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A Whole New World: Marians make the most of a once in a lifetime trip to China

‘High Flyers’ join community

By Randeep Soor and Joanna Harper

A brand new project has started this year at Queen Mary’s Grammar School to encourage primary school pupils from Walsall Borough to get excited about their education and aim high for their future.

As part of the school’s commitment to the wider community as part of our specialist status in Languages and Business and Enterprise, and in a bid to raise the aspirations of the youngsters of the town, we have arranged a gifted and talented project for local Year 5 children.

The “High Flyers” scheme has been organised by Mr Donnan and is being run by Mrs Phillips. The project involves pupils from nine local primary schools to attend QMGS on three afternoons a week. Here they learn new skills and get the opportunity to experience life in a secondary school environment. Mrs Phillips has arranged a wide variety of ways to stimulate the developing brains of youngsters from Aldridge, Bentley and Bloxwich. There are wide-ranging

activities planned for the pupils, incorporating different subjects. In total, 34 boys attend and all are finding it a very worthwhile experience.

The projects they are currently undertaking include photo editing and web design. These can be quite difficult at times, but that doesn’t cause a problem to these intelligent and diligent children, working under the expert guiding hand of Mrs. Phillips. Even though the work is academic in nature, the main aim is to teach them the enjoyment that learning can bring and at the same time developing their social skills by providing opportunities for them to build confidence and interact with others.

The current pupils will continue attending until October 2010, by which time we hope to see a huge difference in how the children behave, learn and interact. In the longer term we hope that the project will be repeated for other children in future year 5 cohorts and also that other schools may also be able to participate as the scheme develops.

In Sport — The future looks bright for QMGS rugby



Weather fails to dampen DofE students' spirits

Joanna Harper writes - "Tired, wet and smelly" described the sixth formers as they returned from their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Qualifying expedition in mid September. They spent a gruelling four days in the Lake District fighting their way through streams, swamps and forests. Team work was essential to navigate the correct route and keep spirits high. Although times were tough, it was good fun and is an experience that they will never forget. The participants still have to spend a significant amount of time doing some form of skill, physical recreation and service but once this is complete, they will qualify and gain a commendable achievement.



Oba outstanding as Othello

Obafemi Akinwale's (pictured above) performance in Othello will live long in the memory. He brought a ferocious intensity, balanced with a mature sensitivity, to the part of the 'Moor of Venice' in the Shakespearean tragedy that played out on the Mayfield stage. Mr Wooton had spent the past six months preparing for the production and the mainly sixth form cast tackled this most complex and difficult play with impressive commitment. The role of Othello is one of the most challenging roles in dramatic literature and demands superb verse-delivery and lashings of raw racked emotion. Obafemi coped remarkably in his successful portrayal of the gnawing jealousy and emotional and physical violence faced by the character as the drama unfolded. Jack Bridgett (pictured below) performed the psychopathic role of the evil Iago with just the right air of sinister cunning. Iago is the motor of Othello and Jack powered the plot, reducing the noble Moor to savagery by infecting him with the green-eyed monster of jealousy. It is also this character who confides in the audience, thus making them accomplices in his villainy. Jack's soliloquies were hypnotic. The audience were spellbound as the drama unfolded on the stage. Our thanks must go to Mr Wooton for all the time he willingly gave in directing the play and to the cast and technical crew who performed so impressively.



Sunley's start-ups

Global Entrepreneurship Week took place between November 17th—21st this year and Mr Sunley organised a huge range of activities to help develop the enterprising skills of the pupils at our school. A highlight of the week was a day on a virtual stock market for our Year 10 pupils. They had to work in teams to invest £100,000 profitably, as share prices and currency exchange rates fluctuated dependent on news items from the television, radio and newspaper. The week also saw the chance for this year's QMGS Apprentice teams to record a promotional video to record the plethora of activities that were taking place. One of the most inspirational moments was hearing Mr Sunley speak to the whole school in assembly about the 'QMGS Start-ups' scheme, when he declared: "The banks might not be lending any money, but I am!". He has decided to offer capital to enterprising Marians to start up their own business. This has already attracted a good deal of interest and we hope to be able to report on successful ventures in future editions.

Samosa sale raises funds

Randeep Soor reports - Upon hearing the devastating news that Indonesia had been hit by an earthquake we knew that, in whatever way we could, we must help them. In November the Charity Committee decided to raise money to help the cause by selling samosas. Initially apprehensive, we didn't know how they would go down, but we soon found out how popular they would be when 400 were sold in almost 10 minutes. A total of over £200 was raised, thanks to the donation from school, which we are grateful for. Thank you to everyone who gave their money to help the noble cause.

