



The QM Observer

Summer Term Newsletter

Friday 15th July 2016

QMGS continuing to fly high & hit the right notes!



Project Horizon



Lewis Ward: On Sunday 3rd July, after a postponed launch due to bad weather, Team Luna, of this year's Project Horizon Near Space Race, launched their payload from the school field. Clear skies, minimal wind and a focused team saw the perfect conditions for a launch, with the payload being released at around 10:00am. Whilst tracking the payload during its' ascent, the team, accompanied by Mr Sepede and Mrs Mitchell, drove to the predicted landing location. After approximately two and a half hours, the payload landed near to the predicated landing location, where it was then retrieved. After its retrieval, the team began the journey back to QMGS, during which some of the footage was viewed. Overall, the launch was highly successful, with the payload remaining intact and reaching a peak altitude of 38,425m, over 2km higher than last year's launch, with amazing footage being captured also. Thank you to all the team members and staff involved who made the launch possible.



Spring concert

Rhys Thornett writes: In April, QMGS and QMHS both hosted their first joint Spring Music Concert in Walsall Town Hall (picture right). Over 200 pupils performed to an audience of over 450. There were 8 different ensembles, all with their own unique style of music: QMGS training band, jazz band, skiffle group, joint string group, djembe group, gospel choir, joint orchestra & joint choir. All of us would like to give particular thanks to Mr Vause, Miss Sullivan and our fabulous instrument teachers without whom the concert would not have been able to take place.



CCF

In what has been a memorable term, the highlight surely was the news that CWO Dan Russon has been awarded the prestigious de Havilland Medal in recognition of his achievements in the CCF. Only 3 of these medals were awarded this year out of a total of over 10,000 CCF (RAF) cadets in the country! In other CCF news:

Sgt. Alex Blundell reports: At Easter, nearly 40 cadets, accompanied by several officers and instructors (left) travelled to Anglesey to attend the annual camp at RAF Valley, the RAF's fast jet training base. There the cadets enjoyed a multitude of challenging and exciting activities including go-karting and high ropes courses. We also engaged in more military-orientated tasks, such as an enjoyable night exercise, and fascinating section visits to IV Sqn, as well as the Fire Section. The camp was enjoyed by all, especially myself, as I was fortunate enough to have the incredible experience of flying in a Hawk T2 jet (picture centre).

Emily Pitt writes: In the Easter holidays, 100 cadets from across the country travelled to Cyprus for the annual cadet camp. We participated in varied activities, such as exciting section visits at RAF Akrotiri, and rigorous command tasks, as well as leisure activities including clay pigeon shooting. The overall experience was rounded off with an awards evening where I won "Best Cadet on Camp".

Mr Ridler: A weekend this term saw 16 cadets venture to Farchynys for Desert Warfare. On arrival, Pilot Officer Rendu gave a lesson on route planning, then allowed the cadets to plan their routes for the next day. The routes were to take the cadets from the Coach House into Barmouth through the hills on the northern side of the estuary - just over 8 miles of walking with a total climb of up to 1500 feet. On Saturday the cadets conducted an Air Defence Simulation Exercise on the estuary which involved designing an airfield and constructing basic defences in the form of tank traps and berms. Sunday morning activities were command tasks and air rifle shooting.



Maths competitions

Karamraj Garewal writes: It was a tough and long day for the QMGS maths team as we travelled to London for the UKMT maths team challenge national final. The team, consisting of Dylan Khangure, Rahul Randhawa, Karamraj Garewal and Robert Peacock (pictured below), was one of 88 schools who made the final, with 1770 schools having entered the competition. A consistent performance across all 5 rounds led to QMGS finishing 19th out of the 88 schools.



Natural Sciences @ Farchynys



Mr Rendu: The Natural Sciences weekend on the 13th -15th May passed off most successfully. Students from Year 8 found the bat cave below Farchynys, undertook a transect at Morfa Dyrffryn sand dunes and visited Shell Island for a spot of rock pooling. Much was learnt and good fun had by all. Look out for other Natural Science visits at our field centre in the next academic year for all year groups.

