opened the night by proposing the motion "This House believes that the BBC does not deserve its licence fee" and Matthew (the main speaker) and Steven (the second speaker) both performed their speeches to a high standard. Unfortunately the team did not manage to win the competition but still reached second place, which is an impressive feat. Steven is to be particularly commended because he was awarded the Birmingham Post Gavel, for being the best individual speaker on the night.

Who will be crowned The QMGS Apprentice?



Matthew Turner reports

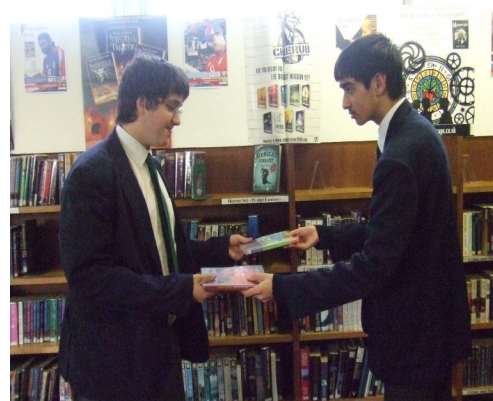
One of the new and most exciting extra-curricular activities that have been taking place this school year is The QMGS Apprentice.

In November 2008, the contest was opened to everybody in Year 12, and sixteen applicants secured places, with the chance to become the QMGS Apprentice and win the cash prize. Like on TV, every fortnight the pupils have been split into two teams, a leader has been appointed and a task has been set. The team that wins receives a prize whilst the losing project manager must choose two people to take back with him into the boardroom, and out of those three students, one of them is fired. So far, nine participants have been eliminated and only seven remain to battle for the prize.

Page turners

By Joanna Harper

On 5th March Queen Marys, along with many other schools across the country, celebrated the annual World Book Day. The occasion encourages reading throughout the school by providing an incentive to pick up a book. One of the organised events was a week long sponsored Readathon which raised two thousand pounds to donate to the Sergeant Cancer Care for Children charity and The Roald Dahl foundation. To support the objective of encouraging reading for pleasure the library has recently invested in five hundred pounds worth of new books. Mrs Nichols thoroughly enjoyed searching for suitable, interesting additions to the library. Currently, the library is promoting a new collection of Asian fiction books, such as 'Q and A', a world famous story upon which the Oscar winning film 'Slumdog Millionaire' is based. The school urges all students to visit the library in the summer term and take advantage of the exciting new reads available.



Strathdee the hero as U16s win cup

Bryce holds his nerve in penalty shoot-out

Mr Francis writes

The Queen Mary's Grammar School under 16 team secured a stunning Staffordshire cup victory. A consistently strong display saw us dominate Newcastle-under-Lyme School. QM's defence was outstanding, which meant that goalkeeper Jaggar did not touch the ball for the whole game. Unfortunately, the Newcastle goalkeeper was having the game of his life. The game was decided by a penalty shoot-out. The tension reached fever pitch as the score reached 3-3. Bryce Strathdee stepped up to coolly score the decider to bring the Staffordshire Cup back to Walsall. A glorious double triumph for QM, with the U18s having already won this competition earlier in the year.



Back row (from left) Jason Lee, Bharveer Uppal, Mandeep Mohan, Arundeepp Parmar, Amardip Rama, Hassan Sawari
Front row (from left) Manraj Dhugga, Arjan Drayton-Chana, Janak Pachchigar, Suraj Desai, Edward Baker, Bryce Strathdee, Tom Jaggar (lying at the front)

Sports Shorts

Cross-country

"The team has performed surprisingly well", says Mr. Lax. There was apprehension about the new team, as last year's star performer Peter Whitehouse had left and it was doubted whether they would be able to perform as well as before. However the A Team came fourth in their league and the B Team coming in third; it doesn't look like there will be anything to worry about. Good luck to next year's captain Daniel Threlfall.

Cricket

It has been a busy time for our enthusiastic cricket players, with the team training hard, in preparation for future matches. Mr. Taylor says that the team is shaping up well and he will soon be able to introduce cricket training on Saturdays for the sportsmen. There also seems to be some competition within the team, as if they are skilled enough to make centuries this season, which I am sure they are, they will be rewarded with professional equipment. There is also some exciting news on the horizon, a trip for the cricket team to New Zealand in 2012.!

Colours awarded

Six cross-country runners were awarded their colours this term: Andy Smith, Chris Norton, Tom Hucklebridge-Key, Sunil Verma, Matthew Porter and captain James Lavery. Hockey colours have been awarded to Alexander Dal-laway, Kavaldeep Jabbal, Jaipal Dhillon and Manveer Dhanda. Rugby colours were awarded to Ryan Christian, John Farrow, Josh Jervis, Simon Weaver, Alex Williamson and Captain Edward Mott. Congratulations to them all.

Rugby season draws to a close

Randeep Soor reports

It has been a good season for our rugby players. The 1st team progressed further than ever before in the Daily Mail Vase, a national competition. They are also about to embark on the 7s tournament and are hoping to improve upon their position from last year in the quarter finals. There was a Walsall schools' 7s tournament held at QM on the 25th March and the QM A team came first, undefeated, and the QM B team came third, only losing once. A name we should look out for in the future is Alix Taylor, who was selected for the Midlands Girls' under18 rugby squad.



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