



The QM Observer

Spring Term Newsletter

Thursday 24th March 2016

A term of adventures: new and old!



Alabama trip

Rhys Lewellyn reveals: During the February half term, 34 pupils, including myself, had the experience of a lifetime travelling to Alabama and completing the Advanced Space Academy program at the National Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville. Mission simulations, rocket engineering and learning about the history of American space technology were all incredibly entertaining and made all the more enjoyable thanks to the fantastic teamwork of both Goddard and Von Braun. Graduation was a moment of personal and collective celebration: winning the Right Stuff award was a great individual honour, but also being a part of the Goddard team which won the Commander's Cup was a moment of true pride. Other fantastic experiences included ice hockey and basketball matches and the beautiful cathedral caverns. Goddard's principles of empathy, trust and commitment helped us all to grow as a team and develop as individuals. Thank you to the staff involved for an amazing trip.

Lanzarote diving trip



Thomas Blackwell writes: In February half-term, twenty students from Years 10, 11 and the Lower Sixth, accompanied by Mr. Rendu and Dr. Ramalho, embarked on a six-day diving trip in Lanzarote, Spain. Following a varied and utterly exhilarating programme of underwater activities (culminating in some unforgettable "fun" dives at the conclusion of our courses) all those attending qualified as either a Scuba, Open Water or Advanced Open Water Diver. All participants really enjoyed the excursion, and are eagerly looking forward to the forthcoming QMGS diving trip, planned for October 2017.

Farchynys

Mr Langton writes: The A level Geographers have been the latest group this term to enjoy the delights that Farchynys has to offer. Spread over two weeks, the students headed out from the coach house to carry out fieldwork in Snowdonia (below right) and on the sand dunes of Morfa-Dyffryn. The summer term will see a record number of Year 7s enjoying Farchynys for the first time and the Headmaster has launched an ambitious fundraising campaign to be able to buy additional property and land at the coach house.

The purchases will enable future Marians to continue to benefit from Farchynys and potential donors are encouraged to contact Mr Swain at the School.





Biology Olympiad

Mr Rendu recalls: The Biology Department had another successful year in the Royal Society of Biology Olympiad. Harkieran Grewal of 6.2 attained the highest score overall, with Sundeep Sandhu gaining a Gold Medal: an excellent achievement for a 6.1 student. Altogether 29 students gained awards, after completing two challenging papers on topics well above the core A-Level Biology specification.

Chemistry lectures

Dr. Pilkington informs us: A series of Chemistry lectures at Birmingham University have continued to inspire and intrigue Sixth Formers this term with an eclectic range of topics. Our pupils have learnt about nanotechnology, the importance of chirality to the action of drugs and our sense of smell, and encountered chemical engineering by way of chocolate crème eggs.

Sixth Form Languages

Preet Bajwa says: On 26th February, the Lower Sixth language groups went to the University of Birmingham for some lectures on certain movie scenes in our language of study: forming essentially Film Studies in either French, German or Spanish. It was an enjoyable afternoon where we analysed and learned about a variety of things concerning cinema, such as specific camera angles and the effect they have on the audience. We also completed worksheets in our chosen language to increase our knowledge about specific topics, and have a glimpse into what we may encounter at A2. Overall, the lectures gave us a wider understanding on the world of film as well as developing our language skills.

Chess tournaments



Mr Smethurst reports: This term has seen two major chess tournaments, together with some exciting fixtures. On Friday 5 February, a team of students from Y7 & 8 took part in the Lightning Tournament at KES Edgbaston. All pupils managed to win at least one game: well done to all involved! Particular mention should go to Amrit Singh and Joshwan Jagpal for attaining board prizes, triumphing in 7 out of 8 and 5 out of 8 games respectively. Following this, the last Saturday in February saw the School play host to a National U14s Tournament (pictured above) which included teams from Surrey and Oxford. Following a long day of chess, Magdalene College School emerged as winners and KES as runners-up. Well done to Dhiren Bahia (a board one player) for securing a board trophy after tough contests against graded competitors: one such player boasted a grade of 169.

