



# The QM Observer

## SPEECH DAY

Despite the numerous obstacles which stood in our path as a result of the pandemic, we have slowly but surely been bringing back the live events and celebrations which have for so long been absent from the life of our school. One of these being the return of the annual Speech Day. This year's Speech Day took place on 11th February. It varied greatly in comparison to previous years in that this year it was held in the School Hall instead of the usual setting of St. Matthew's Church, with the only attendance being Y7 and Y8 as a 'sample' to the experience of a traditional Speech Day. Memorable features included a captivating address by the Reverend Jim Trood, followed by a selection of musical items. At the school, Reverend Rob Denton



engaged in spectacularly gripping debates with the sixth form. Other musical acts were recorded by a visiting videographer on separate days. These will be used to compile a digital version of Speech Day which will be available for the rest of the school to view online very soon.

Anticipate a variety of performances from the school orchestra, clarinet ensemble, and a piano solo from Jack Chang of Y10. Though it is unfortunate that we still could not hold a fully realised Speech Day and prize-giving event, it is the first, albeit abridged, Speech Day that has taken place in two years. As the situation surrounding the pandemic becomes less severe, the school should be able to look forward to a return of the authentic Speech Day experience next year.

**BILL WONG**

## WORLD HIJAB DAY

As a culturally rich and diverse school community, the celebration of days such as World Hijab Day is just one of the many ways we promote inclusivity, understanding and greater appreciation of differences. World Hijab Day was created in 2013 by Nazma Khan, encouraging religious tolerance. On 4th February, a group of sixth form girls organised an ethereally decorated lunchtime workshop in support of the day which had happened earlier in the week. Amongst the many activities were; the opportunity to try on a hijab, fact files about influential hijabi women in popular culture and hijabi themed scrabble and guess-who games. There were also insightful PowerPoint presentations given by Mariyah Ali (Y13) focused on the context around the day and myth busting. A whole school assembly

was also presented by Mariyah Ali (Y13), Amal Usman (Y12) and Zaynab Malik (Y12) with a particular emphasis on their personal journey with wearing the hijab. Wearing the hijab is important to many Muslim women; not only is it an outward expression of faith and a connection to Allah, it also allows them to retain their modesty. It was extremely encouraging to see so many pupils getting involved in the activities and participating in questionnaires. The events highlighted that World Hijab Day is not only important if you yourself are a hijabi woman, but also for everyone regardless of gender or religion. It is similar to Mental Health Week in the sense that you don't need to suffer from mental illness to appreciate the need to learn more and become more emotionally aware; the same philosophy also applies here.

**STEVIE BECKETT**

## LOWER SCHOOL MUSIC CONCERT

The lower school music concert also took place only a day prior to Speech Day, on 10th February. The first music event held by the school music department post lockdown. It featured soloists from Y7 to Y9. The hall was filled with a lively audience turnout of almost 200. Highlights included: Year 7 instrumental ensemble; vocal solos by Samuel Eggington Y7 and Joseph Guthrie Y8; drum solos by Alex Hill Y8 and Benjamin Hay Y8; piano solos by Michael Chen Y9 and Eran Luyima Y9 and guitar solos by Kenzie Doleman Y8 and Rohan Sandhu Y8.

**BILL WONG**

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Holocaust Memorial Day is held on 27th January. It's a day when millions of people who were put to death for just being themselves are remembered. It's also a day where we learn about what happened and take positive action to ensure this never happens again. The key lessons from the holocaust are: we must never forget the Holocaust was not an accident. The Holocaust happened because people made choices to allow hatred and violence to occur and stand by watching doing nothing. The consequence of this was the mass killing and lives being ruined for no reason. We must never accept indifference, prejudice or injustice.

We should read, watch and listen to Holocaust survivor accounts so that we can witness through them what happened and never stand for such discrimination. The choice is ours, to either become part of hatred and oppression, or to be humane. I choose humane. This links us to the 'Equality' core value that QMGS has in place. We must respect the diverse opinions of other people's faiths and beliefs and the opportunities are there for us all in abundance.

