



## Street Party unites community

By Lucy Denis

The newly branded 'Street Party' took place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July. We were blessed with perfect weather, which resulted in a fantastic turn out, this being despite worries caused by a bad forecast. The whole day was a real achievement, at a time when everyone is feeling the pinch. The school raised somewhere in the region of £7,200; doubling last year's total. A great success.

The entertainment for the afternoon was varied; with performances from Diverse Dance Company, a magic show, and a colourful fashion display of outfits from a range of different cultures.

Highlights from the day included a series of sixth formers getting very wet on the ducking stool, Mr Francis' legendary performance in tug of war, and the delicious variety of food available, including Asian food, a barbeque, and home-made cakes. Other favourites included the art store, selling a collection of postcards of students work, the tombola, and the personalised QM merchandise, just to name a few.

The Summer Street Party Committee would like to thank everyone who got involved this year. Without the fantastic support received from community donations, teachers, parents, school students and Mr Lawrence it would have not been possible. Special thanks to the Headmaster for all of his help, support and motivational speeches!



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Fusties have a ball during study weeks

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## Staff and pupils elect new school captain

### Captain Castledine

Following the departure of this year's Upper Sixth, a new group of prefects was selected. To lead them, Robert Castledine was appointed Captain of School. He has the job of putting together a computerised prefect rota system, helping with the administration of the school, particularly reading notices in assembly, and playing a part in the organisation of school events. He contributed significantly to the recent Summer Street Party, attending committee meetings, helping to run four or five stalls and also through being dunked in a pool of water on the 'Ducking stool'! Rob was initially apprehensive about taking on a role which he knew little about, but now says that he feels very comfortable with it and is greatly enjoying himself. He loves giving back to the school and being a role-model for the younger pupils to look up to.



Captain and vice waiting to be dunked! Robert Castledine and Matthew Turner enjoy the Summer Street Party

Every week the new captain of the school plans to write a blog on the school website so that all can see what he does and either empathise or argue with his opinions. We encourage you all to log on and check out this entertaining weekly read.

### "A fantastic day"

This term, Mr. Jones organised a 'Technology Roadshow' for the Year 7s to introduce them to how technology is used in business and enterprise. The pupils took part in several activities prepared by local companies. The firm 'Data Services' allowed the pupils to calculate their own and the school's carbon footprint, 'Goodrich Actuation Systems' introduced them to aeroplanes and how they are constructed, whilst representatives from the RAF had electrical problems which they had to solve in a practical manner. 'Walsall College' taught the students about car maintenance and 'Walsall Museum' brought some of their rare artifacts to be labeled and, finally, 'South Staffs Water' set up water circuits which they could use in order to teach them how water is prepared and transported.

The students described the day as 'fantastic' as the different activities were so diverse, as well as being enjoyable and educational!

### Practical Biology

After returning from study leave, 6th form Biologists attended a field course at the school's Welsh centre Farchynys. During our stay, we conducted valuable practical research developing analytical skills essential for the A2 course.

We visited the estuarine bay where we used belt transects to work out the percentage cover of seaweed and lichen. We also spent time at the Morfa Dyffryn sand dunes where we took random samples of various plant species over a profile of a typical dune landscape.

Jayman Patel stated that, "The concept of using practical biological skills in a rural landscape appealed to my active learning ability"

Everyone that went agreed that it was a very valuable few days and our only regret was that we couldn't have stayed a bit longer.



The biologists unwinding in the Farchynys sunset.

### DofE makes a comeback

After many years of being extinct at Queen Mary's, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is once again thriving. This year there have been Bronze, Silver and Gold expeditions and many pupils have taken advantage of this wonderful opportunity. Towards the end of June, Mr Hudson, Mr Sunley and Dr Rowley managed to find the courage to take around thirty Sixth Formers to Wales for their Gold Practice Expedition. This included two nights' camping and two days' walking. The routes were relatively easy (after all, it is only the practice) and yet two groups still managed to get lost. The qualifying expedition is to take place in September and afterwards we hope to have a number of pupils who have completed the award.

### What a tweet for boys

Mr Law and Mr Clements took the Natural Sciences Society for their second weekend stay at Farchynys. Having visited Wales during the winter, this trip allowed them to compare the wildlife in different seasons. After arriving at the coach house on the Friday they spent some time bird watching and then, after tea, had a short night walk around the headland in order to see some bats. On the Saturday they went for another walk, this time looking for wildlife, and managed to find a birds' nest, but unfortunately were unable to spot any animals. Later in the day the party took a trip to Morfa Dyffryn Beach and explored the sand dunes, searching for animal bones and interesting shells. One of the highlights of the trip was when, on the estuary, the group managed to find an old boat. However, after many attempts to get it to float, they decided that it just had too many holes in it. In the evening they used the laptops at Farchynys to write up some of their findings, including some basic information about plants. On Sunday the party set off to Cadair Idris to do some geological mapping which, despite the weather, was a success. The trip was enjoyed by all and the pupils have learnt a lot more about the great outdoors – not least that boats with holes in don't float!