Debating

Miss Richards reports: The School's Debating Society has met several times this term, discussing controversial issues such as how far freedom of speech should be restricted in schools and whether Donald Trump should be elected in November as the next American President. In honour of International Women's Day in March, there was a hugely popular debate on whether women are truly equal citizens in the UK today. There have been numerous passionate disagreements, some of which were seen by the entire School community during a debate on the importance of arts subjects in comparison to STEM studies during Assembly in February. Students of all ages have taken part - there cannot be many societies where Year 7s get to take on Year 13s... and sometimes defeat them!

Science Live

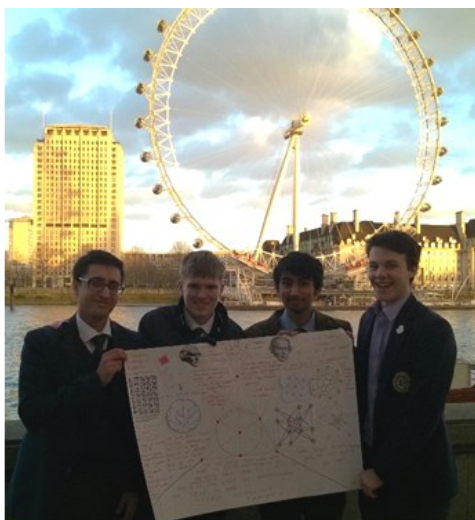
Stuart Kirk writes: On Monday 29th February, a group of about 30 year 11 pupils, including myself, accompanied by Mr Rockett, Dr Pilkington and Mr Rendu, made their way to the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham for the Science Live event. Here we listened to lectures from five different scientists and a GCSE chief examiner. Highlights included an engaging demonstration and talk from Professor Andrea Sella, fascinating investigations of black holes and time travel from Dr Simon Singh, and Jim Al-Khalili as well as a lecture packed with innuendos from Professor Lord Robert Winston.

Physics olympiad

Mr Rockett reports: The Year 11s who faced up to this year's onslaught gave it a really good go and I am pleased with the number of successes. Ben Hopton and Sam Shackleton just missed out on a Gold medal, but they have comfortably beaten the previous year's highest scorers. Two Silvers and eight Bronzes is a good haul and I commend all who had a go at a very tricky paper.

Maths competitions

Mr Litchfield writes: In March, the Senior Maths Team (consisting of Liam O'Connor, Shayan Ahmed, George Benbow and Gaurav Bhalla) took part in the UK Maths Trust National Final in London, spending the day tackling fiendishly difficult problems against 85 other schools. The team really impressed me with the level of detail in their research, and the team (pictured right in the capital) thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of the competition. It was great to see a superb group of such passionate mathematicians working collaboratively in one place and they should be congratulated for their 65th place finish.



Mr Diskin reports: The Junior Maths Team produced a superb performance to win the UKMT Regional Team Challenge Final. Our team (Karamraj Garewal, Robert Peacock, Dylan Khangure, Rahul Randhawa) demonstrated incredible ingenuity and talent as they competed with the other 29 teams. They also showed an excellent understanding of each other as a team and this effective collaboration ensured they made very few errors, scoring 59 out of 60 in the final round (in which some schools only managed to complete half). They have qualified for the national finals, and poster competition, in London later this year.

Mr Lax and Mrs K Taylor write: In support of our pupils' wider reading and in order to mark World Book Day, the English Department has been running a sponsored Readathon. During the week KS3 pupils were asked to read at least three fiction texts and to explore different genres and series to take them out of their reading comfort zones. Sponsorship raised for 2016 is for CLIC Sergeant, Roald Dahl Marvellous Children's Charity & Readwell. Over the last ten years, we have raised around £30,000. Additionally, 40 pupils took part to help to break the previous world record for the number of people simultaneously taking part in a book quiz.



