



## Boldly going where no Marian has gone before

To infinity and beyond: Mirza Baig and Oliver Thomas take off in Alabama - see page 3

## Full steam ahead for Academy Status

### Oliver Beddard reports:

The new coalition government have set out their stall to change many things in their era in charge, and the education system certainly hasn't been overlooked. Perhaps the most notable of their plans is the opportunity for schools to apply for academy status; a move which will allow them the ability to have greater control over the funding that they receive. As it stands, a proportion of the grant to each of the schools in the Borough is collected by Walsall Children's Services, Serco who then use the money to pay for the services that they provide. By becoming an academy, a school can take charge of the entirety of their funding and can then use it to pay solely for the services that they require. After many meetings with governors of the school where the potential advantages and disadvantages were closely considered, the decision was made to apply for academy status. On balance it was decided that the increased freedoms and

financial advantages had the potential to significantly benefit the school community. When Mr Swain initially announced the decision, there were some pupils who understandably had their concerns and queries about the decision, and so the Senior Leadership Group of staff and pupils agreed to allow the pupils to air their questions. Following a question sheet that was sent out to every form, an assembly was organised by the Captain and Vice Captains of School whereby a student panel represented by each year group asked a select number of the most pertinent questions directly to Mr Swain. The general outcome of the question and answer session was that the key features of the school as it currently exists will remain and that the new status has the potential to help current and future generations of Marians. The application has been sent and the school is now awaiting approval, ready to take on the academy status in the very near future. You can follow our website for regular updates.

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The goals fly in as QM teams reign supreme - see the back page

## Glover Speaks Up for Punctuation



### Bradley Glover (above) reports:

Taking part in the whole school Public Speaking Competition is one of the key events of the year and one which is always particularly hard fought. Right from the outset I knew that it would be a keenly competed event, with strong and innovative performances in all categories, meaning a truly daunting challenge. Armed with the confidence gained from the previous rounds, I entered the final determined to at least entertain the judges. My speech itself was snappily entitled "Punctuation", and it followed the national lead of Lynne Truss in stressing the importance of the humble full stop and comma (without which, most of this newsletter would not make sense). After including a joke about a Panda, and an example of a statement without any punctuation, I felt that I had made a reasonable attempt at the competition. When the results were announced, and I found out that I had won, I was ecstatic. I knew it had been a tough competition, and was all the more grateful for the accolade I received, as everyone who competed had just as good a chance. I finally would like to thank the English department, and the participants, for the work put in by all.

## An Unforgettable Experience with the CBSO

**Mr Walton writes:** It's not often that school choral singers get the opportunity to perform in a international auditorium with a world class orchestra and a globally famous choral leader, but that is exactly what happened on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March. The QM Choral Society had been rehearsing throughout this year in preparation for the event, learning two major pieces of music: Gabriel Faure's Requiem and Handel's Zadok The Priest. These are two very different pieces compositions, the first a subtle and melodic work, the second a bombastic

celebratory piece. Our singers joined with 1500 others and the CBSO for an intensive day of rehearsals at Birmingham Symphony Hall, followed by a performance in the evening. The intensity of noise created by the sheer number of voices singing both in unison and in seven part harmony was a joy to behold. Jack Mellor of Year 8 summed it up: "I'll never forget it for the rest of my life".



## Bollywood Bonanza

**Haymesh Mistry writes:** I am delighted to report that the Taste of the East Bollywood Dreams was a great success. It is an evening that many of us look forward to and we all made the effort: to dress to impress, and also to show off our moves on the makeshift school hall dance floor. There is nothing quite like the feeling of being with your friends and dancing the night away. It's that feeling that makes Taste of the East such a successful and consistently enjoyable night. But it was the immense quality of the performances that stole the show, whether it was the array of quality Dholis amongst the QMGS faithful or the vocal talent. The latter was the highlight of the evening with impressive sets from bhangra artist Foji Gill and our very own Anand Singh Bilkhu who wowed the audience and is a name to watch out for in the future.

## Evening showcases the best of QMGS

**Bhargav Rambhatla reports:** The school held its first Sixth Form Open Evening on Thursday 20th January. This was a landmark moment for the Sixth Form, demonstrating that its success and popularity is so great that it now requires its own showcasing. The evening took place mainly in the canteen, with Mr Swain's presentation in the main hall, and with other areas of the school site being set up as social areas for current and potential students to mix. The amount of interest shown was great to see. The prospective students seemed very grateful for the attention placed upon them with one commenting "I thought that the open evening was a very good idea, and one which shows the school's best features". The QMGS Times thanks those who made the event as successful as it was for everyone involved.

