



# The QM Observer

Spring Term Newsletter

Thursday 28th March 2013

## QMGS go to infinity...

### ALABAMA

**Aron dip Pharwaha writes:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> February a party of 42 pupils and 4 staff left QMGS at 6am for Manchester for the trip of a lifetime ....to ALABAMA!!! After a 9 hour flight and a 3 hour coach journey the adventure was about to start.

Our first stop was Cathedral Caverns, lunch, bowling and then 88 Buffet, a Chinese restaurant with the chance to try unique dishes, such as fried frog's legs! It all really started on Sunday, Space Camp! There were 2 groups of QMGS and one mixed group of QMGS and St. Cleres, Essex. The week consisted of simulations, space engineering, space history, team building tasks and a three hour mission into space! The teams were put through their paces and were very much challenged to come out of their comfort zones.

The final full day consisted of a Hollister sale, Wal-Mart, the mall and free time before the edible highlight.....the Cheeburger Challenge!

Overall it was an enjoyable week, friendships were formed and it was full of new experiences.

The class of 2014 are already looking forward to their opportunity to experience the Space Camp!



## ...and beyond!

### MOROCCO



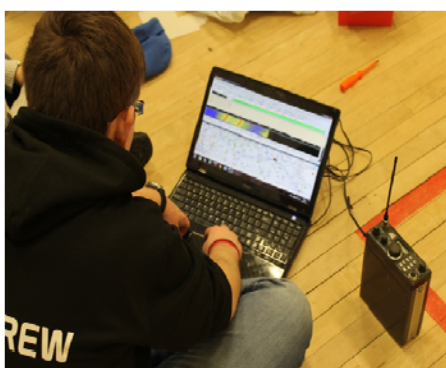
**Jake Garrett writes:** On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 44 pupils and 4 members of staff set off for what was an incredible adventure into the north of Africa and the Sahara desert. We met at school at 5am in order to ensure that we caught our early afternoon flight from London Gatwick. It only took 3 hours and 40 minutes to arrive to a warm welcome at Marrakech Airport. On the first night after arriving at our hotel, we walked around a very colourful local market where we saw local entertainment and produce being offered to the tourists by the local people. We all agreed that it was a trip of a lifetime; the highlights were the camel rides to and from camp in the Sahara, the visit to Todra Gorge, the demos of how traditional Moroccan mint tea and carpets are made and the sand-surfing that took place on the evening of our over-night desert stay. I would like to thank the four accompanying members of staff on behalf of everybody who went for providing us with such an enjoyable and memorable experience, in particular, Mrs. Sharp for organising the 6-day trip to her home country.

## Project Horizon

**Siman Nijjar writes:** Our motto 'The sky is not the limit', has pushed the 21 strong team of students out of their comfort zone. It represents over a year of hard work for the team and Mr Coghlan - without his support, it would have been an impossible task. It is the first project of its kind ever undertaken by a school and has been generating interest nationally.

The stratospheric probe is attached to a pre-deployed parachute which is in turn attached to a helium filled weather balloon. The balloon stack will fly to an estimated 32km above the Earth into a region known as 'near space', which is far beyond the breathable atmosphere. Once our balloon reaches the apex of its flight and bursts, the probe will descend and fall back to Earth with incredible speed until it lands safely.

Our test launch reached greater heights than ever expected, 112,756 feet, which placed us 44th in the World Amateur Altitude Rankings. It has received generous support from our sponsor, Rapid Electronics Limited, who have been very supportive of our work. Even though the weather has prevented Horizon 2 from being launched, we are confident it will be just as, if not more, successful than our test launch.



Project Horizon underway

## Young Writers' Competition

**Miss Timmins reports:** All of the year eight boys who entered the competition 'Around the World in 80 Words' have been successful. Stuart Kirk, Imran Dalvi, Aiden O'Connor and Priyesh Mistry will have their work published in an anthology ('Around the World in 80 Words - West Midland Tales') that will be sent to the British Library and we get a complimentary copy. There are yet to be selections for the county winners, so fingers crossed!

## Kissing it Better

**Shamma Khan recalls:** Over the past eight months QM students have been visiting Walsall Manor hospital as part of the volunteering scheme organised by *Kissing it Better*. Founded by Jill Fraser, it is about sharing simple healthcare ideas and harnessing the energy of the most dynamic groups in a local community by inviting them to use their skills to make a difference to the care of patients and their carers. QM students were on the pilot scheme last summer and it has since expanded to over 20 hospitals, received national recognition, won various awards and featured on BBC Breakfast and The One Show.