Chemistry festival



Mr Ratna reports: In April, I took four Year 8 pupils (Viraj Bains, Nathan Beale, Matthew Clayton and Andrew Thornett) to the Salters Festival at the University of Birmingham, an event which pupils from across the country can enter and are set two Chemistry challenges to complete. The boys thoroughly enjoyed it and the organisers commented on "how well your pupils worked on the challenge and in the laboratory environment, but above all it was good to see them enjoying the day".

Physics Olympiads

Mr Rockett: This summer's Year 12 Olympiad paper was the hardest I can remember, so I wasn't surprised when marks peaked at about 50%. Particular individual highlights included four Silver Awards going to Isaac Walker, Sebastian Stewart-Barry, James Murdoch and Sundeep Sandhu, although we also achieved 7 Bronze I Awards and 6 Bronze II Awards, marking a record haul in terms of numbers of successful students. Well done to all who gave it their best, and also to teachers for routinely going well beyond the A-level specifications. Not far behind were our Year 11 winners. Silver Awards went to Benjamin Hopton and Samuel Shackleton with 8 Bronze Award winners also successful.

Design & Technology updates



Gurjivan Sohal: Students participated in a WWII Ceramic Plate Design Competition, launched to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Finalists attended an awards evening at Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, with stellar results for QM, including myself as KS3 winner, and Keaton Hargun and Roop Dhillon as joint first in the KS4 category. It was a superb evening in the Potteries and all were congratulated for their achievements.



Mrs Youngman: June saw me partake in the week-long STEM Engagement Europe Project, involving a visit to the Netherlands to see the approach and teaching of STEM subjects in schools there. Upon arrival, five other West Midlands delegates (above left) and I joined up with another twenty from Ireland, the Czech Republic and Turkey. Our hosts were lecturers from Koning Willem I College, where we enjoyed tours and saw a huge variety of workshops, teaching areas and some teaching. Their ethos focused greatly on giving students a practical experience and encouraging them to learn by "doing". Inspirational lectures on Creative Thinking were also held, introducing us to the concept of the ICE model which I intend to implement at A Level in the future.

Science at university

Tatenda Mudekunya: writes In June, students from Year 10 (left) participated in 'The Life and Environmental Sciences Discovery Day' at Birmingham University. We had the opportunity to look at different aspects of Science through the activities available, opening our minds to the whole range of careers available.

Further stand-out moments recently have included weekly EngSoc sessions, a competition with the Old Boy-ran JDD Design, a team entry in the Go4Set contest and David Pearce's success in winning the Institute of Structural Engineers Engineering Architecture Prize essay competition. At the end of the summer term, a team also travelled to Harper Adams University to take part in the 'Design your own Robot Competition' (above left).



Easy fundraising

131 people have now raised a total over £500 to the School! If you haven't already, why don't you join us? Whenever you buy anything online - from your weekly shop to your annual holiday - you could be raising a free donation for QMGS. There are nearly 3,000 retailers including Amazon, John Lewis & Sainsbury's, who will donate a % of the amount you spend to QMGS to say thank you for shopping with them. It's really simple, and doesn't cost you anything.

All you have to do is:

1. Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/queenmarysgrammar;
2. Sign up for free
3. Get shopping - your donations will be collected by easyfundraising and automatically sent to QMGS. It couldn't be easier!

Visiting speaker

Kieran Thiarya writes: In March, Hakeem Onibudo came to visit Year 10 to talk to us regarding social entrepreneurship. He mentioned some activities he had been involved in as a result of being a British Council Ambassador. One of these was traveling to Tunisia to get school aged children off the streets to become involved in more positive aspects of community life, which in this case was break dancing. However, in addition to talking about social entrepreneurship he also gave an overview of his life story - how he had progressed from somebody obtaining poor grades in their A-Levels to making a real, noticeable change in society. As a part of his introduction he told us that one of his objectives of the day was to inspire at least one member of Year 10. I thoroughly believe he achieved this and in a greater quantity.



