



The QM Observer

Autumn Term Newsletter

Friday 14th December 2018

A Celebration of Community at QMGS

Welcome back to a new year at QMGS!

We hope that you enjoy reading about the various events that have gone on in the last term! - 2018/19 Editorial Team

Summer Mexico Trip 2018

Reece Salan writes: The best two weeks of my life! We began our journey in the jungle at camp Hormiguero, an eight hour coach journey from Cancun airport, where we set up tents and learnt about the amazing wildlife and the local ecosystem. Every day brought new challenges and experiences. Whether it was painful 5am wake ups to see the birds and hear the morning chorus, or a great day out looking at the ancient Mayan ruins. Every day was great and ended with a peaceful evening around the campfire. After the first week we travelled to Akumal, "The Bay of the Turtles", where we started our second week, diving in the tropical waters. We had two dives each day and the views underwater truly cannot be imagined! I will never forget these experiences. The sea life was so beautiful: my personal favourite was seeing sharks. The trip also strengthened bonds with all my friends as well as new ones. Without a doubt, the School's expeditions are something unique that all pupils should get involved with.

The next trip is a marine conservation expedition to South Africa in July 2020.

Members on the trip (pictured on the left) were: Mehtab,

Jaipreet, Khushwant, William, Joe, Isaac, James, Sophie, Matthew, Arjun, Arjun, Reece, Sarvesh, Chandan and Thomas.



QM in The Cricketer's Top 100 Schools

Mr Gibbons writes: We are delighted to announce that QMGS has been selected by The Cricketer as one of the Top 100 Schools in the country

The publication of their guide follows an exhaustive process that saw more than 350 schools submit entries, judged against an extensive set of criteria which included facilities, fixture programmes, and coaching. This is especially remarkable as the guide only included 13 state schools! Head of Cricket Ben Gibbons commented: "This is a remarkable achievement and we are incredibly proud of our inclusion in the Good Schools Guide for 2019. It would be amiss to overlook the valuable contribution of various members of the Games Staff and for the support for successive Headmasters. We will not rest on our laurels and it was great to see the support from pupils and parents at the inaugural Cricket Awards Evening in October which raised £1274.50 to help improve Cricket facilities at the school". News on the cricket season can be found on the sports page.



QMA Fireworks Night

Daniel Bishop writes: Once again, the school's annual fireworks event was a huge success. It saw over a thousand people flock to the school to enjoy the celebrations. Visitors were able to take in the offerings of the many stalls- from the tombola to the range of food stands, to the ever-popular plate smash. The evening helped raise major funds to improve school sports equipment and facilities. In total, over £10,000 was raised! Without the help of volunteers and donations from pupils, this event would not have been possible. A big thank you must also go to the QMA!



Power to the pupils!

Chris McHugh writes on behalf of the History Society: While the school-wide ballot on Theresa May's Brexit Deal will not shape the imminent future of politics, it was an exciting opportunity to see pupils engage with the issue. The week saw a number of Year 12s speaking about the proposed withdrawal agreement in assemblies weighing up the deal. This helped pupils formulate a personal judgement and cast their vote. On December 5th the History Society also saw a fierce debate on the question "Is Theresa May's Deal Acceptable?" Daniel and Thomas, supported by Lucy and Nicholas respectively, gave opening statements that led to an exciting, animated debate. With the ballots counted, 74% of pupils were against the Agreement and 26% for. An overwhelming majority! This was based on a 75% voter turnout. Thanks to Mr Reynolds who authorised the ballot and provided QM pupils with a voice on current affairs.

Editorial Team: Zachary Elliott, Devraj Jheet, Salman Mohamed, Sai Nathwani

QMGs Celebrates the Centenary of the Great War News

Mr Hughes writes: 2014 saw the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War and ever since I have ensured that the school has remembered each old boy who died as we arrived at the 100th anniversary of his death. The first old boy to die was Private Hubert Sedgwick Sanders, Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 5th May 1915. On 13th October 1915, four old boys serving with the 1/5th Bn., South Staffordshire Regiment, were killed during the Battle of Loos. None have a known grave and all are remembered on the Loos Memorial, near Lens in France.