History



Miss Roberts-Gawen: What a busy term for the History Department! We were delighted to welcome Mark Vance – a History Interpreter – for an interactive lecture on the Wars of the Roses for 6.2s. From listening to stories of magnates usurping monarchs to watching students adorn medieval armour, the lecture provided both significant supporting, contextualised material for coursework essays as well as bringing the period to life. The 6th form benefited from a lecture day on Modern Britain at the Carr's Lane Centre. Valuable revision material was presented on Britain in the 1850s and 60s in four academic lectures. An added bonus from the day is the favourite lecturer of the day, Andrew Baker, will be visiting us at QM in April to run some additional revision lectures for the Sixth Form. Individual academic success was achieved by a number of Year 12s who submitted essays to various university essay prize competitions. Whilst we await results for some of these competitions, we are delighted to celebrate with Balraj Jhooty for his commendation in the Cambridge Essay Competition.

School council

Simranjeet Singh Uppal (Chairman) reports: The School Council has met twice this term. We have had the privilege of showcasing what we do in a full school assembly and we had the School Chef come to speak to us. We have also debated about hygiene, library fines and food portions to name a few. The Council will meet again next term and we shall discuss more topics that affect YOU and OUR COMMUNITY. Please let me know if you have ideas or concerns to make OUR School a better place for all of us.



Satya Wunnava writes: In December 2015, 27 Year 10 and 11 students travelled to Nottingham University to attend a Medlink event. The event consisted of two batches of lectures separated by a 2 hour gap where students could walk around stalls set up by various universities and companies, both national and international. The lectures were based on entry requirements to do medicine at university, the UKCAT and why you should consider universities abroad. The highlight of the trip was a lecture by motivational speaker James Ridgeway on how to perform in an interview. I would like to thank Mr Collins and Mrs Mehta for organising the trip and accompanying us.

Coca-Cola business trip



Preet Bajwa and Aaron Saini: On 22nd February, our Year 12 business class visited the Coca-Cola factory in Milton Keynes. We learnt how the factory operated and how products were manufactured efficiently to keep costs per unit down. It was an informative trip which broadened our understanding on business and operations as we were given the chance to look at several parts of the factory and how it was managed. Over approximately 2 hours, we learnt what it took to create a single can and bottle of Coca-Cola and also about several other business aspects such as marketing and franchising.

STEM competition: In January, Toby Harrington, Dalraj Kher, Navin Johal and Matthew Chislett headed to the Royal School Wolverhampton for a bridge building competition, which tested teamwork and engineering skills to support weights and a remote-controlled car crossing the bridge. We were happy to achieve second place. Toby Harrington

Engineering society: Pupils attending EngSoc sessions this term have embarked on a series of challenges, which tested and consolidated a vast skill set. These challenges ranged from Cotton Wheel Cars, Flood Plain Plateau building, and even Marshmallow Pyramids! We look forward to building on this next term. Robert Elkington

SEE STEM visit: delegates from Holland, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Turkey were welcomed in January to see STEM in action happening at our school. They received talks from the Project Horizon team and the School's present Arkwright Scholars about STEM Mentoring, EngSoc, the new £1 coin and the Arkwright Scholarship in what hopefully was an informative and useful morning. David Pearce

CCF

James Miller & Dan Russon: It's been another busy term for the CCF! There have been three trips to Farchynys: Recruits and Antarctic Training weekends with the recruits, and the now well established Cadet Command and Control Trainer. Back in the Midlands things are always busy: 22 cadets have flown; Camran Purewal won the best shot cup; and there's been much practising in preparation for the unit's Biennial Review at the end of term when Air Cdre Quigley will inspect the contingent. There's no rest during the Easter Break with cadets off to North Wales for both Adventurous Training and the RAF Annual Camp.