Creative minds claim £1000 prize

Oliver Beddard writes - After completing their coursework pieces for GCSE and A-Level Design and Technology, all pupils' work was entered into an online competition sponsored by 'Fitchett and Woollacots'. Once entered, the tables, chairs, gaming units and others were all viewable by the public on the website. The school's projects were up against fierce competition from many schools up and down the country and so it was of no great surprise when the results were revealed and the judge hadn't pinned any individual winner's rosettes onto our pieces. However the judge was impressed by the level of skill and craftsmanship of the work and commended the overall level of high quality achieved. Queen Mary's therefore were awarded the overall school prize for the highest consistent standard of work in the competition. This resulted in Mr. Hughes receiving a congratulatory phone call stating that the school had won £1000 worth of wood. This will go some way towards restocking the stock room and ensuring the same level of quality in the next generation of projects.

Fright Night at Farchers for English Dept

Matthew Wells reports - On 13th November a party of students left for Farchynys to attend a Gothic-themed weekend to help them in their understanding of this aspect of their studies. They visited such places as Cwyrn Abbey and Harlech Castle, where they read extracts from Gothic texts including "The Monk" and "Castle of Otranto". They then watched gothic films such as "Company of Wolves" and "Frankenstein" back in the safety of Farchynys. The highlights of the trip included a night time reading of "Dracula" and "The Woman In Black" on the gazebo overlooking the Mawddach Estuary, and performances by the students of scenes from "Dr Faustus" and adaptations of modern fairytales. Of particular note was the act of Alvin and the Chipmunks' "Bad Day" by Matthew Turner and Curtis Bhatoe, which had the entire party in gales of laughter. It was an enjoyable end to what will be remembered as a fantastic weekend.



So nearly the winning equation for Maths team

Mr Elsdon reports - Early in November, four members of our sixth form represented the school at the Senior Mathematics Team Competition. The team was: Jason Zhang, David Loh, Jacob Swain and Robert King. The competition is of a very high standard with most entries from either grammar schools or public schools.

There are three rounds. Throughout, the top 5 teams are announced (but not the order). The group round is made up of 10 tough questions that have to be answered in 40 minutes. We scored 48 / 60 on this round and this put us in the top five.

The cross number round saw the team consolidate their position with the same 5 teams maintaining their push.

The final round – the mini relay round, sorts out the 'sheep from the goats'. Our team was one of the top 5 teams throughout. Our team scored 40 on this round, thus showing their superiority over the vast majority of the teams present. However, Concord College from Shrewsbury were the overall winners with our team second and Wolverhampton Girls High School third. Therefore we have to wait to find out if we have qualified for the grand final in London next February.

QM land in China

Joanna Harper and Matthew Wells report

During half term, 50 Marians had the wonderful opportunity to travel to China for ten days for what was to be an unforgettable experience. The journey there took over 15 hours, but despite reaching the hotel at 1am there was little rest for the students as they woke the next morning at 6am. The first tour was around Beijing, where the students saw important sights like the Great Wall and Tiananmen Square; after two days of sightseeing the party travelled to Xian by overnight train to see the Terracotta Army, and the entertaining Tang Opera Show. Next up was Shanghai, with its renowned market where the students picked up many bargains and withstood the very aggressive sales pitches!

The highlight of the week came with the trip to Shaoxing, where the students were welcomed to

stay with Chinese families and spent a day sampling the Chinese school life, playing sports and watching performances put on by their gracious hosts. Of course the favour was returned, with a dubious rendition of “Two Become One” being performed by our very own Spice Girls: Aayushi Vias, Georgina Sumner, Joanna Harper and Rosemary Amos, as well as an enthusiastic rendition of the school song by all the group. Of course, no account of the visit would be complete without mentioning the amazing variety of food that was sampled; an assortment of traditional dishes were served each night for the students to enjoy. The trip was widely acclaimed a great success; as Joanna Harper reported, “When the last day came I was very sad to leave, but I gained a great insight into Chinese customs and will always treasure my fantastic memories of the trip”. Our thanks must go to Mr Donnan for organising the trip.



Pupils stand trial “Incredible” Glover shines

Erin Charles reports from court

On Saturday 28th November, 13 QM students found themselves in Birmingham Crown Court, participating in trials for the possession of Cannabis, and stealing. Fortunately, they weren't on the wrong side of the law; they were taking part in the regional finals of the National Bar Mock Trial Competition!

This is a nationwide law competition for pupils in years 10-13, where schools go head to head in order to compete in a Crown Court setting. The team is made up of Barristers, Witnesses, a Court Clerk, an Usher and Jurors, who all play different roles in acting out two different court cases.

This was the first year that QM had taken part in the competition, and the opposition was tough – many of the participating schools had well established team tactics, and months of preparation behind them, however we didn't let this affect our performance.

We put up a good fight in all three of their court appearances, each time attempting to convince the jury that our case was the best. An exceptional performance was given by year 11 student Bradley Glover, who was commended by the Judge as being “an incredible actor with lots of talent”.

Unfortunately, the team narrowly missed out on a place at the national finals, however the experience was incredibly enjoyable for all involved, and we are looking forward to entering a team again next year. Special thanks go to Mr Sunley, Mr Clements and Mr Ridler for all their efforts with the team.

