



The QM Observer

Summer Term Newsletter

Wednesday 16th July 2014

QMGS students reach new heights



Project Horizon: Beat Felix

Mr Coghlan writes: Horizon's mission to Beat Felix, has been a real adventure. The training flight, 'Gagarin' broke all previous school altitude records, reaching 35118m. This was followed by their first high altitude probe, 'Armstrong' which smashed Gagarin's record, reaching 38915m. Armstrong was just 130m below the altitude achieved by Felix Baumgartner and the Red Bull Stratos Team. The Beat Felix Team are pinning their hopes on their final flight, 'Hadfield', which will launch on Saturday 5th July (after this newsletter had gone to print). Over £2400 was raised in equipment and funds with several high profile sponsors getting involved. The project has attracted lots of attention with congratulations from adventurer/presenter Dallas Campbell, Valerie Vaz MP, the Rt Hon David Willetts MP (Minister for Universities and Science), Major Timothy Peake (the British Astronaut), the UK Space Agency and the European Space Agency. The project's next mission, 'Sun Chaser' has been awarded a Special Merit Prize by Rolls-Royce along with £1000 in funding. The photos show the images from near the peak altitude (above) and the team meeting the Mayor of Walsall (left)

Art Exhibition



Yasmin Warrilow writes: On Friday 27th June, an evening of the classics: music, art and wine was held in the Collier Centre, as a showcase of both the GCSE and A-level art students' hard work throughout the year, accompanied by pieces from the prestigious Arnold Fellows Collection. The masterpieces, although varied in style and technique, all maintained the same level of excellence and hence, attracted a large crowd of visitors comprising family, friends and art fanatics alike. Standout pieces included Emmanuel Daniel's witty watercolour take on bulls, beef and burgers; Elizabeth Ash's delectable delicatessen delights and Simran Malhi's hyper-realistic and colourful confectionary. Many thanks to all the teachers for the cake provisions, the art and technology departments for organisation and the musicians for the wonderful ambiance to finish off a great evening!



Music Concert

Mr Swain writes: What a terrific way to round off the musical year! The Hall was packed with parents keen to find out whether Mr Vause had managed to work his magic on their sons after just ten months with their trumpets, clarinets, baritones and trombones. We were not disappointed. The Year 7 band (all 100 of them!) looked good on stage and, even more amazing, produced a happy, convincing sound. There were some solo performances too. They impressed us in different ways. Some, already experienced when they arrived at QM, showcased excellent achievements; others demonstrated how much progress can be made in one short year. Then there was the Main School Band: 42 players giving us a glimpse



of an exciting musical future at Queen Mary's. Mr Vause made a pitch for a concert in Symphony Hall in a few years' time. Put the date in your diaries now - July 2017. By then our very own band will really be able to raise the roof. This year's concert proved beyond doubt: we're on our way!



Barcelona Trip

Bilal Saleem writes: On 23rd June, 43 pupils and 4 teachers set off for Spain. We visited La Sagrada Familia, the Nou Camp, Parque Guell and Las Ramblas. We also visited oceanic caves just outside the small town of Tossa Del Mar, where we were staying. After returning to the beach, we visited the local town of Tossa Del Mar and had the chance to go to the swimming pool. The next day was probably the highlight of the trip as we went to the Portaventura Theme Park where we went on Europe's highest ride, "Shambhala." On Friday, we took a flight back to England and returned to QMGS.

GCSE Paris Trip

Tom Gray reports: Early on 28th June, 18 Year 10 pupils set off on a cultural trip to Paris. On our first day, we visited the Sacré Coeur Basilica, experienced the Parisian metro, walked under The Arc de Triomphe and then walked down the Champs-Élysées before visiting the Louvre museum where we saw the famous Mona Lisa. The next day, we went on a cruise along the River Seine, saw the Eiffel tower and visited the awe-inspiring Notre-Dame cathedral. After lunch, we visited the historical palace of Versailles and its gardens. Our final day in Paris was dedicated to the visit of Napoleon's tomb and the attached Army museum. The trip was an excellent way of enhancing French skills outside of the classroom! It is a lot of fun to take part in and gives you lifelong memories.