The other day in the war that saw four old boys killed came on 14th March 1917 when the 1/5th Bn, South Staffordshire Regiment attacked from Bois de Biez towards the German trenches in front of Bucquoy. 3 officers who were killed- 2nd Lieutenants Taylor, Tildesley and Lavender are buried side by side in Foncquevillers Cemetery in France. This is the only Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery where old boys are buried side by side. The fourth old boy to die, Private Sidney Toon, is buried four miles away in Rossignol Wood Cemetery.

There is only one CWGC cemetery in the world where four old boys are buried, Etaples Military Cemetery, near Boulogne. Private Jeffries and Corporal Foster both died in 1917 while 2nd Lt. Sidney Davis and 2nd Lt. Carpenter both died in 1918. The 100th anniversary of the death of 2nd Lt Davis was remembered in March 2018 and 2nd Lt Carpenter in April 2018.

QMGs has two plaques at the Lochnagar mine crater on the 1916 Somme battlefield. These remember Sergeant Hibbett and Lt Allen who both died on 1st July 1916, the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. Agreed by the QMC, the four new plaques were screwed in place at the crater in May 2018 by current pupils during the battlefield tour. These plaques remember Private Harold Blockley (4th November 1918), Captain Pritchard (23 October 1918), Private Eric Shaw (12 October 1918) and Private Dennis Stanley (18 October 1918).



As a result of on-going research, the QMC agreed to four new names being added to the 1939-45 section of the memorial. The four additional names are:

Lance Corporal **James Kenneth Myers**, Life Guards, died on 7 August 1944 and was a student at QMGs for 3 years, 1931-34.

Private **Harry Taylor**, Herefordshire Regiment, died on 30 July 1944. His admission number was recently discovered in the archives but nothing else has been found. Observer Pilot **Malcom Barnes** had just joined the RAFVR when he died of illness in 1942.

Leading Aircraftman **Thomas Nash**, RAFVR. He died while a prisoner of war with the

Japanese in 1944.

The Marian also suggests that an old boy named "A. Taylor" was killed in 1943 while serving in the RAF whilst another named "John Richard Jones" (QMGs 1927-30), also died during the war.



(left): Portrait of **Private Hubert Sedgwick Sanders**, the first QMGs old boy to die in the Great War (5th May 1915)

CCF Remembrance Parade

RSM T Burns writes: On this Centenary year, the Queen Mary's community engaged in the act of remembrance with a heightened sensitivity to the school's military past. In a poignant moment during school assembly, students observed a moment's silence facing these names in active remembrance; we continue to extend our gratitude to Mr Hughes for educating and bringing to life so many of their stories. Queen Mary's cadets also observed silence at the foot of Walsall Cenotaph on November 11th in a parade that we form a large part of. Cadets stood to attention for the playing of The Last Post and powerful readings of Flanders's Fields and We Will Remember Them: a community now well-tuned to remembrance, I am certain we all will.

International Air Cadet Exchange

Sam Shackleton writes: Over the summer holidays I was selected to take part in the prestigious International Air Cadet Exchange, where 500 cadets from 18 countries experience an aviation-related cultural exchange. My trip was to France, as one of three cadets from the UK, alongside cadets from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Our programme began in Paris, with a formal welcome dinner at the Aéro-Club de France. We were privileged with a visit to Dassault Aviation, seeing their simulators and design facilities, succeeded by a highly restricted visit behind the scenes of Charles de Gaulle airport. There we visited the fire department, air traffic control tower and were driven around the taxiways in operational vehicles.

Following visits to many of the tourist hotspots, such as Versailles, the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower, we moved south to Toulouse, where we visited the Airbus A380 Final Assembly Line. A short homestay broke up our aviation activities, when we enjoyed time in the Pyrénées including hiking, rafting and a visit to Pic du Midi, an astronomical observatory at 10000ft.

