



# The QM Observer

Autumn Term Newsletter

Friday 21st December 2012

## Four Pillars In One Term



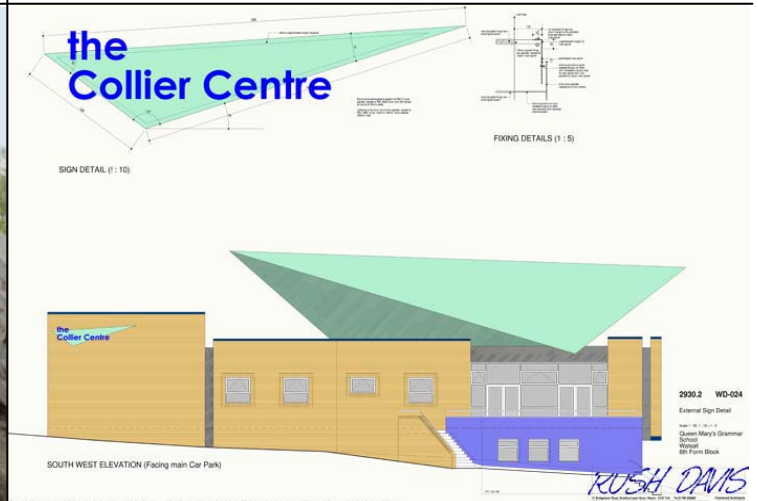
Enterprising in Spirit



International in Outlook



Academic in Purpose



Community Minded

**Jack Gorman writes:** It is safe to say that this year has got off to an energetic start! So much has happened that it has been even tougher than usual to try and fit everything in.

One of the main things that has struck me this term is that it has encompassed what the school is really about. There has been something for everyone: Farchyns cycling weekends to the re-emergence of competitive chess to Project Horizon.

The four front page pictures combine to illustrate the Big Picture of our School: its four pillars.

Stories behind the pictures confirm that we are indeed Enterprising in Spirit, International in Outlook, Academic in Purpose, and Community Minded in Approach.

All these stories are explored more inside, but just a quick overview shows how the Captain of School from last year, Stephen Paddock, was enterprising enough to invite a

national radio show to Walsall to be broadcast from our school hall.

Trips to Sri Lanka and China have highlighted how we are International in Outlook and also Academic in Purpose: pupils both on the trips and back at School have been encouraged to understand more about two very different languages and the culture around them. Last, but by no means least, the opening of The Collier Centre brings together an awesome effort by everyone in the Queen Mary's community.

## Geography Corner

**W. Richards and J. Gill write:** Sixth Form Geography students have had an exciting term. It all started with an action packed day in London. Our first stop was to look around a lucrative development project on the Isle of Dogs; an opportunity to gather primary data. We then visited Westfield next to Olympic Park and the Excel and O2 Arenas. It was a great success, combining academic field work with a visit to London's most recent attractions. In November we travelled to KE Five Ways to participate in a Conference on Geographic Information Systems. The event—part of the global GIS-DAY - brought together forty students from six schools in the area. Later that same month we played RUFopoly, inspired by a Professor from Birmingham City University. Debate and discussion erupted as we travelled through *Rufshire*. It was an enjoyable and inspiring morning.



Geography students in London

## Spanish Exchange

**Jack Gorman recalls:** Early in November, QM welcomed 12 Spanish students from our partner school in Vigo, Galicia.

Activities they enjoyed during the week included visits to Birmingham, Cadbury World, Stratford-Upon-Avon and London, not to mention meals accompanied by the partners. For many of the Year 10s, this was their first exchange; they commented to me that they have definitely seen an improvement in their language skills. This was done through communicating during the week and also utilising social networking to the full to keep in touch afterwards.

We are all looking forward to the return visit to Spain at the end of February 2013.

## Any Questions?

**Jack Gorman reports:** On the 14<sup>th</sup> September the school was privileged to welcome a number of well-known and important people from the world of politics and broadcasting. The reason they came to Walsall was for the BBC Radio 4 show "Any Questions?" Stephen Paddock, the Captain of School last year, had prompted the initial enquiry; now his idea had come to fruition. The panellists were a member of the shadow cabinet, Emma Reynolds, the blogger Iain Dale, former Minister David Mellor and award winning journalist Luke Harding. (He came back to Walsall as the main speaker at Speech Day. For me, as a student of Economics and English, it was ideal to see how questions were posed and how effective they were at prompting debate among the panellists. After the show, the guests and audience were invited to the newly opened Collier Centre to have light refreshments and a chance to meet other people. All in all, a truly valuable experience and something that I will remember. Thanks must go to the tireless efforts of the people who worked behind the scenes and made this happen.

## New Collier Centre

The opening of the Collier Centre in September by Sir Gary Hickenbottom represented the end of what had seemed like a lifetime of fundraising and construction. The impressive building, comprising (amongst other features) the Hill & Holloway Learning Hub and the Bateman Community Room will provide a fantastic resource for both the school and the community in the future. The following QMC Dinner was a fitting end to a day characterised by a celebratory mood. Old Marian, Paul Walton, delivered the after-dinner speech.