Barcelona trip



Jaian Patel writes: In May, a group of 44 Year 8 boys travelled to Spain. After arriving at our hotel in the coastal town of Blanes we visited La Sagrada Familia (above). The following day we visited the FC Nou Camp followed by a visit to Parc Guell. Following this was a trip to the famous street of Las Ramblas. In the evening we went to see a very entertaining medieval show followed by a Spanish flamenco show. The following day was a thriller at Port Aventura, home to the tallest rollercoaster in Europe, Shambala. On our final day we went to a typical Tapas restaurant after a much-enjoyed ride on a crystal-bottom boat. Fortunately, there was enough time to relax in the hotel's marvellous pool, where we could all cool off before packing up our bags. Unfortunately we had to say "Adiós" as we made our way to the Prat De Llobregat Airport to conclude a splendid trip to a marvellous country.

Geography at the BBC

Harvir Dhahan: Year 9 visited BBC studios in Birmingham to see what happens behind the scenes of the news that appears on our TV. Throughout the tour we were able to try out amazing gadgets (such as a virtual reality camera) and a few of us even presented a mini news and weather report using a green screen. On our tour, we saw how much work is put into a 30 minute programme, which made us realise how important this job is. Overall, the trip was an unforgettable experience and my personal favourite moment was creating a radio drama which used sound effect equipment and allowed us to speak through microphones and hear back how we would sound on the radio.

Farchynys weeks

Over 7 weeks of the summer term, all of the fustees have travelled to Farchynys for their 'learn to learn' residential. A huge range of activities have been undertaken, lots of staff have given up their time, and the boys have started their association with life on the estuary (left)!

Twelfth Night trip

Rhys Llewellyn writes: In April I had the pleasure of experiencing Twelfth Night at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, alongside A-level English students. The production was exciting and hilarious, offering a provocative new insight into the play for the examination this summer. Music was utilised perfectly in the production to develop memorable characters and drama. We also had the good fortune to enjoy a brief discussion with the cast after the show had finished, an invaluable opportunity to learn about the creative process which led to the excellent performance.

Rising authors award

Dominic Smith reports: Ever since I joined the 'Creative Writing Club', we have been working on a story that could be entered into a competition, with all the finalists being published in an anthology. After spending weeks working on this, we were finally ready for the big day. The creative Writing Club went to Walsall Library where the competition was being judged by three local authors. They told us how writing could change our lives and how much fun it was - we agreed! All contestants received a certificate before we found out the winners for 'Best Story', 'Best Presentation' and 'Most Unique Plot' - I won the last one for my story called 'Weird Style'! We really enjoyed the day and the opportunity, and would like to thank Mrs Taylor for organising the event with the other schools, and Stuart Kirk in 11D for running Creative Writing Club.

Castle competition

Prabhdeep Singh Khaira: Over the Easter break, we were set a history project to build our own model of a castle. For this project we had to create a model of either a real life castle (for example the mighty Krak Des Chevaliers in modern day Syria), or we had to create a generic castle model such as a Motte and Bailey or a Stone Keep castle. A few students even used Computer Aided Design technology. Then we had to create a short description of the castle, writing about how castles developed over time and what most of these castles were like or who owned them and when they were built. We developed many skills and I think this was a good project as we learned while having fun and most students would like to do something like this again.

Cricket

Mr Gibbons: Whilst the wet weather has prevented a number of fixtures throughout the season, it has not reduced the spirits of the QM cricketers who have enjoyed success this year. At senior level, the 1st XI recorded victories against LSS, Shrewsbury U16A XI and the QMOB but lost narrowly to both KHVIII and BVGS. Nathan Blackwood has been the stand out batsman scoring 264 runs including a top score of 52* vs. LSS. In addition, against challenging opposition in the Bablake Tournament, he scored 131 runs in four innings with a top score of 48 from only 27 balls against Warwick School. Arjun Patel also recorded an unbeaten 50* against eventual winners Wellingborough College. Whilst Nilan Patel led the way with the ball achieving 13 wickets, Seth Jordan impressed throughout the season achieving 9 wickets with a best of 3-23 against Warwick. The 2nd XI suffered a disappointing defeat to Solihull School despite 2-28 and 44 from captain Sundeep Sandhu but they secured a nail-biting victory versus a Shrewsbury U16B XI thanks to the efforts of Devansh Tandon who scored 28 and took 3-4.



