



# The QM Observer

Spring Term Newsletter

Friday 7th April 2017

## Working hard for the welfare of QMGs

### The HM in Downing St.

WE THOUGHT it was a hoax at first. In these days of fake news, an invitation from the Prime Minister that arrives by email does more to raise suspicion than the spirits. However, a voice at the end of an enquiries hotline sounded reassuringly authentic and so, towards the end of last month, the Headmaster travelled to Downing Street for a Reception at Number Ten.

"It was the first time this term that my crutches were a positive advantage," he told us. "I was given the only seat in the room, which just happened to be right by the Prime Minister's lectern!" It also meant that Mr Swain had the opportunity to talk to the Secretary of State for Education (right) about grammar schools, Queen Mary's and The Mercian Trust.



The Reception was given to celebrate the achievements of what the government is calling schools that work for everyone. Mr Swain was under no illusion why he had been invited. "I was there", he told us, "to represent everyone who works so hard for the School!"

### Mental Health

**Mrs McPhee reports:** February saw the first QMGs Mental Health Awareness Week, a series of events designed to provide information and support to our young people in response to recent reports that mental ill-health is on the rise amongst teenagers. Behind the scenes, Mr Langton and the staff Mental Health Working Party had discussed and researched the issue beforehand, and all staff have received training with the charity Time to Change.

The week saw whole-school and year assemblies on general mental wellbeing and digital detoxing; Year 7 PSHEE lessons delivered by 6<sup>th</sup> Formers on the detrimental effects of technology; the launch of mental health ambassador drop-in sessions run by trained 6<sup>th</sup> form students, plus the MindSoc and Judge Denison societies holding sessions on psychological disorders. On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February, parents were invited in for an awareness session with Gemma Fieldsend from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust.

Our work, however, does not end here. Our School Council will be visiting Year 6 pupils at local primaries during April to teach about digital detoxing and how to manage transition as part of their entry to the Speaker's Schools Competition. In May, Y8 will have a mental health session as part of PSHEE Day. Promoting and using strategies for maintaining optimum mental health should not just be a one-off, box-ticking event, but something we must ALL incorporate into our daily routine.

### Canada Ski Trip



**Keval Nathwani writes:** During the February half term, 19 students from the Grammar School joined the High School on a skiing trip to Panorama Ski Resort in BC, Canada. After a long flight to Calgary, we arrived at the ski resort, fatigued but enthusiastic for the long week of skiing ahead. Each day comprised a full five hour skiing day where we were split into six groups of varied aptitudes. During the week all skiers, experienced or novice, improved their ability on the slopes with some attempting, with varied success, a double black diamond and even some jumps. The evenings were arranged with leisure activities such as musical bingo and a swim in the hot springs; however, the focus of our enjoyment was the endless opportunity to rush down the slopes with the chilly Rocky Mountain air wafting in our faces. I can say with confidence that after such an enjoyable trip those who have 'caught the bug', will no doubt be returning!

### Florida Space Trip



**Miss Smith:** Shortly before half term, on 16<sup>th</sup> February, a group of students from the Grammar and High Schools travelled across the Atlantic for a trip to Florida. After an early start, the first full day encompassed a visit to the Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, the highlight being a private, behind-the-scenes tour, during which we were the only people in the park! The following day, we headed to the Kennedy Space Centre, and despite not being able to witness a rocket launch, all students (and staff) had a highly enjoyable day. Further highlights of our time in the States included an afternoon at Epcot; a tutorial demonstrating traditional Native Indian methods of alligator hunting; a morning at Boggy Creek Airboats; and a full day of astronaut training. We returned home on the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> February, jet-lagged but having enjoyed a varied and highly successful trip.

### National Youth Orchestra



From the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February, Manveer and I travelled to Liverpool for a residential weekend run by the NYO. On Saturday/Sunday, we developed and learnt a lot of new techniques, then on Monday we performed them at a concert in Liverpool University. It was an extremely exciting and unique experience and we hope to be selected for lots of other NYO projects in the future. Many thanks to the NYO and Mr. Langton for allowing us this wonderful opportunity. Also, many thanks to Mr. Vause for his continued support.