Having fun in Sri Lanka

## China Trip

**Danny Bav:** From the 20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> of October, a group of 34 pupils accompanied by 4 staff members went on an epic 5969 mile journey to China. The journey involved stops in Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou and Shaoxing. The highlight of the trip was our visit to our Chinese partners "Shaoxing No.1 High School". Once there, we were separated from our group and had the opportunity to stay with a Chinese family for two days. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed it – especially the Chinese food! We are looking forward to the return visit of the Chinese students of our partner school in the future!



## Sri Lanka

**Krishan Patel writes:** On 19th October, 16 pupils and staff went to Sri Lanka to play cricket. QM came back with 3 wins out of 4 in vastly different conditions to those we are used to. Unfortunately, one game was cancelled which was a game against a school that was affected by the Tsunami in 2004. However, we visited a charity, the Foundation of Goodness, where we were in awe of the work done to re-build parts that were worst hit. Throughout, there were stand-out performances. K. Patel won 'Tourist of the Tour' for leading the team to an impressive record. O. Hanson received 'Fielder of the Tour' for producing match changing catches and run-outs. M. Hyde got the 'Champagne Moment of the tour' when he blasted a six, a catalyst for a recovery in QM's 3rd win. J. Benning won 'Most Improved Player' for consistent performances. And finally, the 'Player of the Tour' was awarded to L. Boniface for scoring an average of 58 runs per game and bowling at an average of 6.3. We enjoyed a fantastic tour, and took away once-in-a-lifetime memories, but are well aware that the true test lies at the start of this season.



## QM Chess

**Aamanh Sehdev writes:** The Sixth Form Chess Team played their first match in just under 4 years against Camp Hill; a tough start to their return to the Birmingham Junior Chess League. Queen Mary's second team, captained and organised by myself and Kyrone Grossett, started off promisingly with a notable victory against Camp Hill's third team, crushing them with a formidable 6 - 0 scoreboard. Queen Mary's first team, captained by Marcus Raiyat, struggled against a strong Camp Hill second team. However there were some notable performances from Gavandeep Nijar and Fahim Nasri, who eventually won his game, the only first team victory on the night. Although Queen Mary's first team lost the match 4.5 to 1.5 it seems we have discovered a very able young player. Well done to all involved! Future fixtures will be posted outside of Q5 and practice sessions will take place in Q5 every Week 1 Lunch time at 1.40pm.

## Year 7 Music

**Mr Vause:** The photo below shows 7G blowing their new brass and woodwind instruments as part of a new school initiative.

'Monday morning's are certainly noisy, with all 96 boys in Year 7 now learning to play; however they already make a great sound! For me, music lessons should be about developing practical music-making skills; that's when it's most fun, and that's why I'm really excited about this particular project. I'm hoping later in the year to put on a concert that will feature all the boys playing together, so watch this space - ear muffs will be provided!



## Skiffle Group

**Francis McKenna and Chandan Jolly write:** The Skiffle Group has had a very successful term. A collection of talented musicians has been recruited and instruments played include ukuleles, banjo, guitar, washboard, tea-chest bass and double bass. Songs played include "Pick A Bail Of Cotton", "My Old Man's a Dust-man", "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight?" and other Lonnie Donegan classics from the 1950's and 1960's. The final assembly at the end of half -term saw the group's first public appearance. It is hoped that the New Year will see the group continue to flourish.

## DT @ Jaguar/Land Rover

**Luke Chandler writes:** On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of November, two sets of DT classes visited the Jaguar/Land Rover factory in Solihull. The morning involved a tour around the site, going to the assembly room and production area. We saw robots in action, working at a 90 second work limit per station. These 2 sections of the factory were quite interesting and our tour guide, Bob, knew the ins and outs of the site. In the afternoon, we visited the paint room, a first time experience for the school. Afterwards, we returned to the learning and youth centre on site where we successfully took part in a team challenge producing models of coffee trolleys. Overall, the trip was an experience to savour and we would like to thank all staff at JLR who made the day a success.

## Lord Mayor's Quiz



The Year 12 team at the Lord Mayor's Quiz

**Mr Elsdon writes:** A team of Year 13 pupils (Oliver Jevons, Matthew Greenwood, Roxanne Taylor, Imiose Agboaye, Gavandeep Nijjar, Catherine Ravenscroft) and a team of Y12 pupils (Jacob Harding, Matthew Elliot, James Gray, Callum Macintosh, Bradley Adams, Arslan Awan) took part in the Lord Mayor's Quiz, hosted by "The Beast", Mark Labett (ITV The Chase) in the Great Hall at Birmingham University. There were ten rounds of questions, with a Joker round for the teams on topics ranging from Literature to 2012. Both teams proved to be very strong with the Year 13 team finishing 5th and Year 12 7th out of 34 teams from schools around the Midlands. Both teams were within 10 points of the winning school - K.E. Camp Hill (Boys). The competition raised over £1000 for the Lord Mayor's charities, and was a success.