The scheme was mainly focused on Stroke/Dementia patients. We lifted their spirits and broke the monotony of their day through conversation, musical entertainment, literature and games. It was moving to enter a lifeless ward, and then leave it energised! If the opportunity arises, all should consider volunteering for such schemes - there is no greater satisfaction than making someone smile.

## Air Squadron Trophy

**Mr Ridler reports:** On 10<sup>th</sup> February, the RAF Section's Air Squadron Trophy team travelled to RAF Cosford to compete in the annual regional competition. As usual, the team of 13 competed in tasks such as Drill, Shooting, First Aid and Aircraft Recognition. Overall, the team improved on last year's 6th place, finishing 5th overall out of 12 schools.

In the RAF Knowledge discipline, Bradley Adams and Elliott Farley both scored the top marks out of all of the cadets taking part, receiving certificates for their efforts. The team also scored the highest mark overall, collecting that particular trophy for the 1st time in 8 years. The shooting team also won their discipline. Given that only two of the team are in 6.2, it is hoped that this year's success can be used as a platform upon which to build in the future.

## Alessi Competition

**Mrs Roderick writes:** The Alessi product re-design competition task has once again taken place. The entries this year were again very good and produced some interesting and creative designs. The winners from each class were Thieran Patel, Sebastian Stewart-Barry, Balraj Jhooty and Arun Juss. The overall Year 9 winner was Sebastian Stewart-Barry (*pictured right*). He designed a biscuit barrel that looked like a fish bowl and had a frog sitting on a lily as the lid!

## Spanish Exchange

**Kyran Kanda writes:** On February 26th, seventeen pupils from QM went to Colegio Miralba in Vigo accompanied by Mrs. Franklin and Mr. Lawson. Our time there consisted of many memorable excursions, such as Santiago de Compostela, the capital of Galicia. We were taken on a guided tour and shown much of the strong Christian heritage with a visit to the Cathedral. The week also included a trip to O Castro allowing us to see much of the stunning natural beauty of the town. The week was a fantastic opportunity giving tangible insights into Spanish culture and the Spanish weather lived up to its reputation! Following a tearful goodbye on the final night, the exchange had fostered strong friendships which we hope will extend into the future.



## Schools' Brightest Business Brain

**Rikesh Patel:** On 18<sup>th</sup> of March, four students went to the Schools' Brightest Business Brain final in London. To get to this stage an online test was taken and two QM students Jack Gorman and Jeevan Pawar came in the top ten. The day was composed of six activities which tested: teamwork, debating, creativity, problem solving and decision making. Six different companies had their own tasks such as Microsoft and Aviva. Although no-one won an award, every participant should be proud of their achievements and the day was a fantastic opportunity to showcase QM talents at a national level.



## Chess Special

**Aamanh Sehdev & Gavan Nijjar write:** This year has seen the re-emergence of the school's chess teams after a gap of over 20 years. Under the guidance of Mr Smethurst, they have played a range of fixtures against some prestigious local schools. Against KE V Ways, the 1st team were missing two key players in Anthony Lee & Marcus Raiyat, but they were not to be fazed and managed their 1st win of the year with a score of 4-2. Matt Greenwood managed to achieve an emphatic checkmate in under 10 minutes against their first board player. Fahim Nasiri of Year 9 continued his good form & won, followed by Gavan Nijjar and Kyrone Grossett. The 2nd team played Solihull school on the same day & Kyrone Grossett managed to win his 2nd game of the night, this time in less than 10 minutes, followed closely by Daniel Law, who retained the strongest record for the school this year with 4 wins out of 4. Aamanh Sehdev went through around 30 moves at the end of his game to checkmate his opponent and Lorcan McCullagh battled through a scrappy match to obtain a very simple checkmate as a result of a blunder by his opponent. Overall, the team managed to notch up an impressive 4.5 to 1.5 victory. Against KE Camp Hill, the team was not at its strongest with Matthew Greenwood & Antony Lee out but we played on regardless. For the first 45 minutes, all the matches were fairly even but then things got interesting. Arslan Awan, unfortunately, lost his match having checkmated his opposition but he couldn't remember that he had to say checkmate and instead he kept saying "check-friend". Kyrone Grossett & Gavan Nijjar lost as well, but it was not all doom and gloom with Richard Ng and Fahim Nasiri beating their opponents. Aamanh Sedhev added to the glory after a gruelling two hour match resulting in a draw. The end result was Camp Hill 3.5 -2.5 QMGS. In all, there have been some great performances and it is extremely positive to see Chess back in the school.