**Harjeet Singh Wilkhu, 9P**



## Intermediate Maths Challenge

**Mr Litchfield:** Last month, Queen Mary's entered it's biggest ever cohort of students into the Intermediate Maths Challenge, with 120 pupils sitting the paper across Years 9, 10 and 11. Twenty-one students attained the coveted gold certificate, whilst forty-nine attained silver and twenty-nine bronze. Special mention should go to the 15 boys who qualified for the Kangaroo competition next month due to their exceptional performance. The qualifiers are: Bradley Clarke (Best in School and Year 11), Jeevon Grewal, Liam Bernbaum, Leviticus Rowell, Rohan Rashoda, Daniel Pittaway, Abu-Bakr Ahmed, Shashidhara Balla, Reuben Sidhu, Kieran Thiarya, Christopher Raistrick (Best in Year 10), Karamraj Garewal, Sarvesh Rajdev, Adnan Basheer, Dylan Khangure (Best in Year 9). This places them amongst the very best mathematicians nationally, so they should be incredibly proud of this achievement.



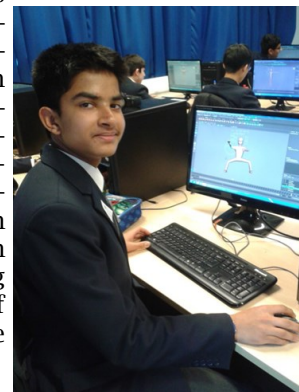
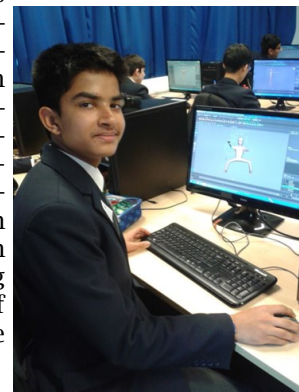
Year 12 candidates, one week later, faced the most brutal paper I can remember but battled hard gaining 9 Bronze, 7 Silver and another precious Gold Award. Bradley Clarke (pictured) and Samuel Garbett are our Gold Stars and I congratulate all who attempted this daunting but rewarding challenge.

**Mr Rockett**

## Physics Olympiad

March has seen a record haul of Oxford University Olympiad Awards for the Physicists. Year 11 students earned 11 Bronze, 4 Silver and 1 extremely rare Gold Award. The

**Mrs Westwood-Cooke:** Art students from Year 9 visited the Media Department of Wolverhampton University on Friday 10th February. They had a challenging and exciting day completing two workshops in Animation and Computer Games Design. Students experimented with various techniques including 3D modelling and texturing, animation and interaction design, giving them a taste of possible future careers in art.



## Chess

**Mr Smethurst writes-** For me the highlight of the season has to be Fahim's emphatic performance at the National U18 Tournament held at King Edward's Edgbaston. It seemed to represent the culmination of years of practise and hard work, however much more has been going on besides. Sarvesh and Dhiren continue to establish themselves as reliable first team players; a massive interest from the Year 7s and the school continuing to host national and regional tournaments. So, as Fahim sadly leaves us, there is still plenty to look forward to!

### Foodbank Charity Challenge.

Just before February half-term, Mrs Mehta ran the **Foodbank Charity Challenge**. The House team wanted to help and support the North Walsall Foodbank and asked the School community to get behind us by being generous in approach. Each House had a box in reception in which we asked for donations of non-perishable food items. We tallied up all the items before they were delivered to the foodbank. As a School we donated a total of 319 items with Darby winning the overall challenge, closely followed by Petypher. The North Walsall Foodbank appreciated our generosity.

### Community Awards:

**Ancic Mathews and Taran Singh of 9G write:** The process has enriched our experience of this school community and opened our eyes to the diverse range of clubs and societies. It has also allowed us to better ourselves as members of the local community. So far, working together through these comprehensive challenges, we have found that working hard to complete them was not as easy as we first anticipated. However, we believe that working hard will result in a fruitful rounded experience not only in our school careers but also our future prospects.