## Members of the QM Skiffle Group



## A Christmas Carol



Marcello Hunt took on the role of Ebenezer Scrooge in the Junior Production of Dickens's *Christmas Carol* as the term reached its conclusion. It was an authoritative performance which held everything together as a large cast learnt the ropes, thoroughly enjoying themselves in the process.

More carols were served up at St Matthew's the following week as the Music Department got us in the mood for Christmas.

## Project Horizon

**Mr Coghlan:** The aim of Project Horizon is to send a weather balloon filled with helium, 29km into the Earth's atmosphere, but record environmental data and film the mission using an on-board computer. The 'Horizon' project involves a team of 20 Sixth Formers employing a wide range of skills across every aspect of the project. A key milestone was reached in the Horizon project with the successful building of a radio transmitter circuit which will transmit GPS data that can be used to plot the flight path of the balloon and to track its course on Google Maps. The team continue to make further progress and to complete further deadlines as they build up to the highly anticipated launch in March 2013.

## The Project Horizon Team





## QM Cross Country

**Michael Sunner writes:** It has been a successful term for the Cross Country team. Under the new leadership of Mr. Clements and Mr. Larvin, a reformed team have "hit the ground running" with impressive performances from all QM runners in our fixtures. A home race on 12th December, saw an outstanding team performance, where QM won both the A team and B team races at home with 8 runners finishing in the top 15. The team has a good blend of newcomers from Year 11, Sixth Form girls and the experienced "Old Guard" from the previous year. What has been most encouraging is the team spirit which has developed within the squad due to the enthusiasm and confidence of the runners. "Excitement is building" as the team look forward to future fixtures within the New Year.

## CCF Outward Bound Weekend

**Liam Allen writes:** On the 23rd November, 15 Cadets and 4 members of staff travelled to Farchynys for the annual CCF outward bound trip. The Friday evening gave us the opportunity to settle before we took on the challenge of Cadair Idris on Saturday. That morning we began the ascent of the ninth highest mountain in Wales by taking the Minffordd path to Llyn Cau and finally climbing to the summit of Penygadair. The next morning we had a skiing lesson at the Telford ski slope before returning home. This weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants (see photo below)



## CCF Field Day Review

**Alex Blundell writes:** A cool and overcast Friday morning set the scene for the termly excursion to Shropshire for the QMGs CCF. The day's activities were well planned and included NCOs teaching cadets about movement as well as camouflage and concealment. This was a very enjoyable part of the day for most; it was engaging, active and fun. Competitiveness accompanied by a sense of teamwork was a big part of the day, with friendly assistance and help from NCOs and staff, the day went smoothly. The remainder of the day involved a period of drill to bring everyone up to speed for the Remembrance Sunday Parade. In all, Field Day was a great success with the cadets having learned a great deal from the NCOs. The majority of cadets came home at the end of the day having learned something new and had a good day, even if they were all covered in mud and camo-cream!

## The Formula 1 Experience

**Simon and Ryan Gangar write:** On the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012, my brother and I visited two Formula 1 teams, Lotus/Renault F1 and Force India. The purpose of the visit was to look at Formula 1 car development. Throughout the day we gained an understanding of how a formula one car is designed, right through to testing it, in a wind tunnel. We learnt a lot about 3D production printers which use a stereo lithography process to produce parts for testing within the wind tunnel, also known as rapid prototyping. Observing the manufacturing and the meticulous engineering that goes into building an F1 car was priceless, and has provided us with an amazing insight into a career which we would both like to pursue. The highlight of the visit was getting a glimpse of next season's Force India car as well as gaining some strong industry links which will be invaluable in the future.

## World Challenge Weekend

**Mr Stockley writes:** The weekend revolved around workshops and activities designed to get the challengers thinking about possible situations they will be faced with on their trip. These activities took place on the camp site and the chase itself and covered a range of topics including, how to cross a river, recognising and dealing with altitude sickness, equipment checks, putting up tents, what to expect at the border crossing, team and personal budgeting. Despite the relentless precipitation for most of Saturday and all through the night some valuable skills and knowledge were passed on and a lot of fun was had by all, challengers and teachers included.

## Rugby



**Jakob Brooke writes:** The rugby season so far has been one of mixed emotions for QM. The 1st XV (photo above) has bonded brilliantly this season, destroying teams through brutal defence and ball carrying. Unfortunately the weather, as always, has been our main opponent. Of the games we have played we have won 5 and lost 3 and we look forward to the next part of the season after the Christmas break. Special congratulations must go to Jakob Brooke, Alec Burns, Mark Styles, Rejoinder Sehmar, Khrishan Patel and Gavandeep Nijjar on receiving their full colours.