The Chess Team

Follow us on Twitter @qmgs1554 and look out for the various departmental accounts

## Exchanging Cultures

**Bradleigh Smith recalls:** On 2nd March, 18 pupils from QMGS and QMHS left Birmingham Airport for Frankfurt, Germany. On the first day, we met our host family and saw where we would be living for the week. We spent Sunday with our host families, doing things like going to a water park or skiing at Winterberg. On Monday, we went to the German school and then to the local town of Biedenkopf to do a town rally and buy ice cream. On Tuesday, we went to Frankfurt to go shopping and to the Blind Museum. We went to Marburg on Wednesday and on Thursday we went to Kassel, to go to a climbing hall in which you could do free-falling, bouldering and different climbing walls. On Friday, we attended a normal school day and said farewell to the friends we had met. The next day was the final day: We said our goodbyes and left Marburg station to get a plane from Frankfurt Airport - no-one wanted to leave!

## Young Chef of the Year



**Alex Jones reports:** On Thursday 14th March, Ben Haynes and I, travelled to Brownhills School to compete in the Young Chef of the Year competition. Ben cooked 'Honey and Worcester Sauce Chicken, served on tagliatelle with a side salad garnish'. His efforts landed him 4th place in the KS3 competition, a cookbook and a small cash prize. I cooked 'Grilled Chicken and Vegetable Kebabs served with spiced sweet potato wedges and a boat of bacon and mushroom sauce'. The judges said that the presentation was excellent and the taste more than matched that, and gave me the 1st place prize for the KS4 competition. I won a £30 prize, along with a cookbook, certificate and brought the Winners Shield to QM for the first time in six years.

## Arkwright Scholarship

**Mr Hughes writes:** In February 2013 seven students from QM sat the Arkwright Scholarship examination. The initial assessment was based on an application form and a formal examination. Results were issued on 8 March and Xavier Tang, Jimmy Chuong, Omar Itaf and Jaskeiran Dhandwar had been selected to attend the final stage of the selection process. Early next term we'll hear if any have been successful in being awarded a very prestigious Arkwright Scholarship.

## Intermediate Maths Challenge

**Mr Litchfield reports:** In February, 67 pupils from Years 9, 10 and 11 took part in the Intermediate Maths Challenge, achieving an excellent set of results, with 21 gold, 18 silver and 15 bronze certificates being awarded. It was also very pleasing to see 11 pupils qualifying for further rounds of the competition as a result of their strong performance. In particular, Gaurav Bhalla and Shayan Ahmed should be praised for qualifying for the prestigious Olympiad papers. Shayan achieved a stellar score of 114 out of 135 in the first round, earning him the title of "Best in School". We await the next set of results with eager anticipation.

## Spring Concert

**Richard Ng writes:** 2012-13 has been hugely significant for the Music department at QMGS. We have welcomed Mr Vause as our new Director of Music. The Spring Concert, on Thursday 21st March, was the culmination of our 6.2s' years of service to the Music department as well as a chance to witness the passing of the musical torch to younger pupils. The audience who packed the hall for the event also witnessed a historic moment: the first public outing of the newly-resurrected QM Concert Band, a joint ensemble featuring players from our school with QMHS & Mayfield. As part of an incredibly diverse programme we were treated to polished performances from a Dhol Drum Group, Skiffle Group and the newly-formed Year 7 & 8 Choir in the first half, with the second half featuring a Sixth Form acapella Barbershop Octet and a grand finale that brought together the Concert Band, Senior Choir and Year 7 & 8 Choir. Dotted throughout were instrumental solos that ranged from the baritone to the electric guitar but which were invariably exceptional. Thanks go to all performers for providing us with such an awe-inspiring evening, with special thanks going to all instrumental teachers for their assistance on the night, as well as our very own Mr Hughes for his work with Skiffle Group and Mrs Lupton and Mrs Philips for their contribution to the Senior Choir. Appreciation must be expressed to Mr Merrimam-Johnson of QMHS for his part in making Concert Band possible, and finally, none of this would have been possible without the blood, sweat and tears that Mr Vause has managed to squeeze out of himself in just his first year as Director of Music. An end of an era but the start of another, this was a truly wonderful night for everybody.