### Pupil pop star performs

Reluctant hero Gregg Collett appeared in the final of this year's West Midlands Pop Star competition, beating off fierce competition from over 250 applicants to reach the final 16. Despite not finishing in the top three, he gave an excellent performance and can be extremely proud of his achievement.



James Allen's winning photograph

### Good Shot from James

Earlier this year QM students took part in a photography competition run by a professional photographer and old Marian, Ben McPhee. They put their skills to the test in order to claim first prize - a top of the range camera. Entrants had to choose between three fields: culture, landmarks and buildings, and produce original and brilliant ideas. These would then be judged by Ben himself. It was tough to award a first place in such a fierce competition when all were so commendable, but a decision had to be made. Ultimately James Allen (see photograph above) claimed first prize with his study of rain in New York, with Katherine Morgan and Vikram Chandra coming runners up. The best pictures have been immortalised and are showcased in the entrance hall at QM for all to see and enjoy.



## From music to CCF, it's all been happening!

### You're hired!

The QMGs Apprentice, organised by Mr Walton and based on (you've guessed it) the popular BBC television series *The Apprentice*, has taken eight months and twelve tasks to complete, culminating in the Final between Rackesh Patel and Joanna Harper on 10<sup>th</sup> July. To get there, each finalist had to face a series of difficult and diverse tasks, with each getting progressively more difficult as the numbers in the competition were whittled down from the 16 original entries. The tasks were all school-based, with the teams having, among other things, to create an assembly, sell tickets for the Black Comedy drama production, and make and sell clocks to members of the school community. Each Apprentice learnt valuable skills along the way, such as public speaking and how to conduct market research, but of course, the real aim of each was to win the competition and walk away with the coveted £100 prize. For the two remaining contestants the final was the most difficult challenge yet.

They were instructed to design a new name and logo for The Vine Restaurant, a charitable business that had already been supported by the school through the Sixth Form Enrichment Programme. The aim being to enable it to gain business and attract new customers. The winner would then have the possibility of having their name used for the re-branded café.

The finalists picked their teams, chose their themes and gave presentations to the Apprentice Judges as well as a selection of students about their innovative ideas for the renovation of the restaurant's image.

After two exceptionally good presentations, the judges were faced with a difficult decision: whose idea was better, and who should be crowned The QMGs Apprentice. A clear victor however was not forthcoming; each contestant gained three votes, and the judges had to reconvene to reach a final decision.

After much deliberation, Joanna Harper was declared the winner, with her new name 'Zest' presented to The Vine for their consideration. A gruelling, but rewarding year was over. Mr Walton had found his apprentice!



Above: Mr Walton presents Joanna Harper with her prize



### Choir hits the right notes

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April, Queen Mary's Choral Society performed Mozart's Requiem along with 1500 other singers and the world renowned CBSO in the Birmingham Symphony Hall. From as early as November, rehearsals were in progress in order to create a big sound from the relatively small choir and get a firm footing on this challenging piece of music. "When the time finally came for the piece to be performed the volume of sound produced was amazing and although it lasted an hour it seemed to be over in the blink of an eye," reported tenor David Gelder. The many intense rehearsals definitely paid off as the choir performed brilliantly. The experience is one which will be closely valued for the rest of their lives.



### Financial Fun

The Year 8 Enterprise Day this term was focused on 'Financial Capability'. The year's task was to bid for the job of catering the party for the X Factor 2009 winner. Each member of the team took on a different role (such as managing director, financial director etc) and together they had to produce a detailed business plan and pitch it to a panel of judges. The day was very enjoyable and the pupils learned some valuable business and teamwork skills.

### Attention! Review time for CCF

Every other year the CCF has its biennial review, where a senior member of the British Army or Air Force visits the contingent and inspects the cadets. During the other years there is a formal inspection and this year Brigadier Bourne-May, commander of the 143 West Midlands Brigade was the guest of honor. He stood with the school officers and watched as our troops marched past in platoons following the Guard of Honor, the RSM and his two CSMs. He was extremely impressed by the turnout and the appearance of the cadets and even commended the marching (which is very unusual for our contingent). Major Law was presented with the 'Lord Lieutenant Certificate for Devoted Service', and certificates of 'Outstanding Service' were awarded to the RSM, Tom Hillit and the CWO, Peter Szamocki. The event was a resounding success and we look forwards to the biennial review in 2010.