Black Forest Trip

Tim Crooks writes: After a very long day of travelling through France and Luxembourg a group of 29 students and 3 staff arrived at our accommodation for dinner and a game of football. On the first day we explored Freiburg with a tour guide who told us interesting facts about the town. We also went up on Germany's longest loop cable car (Schaunslandbahn) for spectacular panoramic views of Freiburg and the Rhine Valley. The next day we travelled into France to visit Strasbourg. Its Cathedral of Notre-Dame was the tallest building between 1625- 1847. Inside it has a giant clock which not only tells the time but also the movements of the planets and the zodiac.



Easter Camp

Dan Russon writes: On 2nd April, 4 RAF Cadets from the CCF Contingent met up with 50 other cadets from around the country in Birmingham Airport. They set off for ten action-packed days in Cyprus and were to stay at the RAF's most eastern operational air base, Akrotiri. The visit consisted of many leadership and team-building exercises as well as some leisure activities, such as Go-karting, Banana-Boating and Clay Pigeon Shooting. Some of the experiences wouldn't be possible in the UK so having the opportunity to take them up in Cyprus was a privilege.



NMA plaque

David Pearce reports: On Friday 27th June, the CCF contingent together with the headmaster and teachers and governors of the school witnessed the dedication of a tree in the National Memorial Arboretum as a sign of the school's remembrance to the fallen old boys and teachers who served in the Great War. The commemoration was led by Mr Hughes, together with the Headmaster and Mr. Fawson and a plaque and poppy wreath installed by two members of the CCF, one Army and one RAF. Overall, it was a memorable occasion for all involved and a fitting tribute to the old boys and staff who lost their lives in the First World War.

There have also been many CCF trips this term including desert warfare and 'Operation Sleepless Night'. Students enjoyed the unique experiences offered by the CCF.

Oxford German Olympiad



Paramveer Bhachu and Ben Fortes-Mayer write: The Oxford German Olympiad is a competition run by the German network to promote German speaking in schools. There are 3 different categories across 3 different age ranges. We entered the year 10/11 category and adapted Franz Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis'. As it was a silent movie, we created German subtitles. We were awarded second place overall and Ben travelled down to Oxford University for the presentation along with Mrs McPhee.

Farchynys



Syed Hassan writes: Farchynys was an amazing experience, it provided an opportunity to visit Wales. There are many fascinating landscapes and landmarks and I got to know my class mates better. I gained life long memories of the amazing places we visited.

At Farchynys we went to Cymer Abbey, Llechwedd Slate Mine, Beaches, Centre of Alternative Technology, Harlech Castle and Llanfair Slate Mine. We went on two walks, Precipice Walk and Coed y Brenin Forest Walk. Harlech Castle was marvellous, it looked amazing and was built upon a hill. When you looked out of the windows the houses were tiny. The walks were fun and the view around us was amazing.

Biology Challenge

Miss Alam writes: During March, around 10,000 Year 9 and 10 students within the UK took part in the Biology Challenge 2014, including 93 Year 9 students from Queen Mary's. Throughout the extensive number of participators, only 5% of them received a Gold Certificate, whilst 10% received Silver, and 15% received Bronze. 38 of our students were commended and 32 highly commended, Zaahid Akbar, Daniel Anson, Jamaal Butt, Matthew Chislett, Rajveer Dhindsa, Muhammed Esat, Sam Hart, Lahiru Palipana, Jamie Prew, Hisham Sarapuddin, Samuel Shackleton, Musa-Ali Shah and David Yacoub all qualified for a bronze certificate. A particularly wonderful achievement was Stuart Kirk's - he attained a silver certificate.

