



The QM Observer

Spring Term Newsletter

Thursday 29th March 2018

Change and Continuity at QMGs

2018 saw two significant appointments in the leadership of the School: Mr Swain, the 36th Headmaster of the School, stepped down to assume his new role as CEO of the Mercian Multi-Academy Trust. Additionally, after a year as Head of School, Mr Langton was formally appointed the 37th Headmaster of Queen Mary's Grammar School.

The Mercian Trust

Mr Swain writes: Queen Mary's Grammar School is a proud Founder Academy of the Mercian Multi-Academy Trust. In our MAT, we choose to pursue life to the full in the business of education; We focus on the sense of learning in a combined community, together with enhancing the idea of friendship and kinship.

The name of our Trust is significant. It was in Mercia that St Chad established *learning communities* which fostered a sense of common purpose. A thousand years ago, they spoke of *bonds of kinship*.

I am convinced that we are stronger together. The Mercian Trust is already helping to shape the educational landscape in exciting ways. As Queen Mary's prepares our pupils to live life to the full, so the MAT can offer more opportunities to all. This includes enrichment opportunities as well as further expansion of the Post 16 curriculum in an even wider range of subjects. The MAT will support all its young people in realising their full potential as learners.



A New Headmaster

Abigail Dakoru writes: When asked how he felt about his new role, Mr Langton stated that he was both honoured and excited to be the 37th Headmaster of such a prestigious school - a school in which he has a great sense of pride.

Mr Langton stated that assuming his new role as Headmaster had been a "gradual process". This was in terms of becoming familiar with the added responsibilities of the role, as well as looking ahead to the new challenges Headship will bring.

When asked about making any changes to the School, he highlighted the need for "stability and continuity" adding that he felt it necessary to prioritise mental health not only for the students but also for the staff. The Mental Health Awareness Week and the significant work that has been carried out by staff and students to improve wellbeing throughout the school has certainly made an immediate impact.

Mr Langton highlighted his hopes of improved sports facilities for the School community. He also looks to develop creative subjects, thereby creating a school environment where the arts and sciences can flourish simultaneously.

Queen Mary's Higher Education Fair



Mr Matley writes: On Thursday 15th March the school welcomed 16 visitors from universities, apprenticeship providers and the armed forces to the second HE Fair. The event is designed for Year 12 pupils, as they begin to prepare their UCAS applications, or alternative career paths. The Hall was extremely busy during the lunchtime period, as Year 11 were also encouraged to attend; doing so in huge numbers. A number of the visitors gave 30 minute talks in the lecture room, which ranged from Oxbridge applications to gap year ideas. Images of the event can be found on the Sixth Form twitter page (@qmgs6thform). I was pleased to see that the pupils were consistently praised for their interest, attitude and manners in the feedback from our visitors.

Happy Chinese New Year!

Chinese New Year, also known as Spring Festival arrived on 16th February this year. It is the Year of the Dog! 狗年吉祥! The Year 7 and Year 8 Mandarin Excellence Programme pupils have been really busy taking part in various cultural activities to celebrate the Chinese New Year, including visiting a partner school in Worcester in February, participating in Birmingham's China Town Celebrations and putting on our own Gala at School. The MEP pupils are thoroughly enjoying all these extra opportunities





Geneva Trip

By **Stuart Kirk 6MB**

On 17th February, 45 Sixth Form students, accompanied by Miss Smith, Mrs Mitchell, Mr Ridler and Mr Sepede, travelled to Geneva, Switzerland. The main attraction of the trip was a visit to CERN to learn more about the experiments carried out at the different particle accelerators located there, such as the Large Hadron Collider and the Proton Synchrotron. The scientists on the trip were also treated to a visit to Bern to explore the Einstein museum along with a visit to the Museum of Natural History. Whilst the trip was primarily aimed at the scientists, the group had the chance to visit the UN Geneva offices - offering a taste of a different subject. The trip also involved several

chances for relaxation, including a meal in a traditional Swiss restaurant (reeking of cheese from fondue!) and a cruise on Lake Geneva. It was the perfect way for Year 13 students to be "International in Outlook" for the final time in their QM career. Thank you to all the accompanying members of staff, in particular Miss Smith for organising such an unforgettable 4-day experience!