## QM Cross Country:



Members of the QMGS Cross Country team

**Michael Sunner writes:** QMGS Cross Country continued their consistent form from the previous term into the New Year. Following their last race of 2012 where they dominated both A team and B team races, the first race of 2013 was no different. QMGS had completed another double, winning both the A team and B team races against difficult opposition. This was a significant milestone for QMGS Cross Country. In previous years the team were taken light-heartedly by the opposition. However, times have changed and now when the mighty team (above) turn up to an event, just their appearance evokes fear amongst the hearts of our competitors. Within the space of a few months we have become a major force within the league and our thanks go to Mr. Clements and Mr. Larvin whose training, enthusiasm and passion for Cross Country has brought us to this position.

The team have blended well; the energy of the Year 11 members has complemented the experience of the Sixth Form members along with the leadership of the faithful 'Old Guard'; captain Sam Smethurst, a returning Jack Gorman, Brad Adams, Elliot Farley, Jamie Evans and myself. We look forward to another year of Cross Country as 2013 will have a bright future for QMGS Cross Country.

## CCF Summary for the Spring Term:

**Matthew Elliot writes:** The annual Air Squadron Trophy competition was a major success with the contingent winning the shooting and general knowledge competitions and coming fifth overall. Recruits Weekend and Antarctic Warfare provided some excellent training at Farchynys, with exercises on the headland, and command tasks. Farchynys also was host to the CCCT Weekend in which a number of cadets used command and communication skills to successfully defend Harlech from a simulated enemy invasion. Unfortunately this term's field day which was to be held at Swynnerton training area was cancelled due to hazardous weather conditions. This was an unfortunate conclusion to a successful term for QMGS CCF.

**Editorial Team** Editor: Mr R Langton

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Contributors: Mr Collins, Mr Francis, Matthew Elliot, Arondip Pharwaha, Jake Garrett, Miss Timmins, Mrs Roderick, Siman Nijar, Kyran Kanda, Shamma Khan, Mr Ridler, Rikesh Patel, Mr Litchfield, Bradleigh Smith, Alex Jones, Mr Hughes, Christian Clark, Richard Ng, Aamanh Sehdev & Gavan Nijjar

## Hockey:

**Mr Francis writes:** In what has been a frustrating season because of a bleak winter, there have been several highlights. Tom Ford (pictured right) has emerged from a player who was in the 2nd set in Year 10 to become one of the most prolific goal scorers the school has seen. He notched his 52<sup>nd</sup> goal of senior hockey in his final match against Warwick School. The team which Tom has captained this season has been the most successful 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in the last 15 years, winning 14 of their 20 matches and beating many independent schools on the way. Hockey is thriving at the school and with a number of B & even C Team fixtures there are a lot of pupils experiencing competitive Hockey for the first time. The U14 team reached the last eight in the Midlands Hockey tournament & were the only state school in attendance; showing we continue to punch above our weight.



## Year 7 Rugby:



**Mr Collins reports:** A fine first season was capped off by the Year 7 Rugby team as they were crowned as winners of the Walsall School's Tournament (above). They played 5 matches; the opposition being Walsall Academy, Shire Oak, St Francis, Streetly and Aldridge school; scoring an impressive 22 tries and conceding 0. There were 10 try scorers, with Suglani in 7D scoring an amazing 5 tries! The squad played well throughout, expertly captained by Pepper of 7D, with Back of the Tournament going to Huyskens and forward of the tournament going to Clarke 7P. The team also finished with runners-up medals in the annual Staffordshire Tournament in Lichfield. On a bitterly cold day, the boys bravely and skilfully battled through six group matches to reach the final. The early matches saw the QM boys demonstrate their class (and size!) with 6 straight victories. After a Churchillian pep talk from the coach, the final took place against old rivals Newcastle. Against a backdrop of an enthusiastic crowd, a tense first half saw some resolute defence from QM and a blank score sheet at half-time. Another sterling effort in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, but QM couldn't quite prevent the try which won Newcastle the match. It was a fabulous effort from the QM boys and they should be proud of their efforts in their first season of rugby.