## House updates

## DT

**NMA competition-** The Year 7 National Memorial Arboretum competition was to design a product that could be sold in their shop. It was a fun and enticing event as it put your mind to the test by making you think of an original idea that was respectful and yet still able to entice a wide audience. The competition was judged by staff and volunteers at the NMA. **Sam Whittern**

**Go4SET:** On 9th March, the teams went to the NEC and Birmingham Airport to attend the introduction to Go4SET and to begin the project. The project we chose was an Eco Hotel and we have 10 weeks to design and build a model and write a report on it. We also met our mentor who works at Severn Trent Water company. This project aims to improve our team work and to enhance our knowledge and enthusiasm of engineering. **Nathan Francis**

## Chemistry

**Birmingham Sixth Form Lecture -** 'As part of the Chemistry department's enrichment programme this term, sixth form chemists have visited The University of Birmingham to listen to a diverse range of talks from academics. The lectures have considered man-made climate change, carbon capture technology, the use of nano-materials for skiing, and an excellent revision session on inorganic complexes.'

**Chemistry Olympiad -** 'The 2017 Chemistry Olympiad proved to be as challenging as ever, testing sixth formers to the limits of their comprehension. A gold medal proved elusive but on the whole it was a very encouraging showing: five silvers and seven bronzes. It was pleasing to see not only Year 13s amongst the medals but also Year 12s. **Dr Pilkington**

## Spring Concert

**Tom Burns writes:** Members of the music department are looking forward to it's next big performance, the Spring Concert - taking place on 5th April. Following the recent successes of joint performances (Christmas concert below), this concert will be held together with QMHS, but for the first time is taking place at the Forest Arts Centre. Following the theme of 'firsts', this concert will also be the first completely instrumental concert; with repertoire from the QM's Orchestra, Training Band, Strings Ensemble and Jazz Band. If you've not already done so, check out the music department's website **Qmmusic.info** which has already had over 2300 hits since its launch in October.



## Author Visit

**Mr Clay Croome writes:** The final school trip of 2016 saw Year 7 pupils meet Clare Balding at Wolverhampton Grammar School. The TV and radio presenter spoke entertainingly about her new children's book. She also drew upon personal experiences to share a number of messages: find the Olympian within yourself; be determined despite obstacles; be different and stand out. After her inspirational presentation, Clare answered a number of questions - Nomso Ndozi (7P) asked about Clare's own experiences at school. She answered she would not be where she is today if not for her passion for English and love of sports. The boys took home signed copies of Clare's book, *The Racehorse Who Wouldn't Gallop*. We eagerly await the sequel!

## RPE Cambridge Trip



**Ethan Moore reports:** In January, 25 students attended a day of lectures at St Mary's Church, Cambridge on Philosophy. Before attending the lectures, Mr Bradley took students on a small tour of Trinity College (an alumni himself) during which we were able to catch a glimpse of what it's like to study at Cambridge. The day proved a thought-provoking fusion of analytic philosophy, theodicy, cutting-edge science and ethics delivered by a cast of world-leading philosophical academics. Perhaps the most valuable advice of the day was "never be a banker" - students found the day a brilliant mix of dazzling sights and informative lectures. Thank you to Mr Bradley, Mrs Mehta and Mr Clements for making the trip possible.

## BBC Live Lesson

**Stuart Kirk reports:** In January, a group of approximately 20 creative writers, consisting of mostly Year 7s, sat down to participate in the BBC Live Lesson for the BBC Radio 2's 500 Words Competition. The boys enjoyed learning new skills in order to craft their characters, setting and plot. Hopefully they were inspired by the lesson to create amazing stories to enter into the competition. We eagerly await the results!

## Judge Denison Society

**Ramandeep Sandhu reports:** This term saw an invigorated return of JDSoc, with debates ranging from mental health to whether animals are the greatest victims of history—and even a guest appearance from Conservative West Midlands mayoral candidate Andy Street. All in all, another brilliant term of debate.

## Mandarin Excellence Programme

**Dylan Heydon-Matterface writes:** This year, Year 7 pupils involved in the MEP started extra lessons of Chinese in preparation for the programme. It's still early days but students are already preparing for an immersion weekend at Farchynys, and look forward to all the other amazing opportunities the programme will have to offer.