Musical maestros' masterful performances

Mr Walton reports - The annual Music Competition took place on a cold Wednesday evening in November. Mr Toby Barnard, The Head of Music at St Peter's Collegiate School, Wolverhampton, adjudicated and was treated with some outstanding performances. As usual, the competition was in two sections: Intermediate for those who are at grade 5 or under and Senior for more accomplished players over grade 5 standard. The Intermediate section was a close contest, with Shauna Wood impressing on the flute, playing a rendition of Gluck's 'Dance of the Blessed Spirits'. The stand-out performance though was Gregg Collett's impassioned and charismatic 'Time to Kill', a self-composed guitar and voice piece. He therefore walked away with the trophy for the second year running. The Senior competition saw examples of drama and beauty in equal measure. Robert Castledine started off proceedings with a dextrous take on Fats Waller, Jacob Swain showed dazzling skill in tackling the fiendish 'Toccata' by Katchaturian. Chris Crompton also delighted the audience with his melodically beautiful performance of 'Angelina' on the electric guitar, while Georgina Sumner particularly pleased Mr Barnard by tackling Corelli's 'Sonata in F' on the recorder. The joint winners of the Senior Competition though were Richard Ng (pictured below), whose dark and dramatic 'Mira' had the audience spellbound, and James Smythe (pictured to the right), whose cornet sparkled with the beauty of Saint-Saens' 'Fantasy in E'. It was a memorable evening for those fortunate enough to have attended.



Divali dance delights

Vivek Sarin writes

On Friday the 9th of October, Queen Mary's held a Divali Dance in the school hall which many parents and pupils, including the headmaster, attended. The hall was decorated in festive lights and colourful materials, giving a beautiful ethnic atmosphere. The QMA had hired a dance instructor, who did an excellent job in teaching families how to do the Gujarati dance. Everyone was invited to form a circle which then led on to two dances being performed, the Garba and the Dandiya Raas. The food that was served was chick peas and rice with samosas and for those that couldn't handle the Indian spice: fish and chips! During the first half of the event, the instructor and his advanced dancers taught the Garba dance, and some pupils even volunteered to show how it was performed. To which everyone shortly after followed, doing a marvelous job. The second half consisted of the spectacular event of everyone performing the dandiya raas with sticks.

The night ended with a speech from the instructor, following one last group dance. Overall, everyone had an enjoyable night and we hope to set the standard again next year, making it bigger and better.



Revellers enjoy the Dandiya Raas

Fusties lead the way in rugby revival

Bankolu Alo reports

With the start of the 2009-2010 school year came the start of the rugby season here at Queen Mary's, with players bustling with equal measures of excitement and trepidation. With the season an unfinished story to be told, the early signs have been promising. The U12s of Year 7 have performed impressively (see panel below right), with victories over Newcastle Under-Lyme School and Derby Grammar School particularly worth noting. When it is taken into account that many of the U12 team would not have encountered rugby prior to their coming to the school, the feat is all the more special. However, success has not been confined to these young tyros. The U16s overcame a determined Denstone College side to progress to the semi-finals of the Staffordshire Cup. The U13s and U14s have managed to win the lion's share of their fixtures, the latter enjoying their best year to date. Success has been harder to come by for the 1st XV so far this year, in what was always going to be a tough season for them. However it has not all been doom and gloom, with signs promoting optimism, and the 1st XV can look to kick-start their progress next time around.



The successful Year 7 rugby team

Coach Collins oversees Y7 success

P	W	D	L	F	A
8	6	1	1	175	84
King Henry VIII			L	32-17	
Fairfax			W	10-5	
Tettenhall			W	17-10	
Derby			W	46-5	
Newcastle			W	29-10	
Wolverhampton Grammar		D		10-10	
KE, Lichfield			W	25-5	
KE, Aston			W	17-7	

Try Scorers

12	Daniel. E
8	Walker. E
5	Patel. Nilan
4	Blackwood.N
1	Ford, Turner

Conversions

9	Russon
1	Walker. E

Pepper spices up Dodgeball competition

Driven by the stimulus of Enterprise Week, Mr G Taylor organised a dodgeball competition to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. The captain of the winning team, Joshua Pepper of Year 9, had this to say: "The matches were very competitive and everyone was keen to play and raise money. It was enjoyed by everyone as the competition was very well organised so a maximum amount of games could be played". The real headline of the event was the money raised, with nearly £500 being donated to the British Heart Foundation. Thanks to Mr G Taylor for all his hard work.

Threlfall races to house glory

Andre Rhoden-Paul writes - The much anticipated Senior House Cross-Country competition sported some fierce competition from Year 11 and the Sixth Form. For five laps of the course Daniel Threlfall duelled with Arjan Drayton-Chana. In a dramatic end, Daniel clinched the win for Darby, with Arjan in second for Gryphon. David Gelder of Petypher house came a respectable third. Once all the results were collated, Darby House was crowned overall winner of the House Cross Country Competition, allowing Mr. Francis, Head of Darby House to revel in their glorious victory.

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