RSC trip

Mr Lax writes: On Friday 4th March, 14 members of the cast and crew of "Bassett", plus three members of staff were treated to a lively and illuminating production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford. Thanks go to Miss Slater for organising such an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Rugby



Mr Collins reports: Year 7 rugby players were involved in the annual Walsall Schools Rugby Tournament at Walsall Academy. We entered two teams in the tournament and came first and third. One team winning 1, drawing 1 and losing 1 and playing in the 3rd/4th place Final, with the team winning that. The other team winning all three games and winning their final to be crowned Walsall schools champions and maintaining the unbeaten record for ALL their year 7 matches.

Cricket Coaching

Mr Gibbons & Tayyib Akram: Cricket training commenced this term and the new initiative was the introduction of developmental 'pod' sessions for the 1st XI, who worked specifically on batting techniques when facing pace and spin bowling. In addition to a full fixture card for all age groups, Saturday fixtures will be reintroduced for the U12/U13 teams to provide further opportunities for the boys to improve. Moreover, alongside entry in regional and national cups across each year, Mr. Gibbons is looking forward to hosting an inaugural 10s Tournament at QM for the U15 team. A final congratulations to Tayyib Akram, Nathan Blackwood, Sanesh Patel, Arjun Patel and Nilan Patel who were awarded their Cricket Colours in assembly.



Alex Storey Writes: Special recognition goes out to Nathan Blackwood, Ethan Walker, Daniel Bishop and Seth Jordan for their excellent achievements in extra-curricular rugby. Blackwood, after a sustained period of injury, had his first XV debut for Walsall Rugby club. Walker represented Staffs in the Rugby championships versus Lancashire whilst Bishop and Jordan had their first call ups to represent Staffs country XV at U15. Congratulations to all four in their excellent achievements.

Hockey



The spring term has seen the usual high volume of hockey fixtures, with A/B fixtures played in most year groups. The senior teams have enjoyed mixed fortunes, coming up against strong opposition, with a highlight for the 1st XI being the 7-1 victory over Newcastle, which featured hat-tricks from Hopton and Hazel.

The U15s have produced some excellent results, winning 6-0 against both King Henrys and Kingsmead and the U14s have won 10 games in total, including 4-0 over Derby, 5-0 against BVGS and 6-0 verses Newcastle.

The highlights of the hockey season surely have to be reserved for the U12 and U13 sides, who were both crowned Staffordshire county champions. The U13s (pictured above) won a tight final

Athletics

Zach Elliot (right) has continued to make excellent progress on the national athletics scene, by being crowned national England Champion in the long jump in February in Sheffield. It was his first national England Title with a PB jump of 6.02m. He is now ranked No. 1 in the UK in that event for the U15B age group. Zach also went on to win a silver medal in the 60m Hurdles. In March, Zach claimed another long jump gold, along with a silver in the pentathlon at the England Athletics indoor Combined Events in Sheffield.



Girls' Games

Kareeyce Samuels writes: During a trip to Portway Climbing Centre, 16 sixth formers stepped out of their comfort zones and had an exhilarating time whilst doing so. This sporting activity is a part of a Sportivate-funded initiative to get more girls involved in sports. During this time, it was clear to see the added thrill of climbing to heights of up to 12m. Not only this, but learning to tie ropes and belay for each other added to the experience, as we gained independence and control over what we had first done at Boulder Central. As well as improving our knowledge of safety, we strengthened the friendships as the weeks passed, and what better way to truly test them, than the weekly climbing race.

1-0 against Newcastle and the U12s triumphed by the same score-line in their final against St Edwards. Dominic Smith scored the winning goal for the U12s.

Thanks must go to Mr Francis and all of the staff who have accompanied the hockey teams, as well as taking training sessions.
Mr Langton

Futsal



Mr Gibbons & Joe Popple: On the 11th February, a QM U12 & U14 Futsal team travelled to the Birmingham International Futsal Arena to compete in the Black Country Futsal Championships. The QM side finished first in their respective groups and qualified for the Birmingham finals which will be held in April.