The U15A team can reflect with great satisfaction after a highly successful season. In the inaugural QMGS 10s Tournament, QM defeated BVGS in the final after being set 80 to win, with Rohit Suglani contributing 30* in the chase. The highlight of the season came in unusual circumstances as the boys were crowned Staffordshire County Champions after defeating Alleynes Academy in a bowl-out (2-1) thanks to strikes by Devansh Tandon and Aarondeep Sandhu. This victory was fully deserved after defeating Denstone College, N-U-L and WGS in the previous rounds. Due to this success, the boys were entered into the National Competition and were knocked out by Warwick in the last 32. Arvind Sharma has contributed significantly with the ball taking 19 wickets with outstanding figures of 6-4 versus N-U-L.

A special mention to both Rohit Suglani (103*) and Usamah Iqbal (100*) in Darby who built a 233 run partnership in only 64 balls in their House match against Aragon. Rohit scored a combined total of over 500 runs for the 1st XI, U15s and for Darby in House matches this year - an impressive feat!

The Year 9 side endured a difficult season and must improve the execution of their skills under pressure in order for results to improve. Their most notable victory came at the Adams' Grammar 10s Tournament where despite the loss of early wickets, some expansive stroke play from Matthew Curtiss (23*), Vishal Puligari (21) and Amrit Basran (18*) ensured QM reached the final where they were defeated by Adams' Grammar. Parmdeep Kalsi has achieved the highest individual score (37*) while both Danial Shah (62*) and Matthew Curtiss (52*) of Petypher hit half-centuries in their House match against Aragon. One of the most improved bowlers has been Amrit Basran, who recorded impressive figures of 3-14 vs. Camp Hill.



The reintroduction of Saturday fixtures for the U12s and U13s has provided pupils with the opportunity to experience the longer format of the game. This has been extremely beneficial for the U13s, where huge strides have been made in their batting with Muhammad Raheem (41*), Ronan Bagry (40*), Jackson Fraser (29*) and Chancel Cyriac (26*) all achieving their highest individual score. In addition, there have been a number of impressive bowling performances with Jackson Fraser obtaining 3-3 vs. Oswestry, Hashim Iqbal achieving 4-22 vs. LGS and Suchir Gella recording 4-2 vs Trent College. The U13s have reached the final of the Staffordshire Cup (not played at time of going to print) and won the inaugural Tettenhall College Tournament (above) with victories against Tettenhall, Birchfield & Bedstone.

The Year 7 team will look back on a highly successful season with an element of disappointment after their defeat in the quarter-final of the Staffordshire Cup and finishing runners-up in the Adams' Grammar 10s Tournament.

Nevertheless, the boys have made significant progress since the Y7 trials and have produced a number of impressive performances including victories against Trent College, WGS, KE Aston and LSS. On an individual level, Jacob Clarke has scored over 300 runs for the U12A side at an average of 52.5, including four consecutive 50s. Oliver Green also hit his maiden fifty (52) versus LGS. From a bowling perspective, Jacob Clarke recorded impressive figures of 4-13 against KE Aston but Will Millerchip (11) and Matt Smith (10) were the leading wicket takers. However, Kaif Zaman achieved the best figures by a Y7 pupil with 5-2 in a House match for Petypher against Aragon.

Cross Country

Mr Larvin writes: Following a tough start to spring term, the team languished in fifth place within the Greater Birmingham Schools Cross Country league. A revitalised squad won the final two fixtures of the year to finish third in the league behind KES and Warwick School. Ben Boulter was unable to defend the individual title due to academic commitments but still placed a commendable 7th, with Adam Anwar in 8th. Tam Calder of 6.2 was rewarded with her year-long commitment with an impressive 4th place in the female league.

Athletics & Sports Week



Mr Francis: In a great team performance, QM finished 2nd behind Shire Oak in the Walsall Schools Athletics championship. 1st places for Reuben Sidhu x3, Gabriel Ekpa, & Kyle Corbin, plus lots of silvers. I was very impressed with the attitude and behaviour of an under strength team. The School Sports Week also went very well. Gryphon won Years 7 & 10 with Darby winning Years 8 & 9 and being overall winners. A big thanks to all the Sixth Form helpers!

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