Staying at Cazaux Air Base and visiting Alpha Jet and special forces squadrons, where we received a demonstration from the fire section, proved to be a superb supplement to the experience. However, this opportunity was not only enriching through activities but also enabled us to live and share cultures and ideas with Cadets from across the world for over two weeks.



Along the way we spent some time in the Somme, where we visited several memorials and cemeteries, something which I would follow up later in the Summer with my family, across France and Belgium. On the way I stopped at the graves/memorials of over 20 Old Boys, leaving plaques in remembrance from QM. This made the purpose of the visit so much more profound in thinking about the personal impacts of the conflict.

The sacrifice of so many men and women, many not far from our own age, truly influences your perception of the world going forward which is why I would strongly suggest partaking in a future school-led battlefields trip or doing so with your family. I would like to publicly thank Mr Hughes for his dedication in researching and preparing the stories, lists and plaques that I used during this trip.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the staff, particularly the CCF officers, who enabled me to finish my time in school with such an experience. I would encourage all students reading to take up the opportunities that are thrown at you during your time at QM: it will go by in the blink of an eye, so make the most of it.



CCAT

Chloe Banks writes: I attended the Basic Rock-Climbing course run by the Cadet Centre for Adventurous Training (CCAT) in Lancaster, with 30 cadets nationwide participating. My course included indoor rock-climbing and bouldering in local leisure centres followed by outdoor rock climbing on steep cliffs and quarries. The week was unforgettable, I will continue climbing to learn new skills, and I look forward to returning for the Intermediate Rock-Climbing course in the future!

Air Squadron Trophy

CWO of the RAF section J Robbins writes: On 18th November, 15 cadets and 2 officers travelled to RAF Cosford to compete as an Air Squadron Team comprising 13 cadets and 2 reserves. The team participated in 5 events. Although the team placed 4th overall, it was a fantastic achievement to win, and receive trophies for, both the Shooting and the Drill events. It was disappointing for the team to not reach the national competition, but we are proud of the extensive practice we undertook, which was undoubtedly the cause for the victories in two events.



Movember Moustaches

William Stevens writes: Throughout the month of November, you may have noticed that some of our teachers have been sporting moustaches. This is to promote men's mental health. The statistics on mental health and suicide in men are alarming; each week, 84 men take their own lives. By growing a moustache, Movember aims to help raise awareness and funds. An amazing £1426 was raised.



Year 11-13 Careers Afternoon

Matthew Daniels writes: On 7th December, QMGS held a Careers fair for KS4 and Sixth Form students. The event consisted of 27 school alumni, with their own unique career path ranging from engineers and teachers to explorers and film producers. All voluntarily gave up their time to inspire the pupils and share their own personal life experiences and advice. The day was a real success, with students from Years 10 and 11 having the valuable chance to attend and many Sixth Formers also receiving this opportunity in a separate lunchtime session. A number of the pupils involved said that they had been given the advice they were looking for, while some even said that the conversations they had made them consider different career paths that they may not have considered before. A huge thank you to the former pupils that gave up their time and to Mr Collins for his key contribution in organising the event.

House Chess

Usemu Makaya writes: The first round of the QMGS House Chess competition began on 10th December. In this round individual forms from each Year group present two volunteering players who subsequently participate in a small tournament of intense matches amongst themselves. After this the two highest-scoring participants in each Year-round progress onwards to the knockout rounds, during which the players are gradually eliminated until only the victorious player remains. Points are counted and added to respective house's point total, after which the highest-scoring house wins the competition. Outside of the competitive environment, chess has been a prominent part of the life of the school, with Chess Club being run regularly at lunchtimes. Good luck to all players!