## Cadet Command and Control Training

**JAR Reports:** After preparation over the previous days, Sunday morning saw the TEWT (Tactical Exercise without Troops) begin. The Queen Mary's Regiment attempted to defend Harlech and the area just north from the perennial foe Redland, controlled by Flt Lt Ridler. After over 3 hours of valiant defence, the QM troops had put a large dent in the Redland forces, but had lost Harlech and were in the process of being overwhelmed on two flanks. While it was a shame that we didn't have enough time to see the battle to its conclusion, the cadets all developed new skills and most importantly, thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

## Twelfth Night Lectures

**Kodi Beveridge-Smith reports:** A Level Literature students attended a fantastic lecture day in Birmingham on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The day was an excellent opportunity to engage with highly respected academics, offering invaluable insights into interpretations and themes of the play. The day was useful, enjoyable and thought-provoking for both Years 12 and 13.

## Birmingham Lectures

**Keval Nathwani reports:** On March 17th a group of lower sixth English students made the journey to Birmingham University to hear lectures by a distinguished panel. These included; Post War American history, The Great Gatsby, A Streetcar named Desire and The American South. They were insightful and indispensable for those on the course and will no doubt be referenced in upcoming examinations.



## Chinese Speaking Competition

This year, two of our entries were accepted for the finals of the National HSBC and British Council Chinese Speaking Competition, which took place on 7th February. Unfortunately, we came away empty handed this time. However, our pupils put on a great performance in front of the audience and the judges, for which they received a brilliant reception. The pupils also met the Minister of State for School Standards Nick Gibb, who asked them for their thoughts on the Government's education policy.

## History Society

**Glen Foster writes:** The History Society has continued to progress throughout this term, hosting presentations on varied topics of historical insight - Hollywood Through the Ages; Twentieth-century Genocides; the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Success of Feminism. More interactive sessions were present, including a debate on whether this House would fight for King and Country and a role-play surrounding the Witchcraze of 16th-century England. Attendances have risen rapidly since the Society came under new management in January, with record crowds of 87, 92 and 147 students filling the Lecture Theatre. The Society will continue to host a stellar schedule of presentations and debate next term.

## Philosophy at Christ's College

**Ethan Moore reports:** In March, two students (Vincent Jordan and Ethan Moore) were invited to spend a night at Christ's College, Cambridge and attend a philosophy lecture day on the following Monday. The days proved an insightful view into life studying at Cambridge, with lectures on Descartes and colocation, a full tour of the college and the chance to converse with current students. In short, an invaluable and inspiring experience.

## ICAEW BASE Competition

**Mr Sunley writes:** The QMGS team finished runners-up out of 13 schools in the Telford Heat of the ICAEW BASE competition. This was the best ever performance by a QMGS team in what is a highly prestigious and extremely challenging Business and Finance competition. Well done to Calum Gill, Lewis Hateley, Ian Heinonen, Ryan Horrigan and Aaron Saini (pictured above).

## Model United Nations

**Vincent Jordan reports:** Recently, six students (pictured right) of the JD Society were chosen to represent QM as the Republic of France at the Joseph Camberlain college model United Nations. Notable speeches in the general assembly were heard from Lewis Fraiser and Sahil Karra, both of whom (alongside Vincent Jordan) secured passes on their resolutions. Britanie Boyd, Daniel Isa and Pavandeep Josan also played crucial roles within the team. We were extremely pleased to be awarded 'best delegation' amongst individual awards ranging from best dressed to persuasive speaking and best resolution. Well done to all involved, and to Mr Bradley and Mr Clay-Croome for making the trip possible.