DT Enamelling

Bilal Saleem reports: On the first day back from half term, particular Year 8 DT students took part in an enamelling workshop, where they were briefed on the aim of the day and went on to use their skills to create various decorations, such as butterflies, dragonflies and flowers. The students moulded the copper sheets using tools, and washed them with Pumice rock to clean them. To finish the experience, they painted their modern garlands with glass powder and heated them in the kiln at 800 °C. Everyone was pleased with their creations of different and exciting decorations, making the day a great experience to be involved in.

DT Crest Awards

Mr Hughes reports: All 30 AS DT students achieved a silver CREST award that recognises and rewards creativity in engineering, science and technology. To achieve the award they worked alongside QM old boy subject mentors while designing and making their AS major project. The process finished with a formal presentation in front of Carole Gallant, CREST representative and Jacob Graham, QM old boy. All students will work towards a gold CREST award in 6.2.



Skiffle Gigs

Samuel Darby informs us: On Tuesday 24th June and Wednesday 25th June, our school's Skiffle Group, led by Mr Hughes, went to Chasetown and Burntwood Methodist Churches to perform 45 minute gigs in the Meeting Groups on these days. They performed Lonnie Donegan hits from the 1950s and '60s. The crowds, roughly thirty in each venue, enjoyed the gigs, as they happily participated and clapped throughout performances.



Food Tech and French

Ben Whitehead writes: Mr Perrault took a group of Year 7s to the Food Tech room to learn a variety of key French words and make cookies at the same time. This was a memorable and valuable lesson which was enjoyed by everyone, especially as they got to expand on their speaking skills weeks after the session. It was agreed that the French food tech was a great cross curricular activity and a brilliant way to develop their linguistic abilities.



Reading Challenge

Mrs K Taylor: The whole school reading challenge consisted of reading 16 books in 16 (school) weeks. There were 3 levels: Bronze, where 8 books needed to have been read, Silver which required 12 books to be completed, and gold for those who accomplished the full challenge. There were 4 students (Robert Peacock, Ajay Sahdev, Chandon Jolly and Oliver Richards) who managed to reach the gold level, and were rewarded with a certificate and a book token for £5 each.

History Society

Matthew Chislett writes: The last History Trip with Mr Lawrence was a visit to Farchynys and after a scenic drive and fish and chips, we strolled along the seafront before returning to the coach house to relax. Saturday saw some atrocious weather, so after getting drenched walking to Llanfair PG and Beaumaris Gaol, we learned about the multiple uses it had and it's dark secret... it was a mass-grave for the bodies of people who had been executed. On the Sunday, we visited the stately home of the First Marquess of Anglesey with its impressive wall-to-wall mural which changes perspective as you moved past it. Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable trip.

Geography Field Trips

Mr Langton writes: The penultimate week of term proved to be an extremely busy one for the Geography department, with fieldwork taking place in Years 8, 9 & 10. The Year 9 groups spent the Monday considering the limestone scenery & mining industry in the Peak District, whilst the Year 8s investigated ecosystem adaptations and rainforest issues at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The Year 10s finished off the week gathering data in Walsall for their controlled assessment. The department look forward to more fieldwork in the form of an international trip to Iceland in 2015.

DT at JCB and NMA

Abbie Westwood writes: On the 8th July a group of AS Design students visited JCB and the National Memorial Arboretum. At JCB we were able to gain an insight into how products are designed, made and sold in a large scale business. We also learnt about the importance of branding and building a good reputation amongst customers. At the NMA we saw memorials that not only showed innovative design but were also amazing tributes to those who lost their lives in the war.



Cricket

Mr Langton reports: This year has seen the partnership with Walsall CC blossom and set firm foundations for the future of cricket at QMGs. As well as Walsall CC playing their 3rd XI fixtures at the school and using the sports hall for their winter nets, coaches Mike Hingley and Jon Moore have been instrumental in running practices and assisting staff in officiating fixtures.