## Cadets hold off threat from the Welsh coast

**Oliver Beddard writes:** Departing on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, cadets from QM CCF headed for Farchynys in an attempt to fight off the fictional mounting Redland threat that was encroaching along the Welsh coastline. The brainchild of Major Machin, the Cadet Command and Control Trainer weekend set out to introduce cadets to leading roles in wartime. 1QM Regiment fought off the Redland Soviet forces for close to four hours and after numerous

amphibious enemy landings, cadets were successful in their efforts to keep Harlech town secure and restrict the enemy from progressing further into Wales. The incredible depth of detail in background information and structures of the enemy's armed forces helped to make the situation that much more vivid and made the moves taken by the section commanders feel just that bit more real. Huge thanks must go out to Major Machin for his tireless efforts in creating such a fun, interesting scenario.





## Students Blast off to Alabama

**Bhargav Rambhatla writes:** As we assembled on an what began as an ordinary Friday morning, the first thing that struck me was the feeling of excitement that was already soaring. As we took off on our journey to space camp in Huntsville, Alabama, the whole group seemed to simmer with anticipation. Needless to say, we were not disappointed. The Space Camp was one of the most intense and rewarding experiences I have ever been lucky enough to be involved with. Early morning wake up calls, late nights, and the occasional evacuation due to hurricane warnings were pretty average fare! We were split into 3 groups; Von Braun, Von Tiesenhousen and Holderer (named after prominent contributors to American rocketry), and within each group, each was assigned to either Pilot Track or Mission Specialist Track. The course itself was a hectic mishmash of scientific lectures, Practical exercises which I'm sure

wouldn't have been legal in England, and hurried meals. Of the numerous standout moments, the few that have really struck with me would be the high ropes assault course, named Area 51, the viewing of the last shuttle launch of the Discovery, with a narration provided by a four times astronaut, the rocket making competition, talking to people we met, and the EDM, a 6 hour simulation of a real shuttle mission, an exhausting experience, but one filled with some of the funniest moments in the whole trip. Outside the space camp, we went to an Ice Hockey match, had a tour of a massive cave, and ate burgers which weighed twenty ounces. When given free time, we were swimming in the pool, playing catch outside, shopping in a nearby retail park or just exploring the immensity of our temporary home. The experience was over almost too quickly, and as we returned to England, we brought back fond memories; of what we experienced, of who we talked to and also the ridiculous American accents that we perfected during the trip.

## CCF weekend victory

**Kieran Macfarlane writes:** After final parade one Friday, I travelled to Farchynys on the annual Antarctic Warfare Weekend, a reliably enjoyable occasion. Saturday began with an early start and a typical Major Law breakfast (porridge with heaps of sugar), before setting out on the headland to conduct training. Cadets were split into teams and moved around various training stands run by NCOs and then proceeded to the main exercise, in which I played the role of an injured airman. Cadets were briefed to use cam and concealment, patrolling and ambush skills to deal with them. The exercise, I can report, was a great success. A prompt reveille and breakfast afforded time on Sunday morning to take part in more activities, including shooting, and code breaking. Overall, I found it to be a really worthwhile weekend and I was surprised at how much we managed to get done in such a short time. Visits like these demonstrate how committed the officers and NCOs in our CCF are; without whom they just wouldn't be possible.

## Marian Masterchefs take top billing

**Jack Gorman writes:** Before half term a cookery competition was launched by Mrs Phillips to find the best cooks in both KS3 and KS4. It took place over four evenings with thirty entrants and was judged by home economist Mrs Lonsdale and a guest judge. According to Mrs. Phillips, "The standard was extremely high and the presentation of the dishes was the decider." Of KS3, Adam Pettitt came out as the winner and of KS4, Gurpreet Beghal. They

both went on to compete at the Walsall finals where they had the daunting task of cooking in a real chef's kitchen with a budget of £7 to make a healthy meal for two. Gurpreet took a respectable 3<sup>rd</sup> place with his fresh salmon and vegetables but the star of the show was Adam who went on to win the KS3 competition with his impressive Japanese stir fry and prawn Gyozas. Adam will now collect his shield from Walsall FC Banks' Stadium and will be competing at the Regional Final in May.