History Society

Ben Carr: At a halfway point in the year, the History Society can report on an interesting start. We've had some incredibly successful afternoons, from our North Korea presentation to our talk on propaganda through the ages, both having packed audiences. We look forward to equal achievements in upcoming events. We are looking forward to our talk on Russia, in light of recent events. There is particular excitement for our World War One project - to commemorate the centenary, students have been challenged to produce a QMGS memorial to those who fought in the war. Someone's name will live on in the school for many years to come, so submit your idea. Remember: practicality, cost and relevance to our school alongside the war.

Aprica Skiing Trip

By **Kian Cushman 6SC**

The Aprica trip was a brilliant experience, enjoyed by all. The trip began after a 26 hour coach journey from QMGS to the very centre of the Alps and immediately we immersed ourselves into 'Aprican' life and culture. The following days were full of skiing, falling, laughing and repeat. The instructors were experts in their field (even with the evident language barrier) and made the experience safe yet very enjoyable. From blue to black slopes, I progressed amazingly, having come from barely being able to turn, to being able to go 40kmph in the "egg position" and stopping almost instantly. This progress was experienced



by all, with everyone going up the mountain and coming down in their respective groups by day 6. Skiing will definitely become one of my hobbies. The overwhelming views of the Alps and the beauty of the mountains cannot be understated and it is at times such as this that I wish I was

in a lower year so that I could go to Canada in 2019. All students on the ski trip would like to thank Mr Rendu and the staff team for making this once-in-a-lifetime trip possible.



Harry Potter Event

In early March, bibliophile students in the younger years from across the Multi-Academy Trust took part in a Harry Potter-themed evening at the QMHS library. Both pupils and staff donned appropriate Hogwarts attire for the event, which combined reading for pleasure with dabbling in the wizardry of potion manufacturing! Thanks go to **Mrs K. Taylor**, Librarian, for accompanying the group of QMGS boys (*pictured below*).



DT

Harjeevan Singh: This term, a group of passionate upper school DT students were fortunate enough to listen to a talk given by Nigel Wiggin of The Old Hall Club. This lecture informed us about the history of Old Hall and where the company is today. We then viewed multiple artefacts, which included the world's first stainless steel teapot and toast rack. I would like to offer thanks to Mr Hughes for organising this wonderful opportunity.

Chloe Banks: In preparation for our project next year, we were lucky enough to be faced with a task set by a company based in Aldridge called Lektronix which is one of the world's leading providers of industrial, electronic and robotic automation repairs and spares. We were assigned the task to design a piece of 3D wall art incorporating their logo to be featured on their office wall. After

discussions, sketching, homework and feedback from the company, we shortlisted two designs. We are currently refining the designs to get ready for the company to revisit and choose which design they'd like us to proceed to manufacture. This task has been a fun challenge and has given us a glimpse into what it will be like to start our own project.



Mental Health Awareness at QM

Mrs McPhee writes; It's been another busy term at QM regarding our mental health work. The 6th-form Change Your Mind team has visited 10 primary schools this term, including our first beyond Walsall's borders, and two more schools are lined up for after Easter, meaning that in total, we will have doubled the number of schools we have visited since last year. The team has expanded from 5 to around 25 students, and it has been great to see them flourish as guest teachers to younger children. The project will definitely continue next year, and the PSLT and I are looking at how it can be developed further.



This term also saw our second Mental Health Awareness Week, running alongside QMHS's inaugural event. We hosted guest speakers from Diversity Role Models, CAMHS, the NHS, and a big name in staff training, Ross Morrison McGill, who headed up to Walsall to talk to the teachers about effective workload strategies. The culmination of the event was a 6th form debate on the Friday afternoon in the Lecture Theatre, with impressive levels of research and well-articulated arguments on both sides. For more updates on our mental health work, and on PSHEE events and initiatives in general, follow us on Twitter at @qmgs_pshe.



Mental Health Debate

Chandan Jolly writes: On Friday 9th February, the school's activities for National Mental Health week culminated in a debate organised by Mrs McPhee about the NHS and the funding surrounding Mental Health facilities in the UK. Students had been preparing for several weeks in advance, and had been given two case studies to research and debate about. They were split into two teams, with each team representing a case study, and having to argue the case for the person in their case study receiving medical care from the NHS. Students met with Obaid Siddiq several times in preparation for the debate. He is a local NHS branch manager, who makes decisions like this one every day. The debate was an interesting and unique opportunity to explore an area which none of the students had been aware of beforehand. We, as students would like to thank Mrs McPhee and Mr Siddiq for the opportunity, and for giving up their time. Additionally, we would like to thank Mr Langton for chairing the debate.