# The QM Observer

Sport

## Hockey

**Mr Francis writes:** The 1st X1 have had a successful season this year, playing 23 games and scoring an impressive 67 goals! Captain Immanuel Hazel has led the way with 27 goals including 4 hat-tricks and a double hat-trick (6) in the 11-4 victory against Ellesmere College. Considering the team has a high number of Year 11 and Lower Sixth pupils the future looks bright for next year and beyond. The 3rd and 4th X1 sides have both had good records and they have been mainly made up of Year 11 players, who have played with both style and attacking intent. The U15s have had a frustrating season as they have lost by the odd goal on a number of occasions. Three players have really shone for the team - an extremely strong centre-midfield partnership of Vishal Puligari and Eduardo Bisconti and the headline stealing Joe Popple who has scored over half the teams' goals this year including all six in a 6-0 win against Derby Grammar. The U14s have been the surprise package this year and managed an impressive victory against Bishop Vesey's. A lot of players have represented the school this year but the side never seems any weaker for it. This year group has a lot of strength in depth. The U13s have played 21 games this year and have won 13 of them, including a victory in the Staffordshire Cup Final. The team beat St Edwards 4-2 in the final. The team scored 27 goals in 6 matches during the tournament. The prolific Jacob Clarke was not content with the 22 goals he scored in Year 7 and has scored an unbelievable 31 this time around. The U12s have been the main beneficiaries of the school's partnership with Aldridge and Walsall Hockey Club, regularly attending training at Aston University on a Thursday night. They were a little unlucky to only finish third in the County Cup where a lack of goals cost them. Their performance of the season was undoubtedly the 6-4 victory against the county champions Newcastle Under Lyme. A score line even more impressive considering we were 3-0 down at half-time. Dilraj Sohal is a name to look out for in the future and this team has real potential. There have been well over 150 hockey matches played this year with a large number of boys representing the school. This is an impressive number of fixtures considering we don't have a pitch on site.



## Rugby

**Mr Taylor:** The U12's (below) played in a 7s tournament on Friday 17th March. In their first competition of this kind, they did very well. There were four groups of 6 with the top two going through to the Cup, third and fourth into the plate and fifth and sixth into the shield. In their group the U12's defeated Ivybridge, Tudor Grange, Nottingham and the hosts KES. They lost to Adams 15-10. Finishing 2nd in the group they played King Edward's Stratford in the Cup quarter final. It was a battling performance but not quite enough to win - it was a 20-5 loss to the eventual Cup winners. The 1st XV finished their season off with the Staffordshire plate final, unfortunately going down 17-10 to Alleynes School in the final.



## Cricket

**Mr Gibbons:** A busy term of training has been completed for all age groups across the school alongside specialist development 'pod' sessions for 1st XI players and wicketkeeper sessions for KS3 pupils. The U13 & U15 teams (below) have already achieved silverware this season winning the Staffordshire Indoor Chance to Compete Cricket Tournaments.



## Futsal

**Mr Gibbons:** The U12s and U14s boys competed at the Black Country Championships on Thursday last week. The U12s won three of their four matches, beating Barr Beacon 4-0, SWBA 5-1 and Sandwell Academy 2-1. Their only defeat was a narrow 1-0 loss to Phoenix Academy. Unfortunately for the U14s team, despite a spirited display, they lost all four of their matches. Thanks to Mr Taylor for accompanying the team and the U12s are awaiting confirmation as to whether they have progressed to the Birmingham Finals.

## Cross Country

**Keval Nathwani:** For the Cross Country squad 2016-2017, this season was epitomised by that age old paradox, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times". We keenly felt the loss of our 'phillipidician' captain Ben Boulter, which resulted in a significant reduction in league table standing. However, all was not lost! To fill this vacuum, the team converged to form a singular and formidable adversary to the likes of King Edward VI Birmingham and King Henry VIII; this truly was a family feud! A sustained performance with a committed and steadfast group of runners ensured that we earned a respectable place in the regional league tables. In anticipation of the next season, with a fresh injection of new runners, we can only build on successes and learn from mistakes. The future looks bright!

## Netball

**Chhaya Patel:** This year has seen a great turnout of girls playing netball. With the team consisting predominantly of new players, I am proud of the way we've all worked together to become a supportive and competitive team making each training session and fixture enjoyable which stems from each individual's passion of netball and having fun. Thank you to all of the netball team (especially Tara McGuirk and Ellie Swain) for their enthusiasm and commitment each week and to Ms Roberts-Gawen for putting up with us.



## Basketball

**Mr Gibbons:** Y8 boys won the Walsall Schools Basketball League, winning all 9 fixtures. Top point scorers across the entirety of the league were: Jacob Clarke (129), Dominic Smith (56), Evan Roberts (32), Morgan Seales (18), Amun Sidhu (18), Noah Bailey-Stewart (14), Gurtaj Sangha (10) and Matthew James (8).

Editor: Mr R Langton; Sub-Editors: Glen Foster, Vincent Jordan, Ethan Moore, Pavandeep Josan