## Crowds flock to see who has The Q Factor

**Mr Walton reports:** A large audience descended on Sutton Road to enjoy the first ever Q Factor Competition. There was real variety on offer with four sections to enjoy: Groups, Junior Instrumental, Senior Instrumental and Indian Drums. The winner of the Groups section were Imiose Agboaye, Kieron Sealey-John and Jordan Smith (pictured left). This trio are now a familiar highlight at school events, with memorable performances in the Flare Talent Show last year and the Chinese celebration assembly. If you're looking for another opportunity

to see the talent on offer at QM, watch out for the Summer Festival on the 9th July, where there will be an outside stage showcasing the best of QMGS's talent, and the final of Flare will be held there, returning from the success of last year. Put the date in your diary.

**The Q Factor 2011 Winners:**  
**Junior Section** - Joshua Nicholls  
**Indian Drums** - Gavinder Sidhu  
**Groups** - Imiose Agboaye, Kieron Sealey-John and Jordan Smith  
**Senior Instrumental** - Jacob Swain

## Sevens glory brings season to a close



**Chief Sports Reporter Bankolu Alo writes:** The school rugby teams have been enjoying a new lease of life this year. There have been notable successes at various levels with a strong showing from the lower years perhaps best showcased by the U15s winning the Staffordshire Cup. The U13s have also had a good campaign, enjoying the learning curve of both gritty defeats and glorious triumphs. The 1st XV have led the way with a vast improvement on last season's disappointments. The highlight of the season was

perhaps also ironically the biggest disappointment, a 24-24 draw with King Edward's Lichfield. This saw us knocked out of the County Cup on a technicality, but exemplified the strides made with such a result being possible against a team that in the past the school has struggled to compete with. The season came to a close with a Walsall Schools Sevens tournament taking place on the Mayfield campus. The 1st VII were delighted to come away from the competition as the overall winners. A happy end to the QM rugby careers of those members of 6.2 leaving school in July.

## Golden Week for Hockey Stars

**Edward Baker recalls a particularly successful week:**

The dynamic success of this year's hockey squads in perhaps best illustrated by one particularly spectacular week of results (see below for the glorious roster of results). Under the tutelage of Mr Francis and other supporting members of staff, hockey has gone from strength to strength, with the victories coming thick and fast. Amongst them have come notable victories against tough opposition, typifying the progress and success of our hockey teams. The 1st XI finished as runners-up in the Staffordshire County Competition and the U14s won the Staffordshire Cup. This bodes well for the continuing success of QM hockey.

### That amazing March week in full:

- U15s beat Camp Hill 9-0
- U14s B beat Aston A 4-1
- U15s beat Solihull 5-0
- 1<sup>st</sup> XI beat Camp Hill 6-0
- 2<sup>nd</sup> XI beat Camp Hill 1-0
- U12s A beat Bishop Vesey's 2-1
- U12s B beat Bishop Vesey's 1-0
- U14s beat Newcastle 5-1
- U13s beat Newcastle 7-1
- U12s beat Newcastle 3-0

### Editorial team:

**Editor** - Mr TM Walton

**Sub Editors** - Bhargav Rambhatla and Oliver Beddard

**Features**—Kieran Macfarlane, Jack Gorman, Bankolu Alo, Haymesh Mistry, Bradley Glover

**Photography** - Joseph Thomas

## Sports Shorts

Sporting Colours have been awarded this year to:

**Cross Country** - James Sloan, James Cattell, James Massey, Oliver Thomas, Sam Wain, George Lavery

**Rugby** - Bankolu Alo, James Hawkins, Jack Crowhurst, Ben Wheeler, George Cook, Ravinderpal Padda

**Hockey** - Janak Pachchigar, Edward Baker

Congratulations to them all on their fine sporting achievements during their time at the school.

## Marians achieve regional success



**Rio Yearwood** of Year 8 (pictured left proudly holding an Olympic medal with Mark Lewis Francis) competed for the Birmingham Team in the Sportshall UK Finals at the NEC on 3 April.

**Ummar Kasujee** of Year 10 was proud to represent Staffordshire at rugby this term. He performed with typical energy and commitment and will look to gain a regular place in the QM 1st XV next year.