Year 10 visit JLR

Dharam Malhi writes: Year 10 GCSE pupils went to Jaguar Land Rover, Solihull. They participated in a factory tour in which they were able to have a first-hand look at the press shop and the assembly line. Later, the QM pupils took part in a team building activity where they learnt the pressure of being on an assembly line. This was broken into two tasks - one was creating shopping carts under timed conditions, where they learnt about the importance of quality checks. The final task challenged our pupils to create a wheelbarrow that could transport water with a competitive element implemented to determine which team could transport the most water to a beaker. It was a fantastic day full of enjoyable moments.

Year 13 Oxbridge Outreach

Arjun Malhi writes: The Oxbridge admissions process is rigorous, made up of several stages. Myself, along with 25 other students from QMGS and the Multi Academy Trust, were pleased to undergo an 'Interview preparation session' on Monday 12th November. Led by an Oxford outreach officer, we were educated on the specifics of the interview stage of the process. This included general information such as correct wear and what to pack, to specific advice such as common interview questions tailored to each of our courses. Not only was this useful, but it also relaxed anxieties about the interviews and gave us the best chance of being fully prepared. I am very grateful to Ms Weston for organising the event.

Valarie Vaz Q&A

Lindsay Hill writes: We were privileged to be visited by MP Valerie Vaz on Friday 16th November for UK Parliament Week. The QMGS Wellbeing Group organised a Q&A session to discuss all things politics and parliament. Brexit was of course a favoured topic. Mrs Vaz discussed her personal views on the issue. It was eye opening to understand such a contentious topic from the point of view of Mrs Vaz, who works at the heart of the shadow cabinet. We listened intently as Mrs Vaz took us through her typical working week and her relationship with Jeremy Corbyn.. It was enlightening to understand the strenuous tests that MPs face in terms of health and wellbeing; Her determination to ensure that support is given in the political workplace was highlighted clearly. Questioning turned to her constituency and the high rates of knife crime. She was insistent on her commitment to raising awareness of youth knife crime within her own party and the government.



Year 7 learn how to maximise their potential!

William Stevens writes: On 28th November, Mr Dry from Maximise Your Potential delivered a seminar to Year 7 on exams, organisation and homework, in the Hall. The seminar was well received by Year 7 students. He told stories of many inspirational figures. Lewis Hamilton's story was particularly inspirational; he went from a council estate to become the richest British sportsman. The session motivated us to do as well as we possibly can, not just this year, but throughout our life at QM.



Skiffle Success!

Rohan Singh writes: On Tuesday 4th December 2018, the skiffle group played at Mayfield Preparatory School. We had the pleasure of performing songs like "Jingle Bells" and "12 Days of Christmas". The musical collaboration, which enchanted the children at Mayfield, was inspired by a variety of conventional and unconventional instruments. Who would have thought a washboard, a kazoo, a few shakers and some cheerful voices would bring such beautiful music to the ears of these young children? The members of the skiffle group had a wonderful time playing to these children.



A Year in Cricket



Mr Gibbons writes: Our entry into the 'Good Schools Guide 2019' caps a fantastic year for QMGs Cricket in a season in which over 120 fixtures were played, including Saturday Cricket Fixtures for the U12s/U13s. Moreover, the boys were entered into various tournaments such as The Cricket Paper National Schools U17s Cup, KES Stratford Senior 6-a-side Competition, QMGs 10s Tournament (U12 & U15), Solihull 6-a-side Competitions and the inaugural U13 Isle of Man Cricket Tour.

Individual highlights include: Jacob Clarke (Y10) who was selected for the

Warwickshire Emerging Player Programme, Hashim Iqbal (Y11) scored 901 runs in all formats for school and has been selected to train with the Warwickshire U17 Squad and Ronan Bagry (Y11), who has been selected for the U17 Staffordshire Squad, won the U15 Managers Award and a Performance Award at the Staffordshire County Awards Evening.



From a team perspective, the U15s were the standout side, reaching the final of the Staffordshire Cup, winning the QMGs 10s Tournament and representing the County at the Regional Stage of the Staffordshire Chance to Compete Tournament. The U13s were

also victorious at the Tettenhall T-8 Tournament.