CCF Field Day



Kodi Beveridge-Smith writes: Following the cancellation of several CCF weekends due to snow, the QM contingent are delighted to report on a successful CCF Field Day. On Friday 16th March, our 360 cadets took part in the 2018 Biennial Review. Despite a soggy start, the weather held out allowing reviewing Officer, Murdo Urquard, to inspect our contingent in the sunshine. His report was in full praise for QM as our contingent grows from strength-to-strength.



We are QM Skiffle Group...



The QM Skiffle Group continues its musical tour of the local area playing to such audiences as Burntwood Live at Home Scheme. In a recent letter, the Community Programme Co-Ordinator, Sue Oldacre, thanked the group for their fantastic performance and also commented on the group's enthusiasm, politeness and talent. She also commented on the significance of the group's charitable work as young people supporting the elderly in the community. These pupils certainly embody our school pillar of "generous in approach". QM Skiffle Group will continue touring in the Summer Term. Thanks to Mr Hughes and Mr Taylor for their ongoing enthusiasm and coordination of the band.

Hockey

Joe Millerchip: This year, the Hockey 1st XI has been incredibly successful, progressing to national stages of competitions. The key to the success is the relationships between the members, creating a good team spirit that has resulted in the consistent performances seen. Throughout this season, multiple individuals have demonstrated outstanding ability with match-winning performances, the most notable being the goal scoring of Sef Huyskens, who will come close to the record number of goals scored in a season. These individual performances are the icing on the cake for a great season for the boys.



Congratulations to the U12 Hockey team who were unbeaten in the Staffs tournament scoring 6 goals and conceding none in their 6 games. The team finished 2nd overall on goal difference. K Balakrishnan scored 4 goals and was the player of the tournament



Toby Robinson: This season has been a good one for the U13 A Team, kicking off with a 3-2 win against St Edwards after being 2 goals down. We then went on to beat Adams Grammar 3-1. Our 4-0 defeat to Bromsgrove was disappointing but, considering they won the National Finals, we felt 4-0 was a brave effort. In the County Tournament, our first game we drew 0-0 to Chase Grammar, then we lost to Newcastle 4-0. In an impressive turnaround, we then beat Wolverhampton 6-0 and St Edwards 7-0. We missed out on moving to the next stage by one goal. It was heart-breaking but, on the bright side, we got to play our very own Queen Mary's B team and won 2-0. So overall a great season for U13 A team hockey.

QMGs Zambia 2018 Appeal

Mr. Gibbons: From 26th February until 29th March, Mr Gibbons ran the QMGs Zambia 2018 Appeal. The purpose of the appeal was to support Volunteer Zambia and the Wallace Group of Universities who use sport as a tool for development within impoverished communities in Zambia's capital Lusaka. Pupils were asked to donate any unwanted sports clothing or equipment that volunteers could distribute to children at specific placements in the summer. The response to the



appeal has been overwhelming from both staff and pupils and the final results will be revealed at the start of the summer term.

Girls' Games

Jasjit Shergill: This year many of the girls have been involved with games on a Wednesday afternoon, where we have been given the opportunity to get involved with many activities such as bouldering, yoga, netball, bhangra, badminton and swimming. It has been a great experience and I would urge more girls to get involved.



Basketball



Mr. Gibbons: The Year 9 Basketball Team, once again, completed a clean sweep in the Walsall Schools' League and defended their title with a 26-12 win against a strong Pool Hayes Academy side. Throughout the season, points were scored by: Dominic Smith (64), Jacob Clarke (60), Gurtaj Sangha (58), Evan Roberts (30), Noah Bailey-Stewart (20), Morgan Seales (10), Amun Sidhu (10) and Rohan Sangha (4). As a result, the boys were afforded the opportunity to represent Walsall at the Black Country School Games. In their three matches, the boys recorded 24-15, 16-13 and 18-14 victories against Moseley Park, George Salter and Castle High of Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley respectively. They progressed into the Regional Round 1 Phase of the National Competition but were beaten for the first time in two years by Ernesford Grange from Coventry, narrowly losing 48-40. A special mention to Gurtaj Sangha who scored 25 points during the match. Despite the defeat, some of the offensive play produced by the team was exceptional and I am proud of their achievements. I hope they use the loss as motivation to strive for further success in the future.



Editorial Team. Editor: Ms Roberts-Gawen; Sub-Editors: Elliot Beesley, Abigail Dakoru, Glen Foster, Callum Humphreys and Gurkirta Josan