Major Law adopts a typically authoritarian pose

### Musicians spring into action at Easter concert

Queen Mary's Spring Concert is usually one of the highlights of the school's calendar, showcasing a wide variety of musical achievement from throughout the school. This year was no exception. The night started with two jazz band classics led by conductor Karen Blakemore, followed by enjoyable solo performances from a number of people including Gregg Collett, James Smythe and a stunning Spanish guitar rendition from Mr Rout.

For the first time ever a rock band, The Vision, made up of school students, performed a set, demonstrating the diverse talent of the pupils at Queen Mary's.

The Choral Society got the chance to perform an intimate rendition of Mozart's Requiem, including four 6.2 students performing the solo parts. One particularly special experience which left the audience dazzled was Mr Swain accompanying James Allen on the piano during the second half.



RSM Tom Hillit salutes for the Brigadier

## Records tumble as Gryphon triumph

By Gregg Collett

The introduction of the House system made this year's Sports Day more exciting than ever and the inclusion of Sixth Formers gave a new dimension to proceedings. As June 16<sup>th</sup> came around, spectators and athletes were blessed with fantastic weather and the PE department promised some record breaking performances.

The Year 7 competition got off to a great start, with twin brothers Rowan and Stephen Walker of Gryphon House leading the way. Stephen won both the 100 metres & the Discus, & came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Shot Putt, as well as leading Gryphon to victory in the 4x100 metre relay.

The Year 8 competition saw Kyrone Grossett of Darby house winning both the Long Jump and the Triple Jump and Ummar Kasujee of Petypher taking the 200 metre and 400 metre titles.

Jakob Brooke of Darby house led the way for Year 9, breaking both the 100 metre and 200 metre school records, as well as winning the Javelin. However, consistently excellent performances from members of Gryphon house, including Manveer Chhina in the High Jump and Rajinder Sehmar breaking the Discus record, meant that Mr Johnson's house just scraped past Darby by 7 points.

Gryphon dominated the Year 10 competition, with Arjan Drayton-Chana winning both the 400 metres and the 800 metres, Calum Smythe winning the Long Jump and Aaron Holmes taking the High Jump and Discus titles.

The Sixth Form events were very competitive, in particular the 400 metres race between Gagandeep Sandhar, Kyle McDonald, Kieran Bhakta and Joseph Philpott. Sam Grundy broke the 100 metre record and was part of the team that broke the 4x100 metre record, along with Gagandeep Sandhar, Kyle McDonald and Jayman Patel.

When all the final results were counted, Gryphon came out on top, much to the disgust of Mr. Francis, head of Darby house.



Sam Grundy races to victory over Kyle McDonald in the Sixth Form 100m race.



Jakob Brooke shows his class in the 100m race

### Sports Day Stats

Year 7—Gryphon 1st, Aragon 2nd, Darby 3rd, Petypher 4th  
Year 8—Darby 1st, Petypher 2nd, Aragon 3rd, Gryphon 4th  
Year 9—Gryphon 1st, Darby 2nd, Aragon 3rd, Petypher 4th  
Year 10—Gryphon 1st, Petypher 2nd, Aragon 3rd, Darby 4th

### New School Records

Year 9—Jakob Brooke: 100m  
Year 9—Jakob Brooke: 200m  
Year 9—Rajinder Sehmar: Discus  
6th Form—Sam Grundy: 100m  
6th Form—4x100m relay: team

### Mr Taylor leads cricket revival

**Randeep Soor** talks to Mr L Taylor —After 13 years away from school cricket, Mr L Taylor returned to the helm and it is great hear him report that it has been a delight to be back in charge. Last time around it took seven years to get QM cricket where he wanted it to be, this time he is looking to do it in five.

He reports that the 1<sup>st</sup> XI just managed, by virtue of a victory over King Edward's Aston, to avoid losing all their matches against other schools. There were a willing but naive team, not possessing the nous to concentrate for long periods. They were therefore unable to build the totals required to be competitive at this level. Malvind Benning of Year 10 proved to be the stand out batter for the 1st XI. The potential that he demonstrated this season bodes well for future success.

There is some other bright young talent flourishing lower down the school. Mr Taylor has high hopes for Priyan Magan, Jakob Brooke and Krishan Patel of Year 9, Sunil Patel of Year 8 and reserves particularly high praise for Luke Boniface of Year 7. He finished the season with a phenomenal batting average of 130.00. Mr Taylor reports: "For one so young, he has great powers of concentration and already has the ability to know which shots to play and doesn't try to be overly analytical". There is also the exciting prospect of a cricket tour to New Zealand in 2012 to look forward to for the current players in Years 7-9. The future looks bright for cricket at QM under the expert tutelage of Mr Taylor.

#### 2009 season results:

1st XI: played 5, won 2, lost 3  
2nd XI: played 3, lost 3  
U15: played 1, lost 1  
U14: played 3, won 3  
U13: played 3, won 1, lost 2  
U12: played 3, won 2, lost 1



#### Editorial team:

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