On the field, the senior sides have come across some challenging opposition, with 1st XI fixtures against KE Aston and Five Ways being rather one sided, but some promising individual performances give hope for the future. Tayib Akram scored 40 in the senior house fixtures and followed this up with 3-14 against KE Aston in captaining the 2nd XI. Najuf Ikhlq scored an impressive 61 no in the KE Aston match to successfully chase 122. Najuf also managed to score 46 in the house semi-finals; the final of this competition won by Nathan Blackwood's 44 for Aragon over Darby. The 1st XI managed to beat the staff in a close game by 2 wickets, Navjoth Rai scoring 25 not out as the students chased 107 for victory, despite 3-12 from Mr Ridler.

The U15 side have battled hard, but have struggled to post competitive scores. Jack Lowe's 51 against Lawrence Sheriff School (LSS) was undoubtedly the highlight, but a close game against Bablake (losing by 2 wickets) showed that the team have the necessary grit to succeed. Mahan Dulai took 3-14 in this game.

Ben Hopton has led the U14 side by example, being the leading run scorer and wicket taker. Ben took 6-18 in a losing cause against Bablake at the start of the season and scored his first half century (51 no) for the school against LSS. Musa Iqbal has flourished with the ball this season, taking wickets in games against LSS (2-7) and Old Swinford Hospital (OSH) (1-10). The B team secured a memorable 4 run win against KE Aston, defending just 50, with Giaan Sidhu taking 2-1 and Imran Dalvi 2-6 (photo below).

The main headline for the U13s has got to be from the house competition, where Rohit



Suglani took advantage of some shortened boundaries (due to the wet ground) and plundered an unbeaten 103, including 5 sixes in the final over! Rohit has continued his form into school games, scoring 33 no in a 10 wicket win against LSS. The A team (above) lost a close game against BVGS, but have shown some real spirit and potential for the future.

The enthusiasm of the U12 team has been infectious this year, with bumper practice turnouts stretching back to December. The A and B teams have worked hard with Mike and Mr Collins and have secured some excellent results. Parmdeep Kalsi has excelled for the A team, scoring 16 and taking 4-12 in a win over Bablake, as well as 21 and 1-8 in a narrow defeat to LSS. Nikhil Rathod has shone for the B team, scoring 47 no and taking 4-2 in the win over Bablake and 4-18 and 14 no against LSS. A tie for the A team and win for Bs against BVGS were also part of an exciting season.

Tennis



Reuben Sidhu writes: Despite the inexperience of the Year 8 tennis team, the school still had a very successful season. This year the team consisted of seven players and they faced three schools altogether: Aldridge, King Edward's Lichfield, and Erasmus Darwin Academy. Alex Liu is the only player to have played them all. Overall the Year 8 teams remain undefeated and were winners of the Central Staffordshire League. We are looking forward to next season.

Golf

Glen Foster writes: In June, a group of lucky Year 9 students received a series of golf sessions, which were held after school at the nearby Walsall Golf Club (photo below). Initially, they were tutored in some fundamental concepts and techniques (including putting and chipping) by qualified PGA professional, Dan Higgs. We then progressed on to the range and encountered more complex skills, such as driving, under the observant eye of Mr G Taylor. Competitive zest soon manifested when games were introduced. All of the pupils involved thoroughly enjoyed this insight into a new sport.



Athletics

The school team finished a creditable 3rd at the Walsall School's Athletics Championship against strong opposition at the Alexander stadium. Zac Elliott of 7A (below) competed at the Warwickshire County Athletics Championships in June and came away with 3 gold medals (100m, long jump & high jump) and a Championship under 13 age group record of 4.95m in the long jump.



Editorial Team Editor: Mr R Langton; Sub-Editors: Lorna Barrett & Abigail Westwood

Contributors: Mr Coghlan, Mr Swain, Yasmin Warrilow, Reuben Sidhu, Glen Foster, Bilal Saleem, Daniel Russon, David Pearce, Tom Gray, Paramveer Bhachu, Syed Hassan, Tim Crooks, Ben Fortes-Mayer, Matthew Chislet, Sam Darby, Ben Whitehead, Miss Alam, Mr Hughes, Mrs K Taylor