A Year in Futsal

Karam Singh Uppal writes: Throughout the 2018 Futsal season, the Year 8 and 9 players have played to each other's strengths and scored some amazing team goals. Numerous goals were scored in the opening fixtures this season. The first joint Year 8 and 9 game was against Hydesville Tower School, where QM came out as comfortable winners against a strong opposition. The final score was 7-2, the scorers being Poonian (2), Ahmed(2), Clare(2) and Matthews. Separate Year 8 and 9 matches followed against Aldridge. The first match was the Year 8 game, which proved to be very competitive. The goals came from Mahal(2) and Johal. Despite their best efforts, Aldridge came out 4-3 winners. The next game was for Year 9, which commenced shortly after. Aldridge took the lead early on, however, the team fought back with an 8-goal flourish in the second half, bringing the game to 12-1 at the final whistle. The goals came from Ahmed(4), Poonian(3), Uppal(3), Wali and Kulair. That meant that 5 out of our 6 outfield players scored. The next joint Year 8 and 9 game was against Walsall Academy, who presented a much bigger team than us physically. The result, in the end, was 6-1 to Walsall Academy; we learned some valuable lessons and points to work on. The highest goal scorers overall were Ahmed(6), Poonian(5), Uppal(3), and Claire(2), Mahal(2) and Kulair(2). We've had a great start to the season and hopefully can keep progressing!



Rugby

This term has been a time of rebuilding for the senior rugby squad after losing influential players from the previous Year 13. Despite these losses, the squad has remained focused under the leadership of new captain, Joel Pepper and have shown signs of good things to come after advancing to the Semi finals of the Staffordshire Cup after a hard fought 7-5 win against Stafford Grammar School. The second team have had the challenge of playing opposing first teams as a result of the 1st XV's cup run. Undeterred by this, the 2nd XV have shown great heart and improvement as the term has progressed.



All Aboard!

New minibus is the latest stop in School's fundraising journey

A shiny new minibus has arrived at Queen Mary's Grammar School courtesy of the QMA's excellent fundraising activities. The association raised an impressive £22,000 in 2017-18 to fund the purchase of the new vehicle, via volunteer-led initiatives. Now, thanks to the generosity of the QMA, donors and parents, the school has picked up the keys to its new bus - with signage kindly supplied by Walsall's IMO graphics. The bus will transport children on educational trips, sporting events and residential activities. At the heart of those visits sits Farchynys, the school's Welsh Centre, which features a range of outdoor learning opportunities a site the QMA is committed to maintaining. Richard Langton, Head Teacher rejoiced at the significance of the purchase stating: "We are delighted to be able to provide students with this fantastic new mini bus which ensures the QMGs name travels far and wide! At Queen Mary's, we believe in giving children a well-rounded education that extends beyond the classroom. We want to create diverse and immersive extra-curricular opportunities for children to enrich their love of learning." He went on to commend the dedicated volunteers, parents and wider community, who work tirelessly to support the school. The

Queen Mary's Association raises, on average, around £20,000 per year. The next goal is set on raising funds for the purchase of cricket equipment at the school and towards the upkeep of Farchynys.

Throughout the year, QMGs hosts a number of popular fundraising events open to families, friends, and the public. This includes the much-anticipated Firework's Event on Saturday 10th November, followed by the Burns night dinner on Saturday 26th January and the summer ball on Saturday 29th June. Seema Sikka, chair of the QMA's Burn's Night Committee said: "We're absolutely thrilled with the new mini bus! As parents, we've invested in our children's education and the QMA looked carefully at how we could make the most difference to the school." She reiterated Mr Langton's gratitude for past volunteer support but looked ahead in urging more parents to get in touch and assist in future QMA events that will serve to develop the school we all love so dearly, Queen Mary's Grammar School.



PICTURED ABOVE: Andrew Donaldson (chair of the QMA) and Seema Sikka (chair of the QMA's Burn's Night Committee) handing the bus over to the Headmaster, Richard Langton.