**AARYAN PATEL**





# MEP TRIP 2022



This year, the Y9 MEP students, with Mr Rendu (Head of Biology) and the MEP staff, visited the YHA Ravenstor on 20th January. The students enjoyed a weekend based on the Chinese New Year. On the first day, the students left school to go to the youth hostel via

coach. For the next two days, the students would have sausages for breakfast, before enjoying a walk each day. Although both walks were based in the Peak District, the first was also through a **very** muddy countryside. So, although the walk was muddy, it was still a great experience. Fortunately, the second walk remained dry and went along the Monsal Trail, which goes along an old railway line - now covered up. Along both trips, the students learnt about how the Peak District was formed and about its local history. Back at the youth hostel, the students had a booklet to work through based on Chinese New Year and even got to make some tasty food for themselves. They participated in making Chinese cultural foods like dumplings and bubble tea. They also did some singing, made lanterns and Chinese couplets for the Chinese New Year! QMGs are very grateful to the Mandarin Department, Mr. Rendu and YHA Ravenstor for the incredible trip!

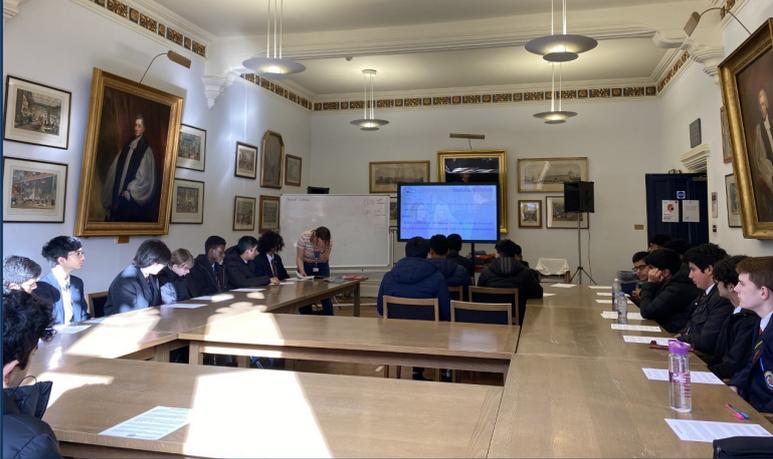
ZAYAN PANNUN

## Y11 OXFORD TRIP

It was an early start for the 30 members of the Y11 Oxford Step-up Programme who, on 16th February, visited the dreaming spires of New College, Oxford. Before them lay a day of learning about the realities of studying at this prestigious university.

Throughout the day the Y11s were treated to various insightful and engaging talks on subjects ranging from the university's rigorous applications process, to the unique tutorial system which Oxford is renowned for.

The trip also included a walking tour around the city, where students marvelled at the grand and imposing architecture, as well as visiting another of Oxford's colleges- Jesus College. Eating lunch in the cavernous dining hall at New College, which seemed straight out of Hogwarts, was a wondrous experience during which the Y11s spoke with university students about life at Oxford, gaining invaluable insight.



Perhaps the most interesting segment of the day was the discussion with a New College's law tutor, who engaged the students' critical thinking and debate skills by posing the question: 'Should it be illegal to run a red light in the middle of the night on an empty road?'. This prompted intense discussion between the students, giving them an insight into the Oxford interview process.

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for the Y11s to better understand the inner workings of Oxford University, and hopefully encourage them to recognise Oxford as a realistic option for future study. We would like to thank Mr Mackenzie and Mr Monier for accompanying them, as well as Shelby Holmes, who coordinated the activities for the day.

HARRY SHARMA



## OPPORTUNITY AT QMGs

### THE ORWELL YOUTH PRIZE 2022

The Orwell Foundation, an independent charity, celebrates the life, work, and legacy of the writer George Orwell (1903-50). Two of Orwell's novels, Animal Farm (1945) and Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), have had a profound influence on the post-war world while his non-fiction writing includes The Road to Wigan Pier (1937), Homage to Catalonia (1938), and a number of celebrated essays on a wide range of subjects.

In the Orwell Foundation's own words, "We use Orwell's remarkable legacy to celebrate honest writing and reporting, uncover hidden lives, confront uncomfortable truths, and, through the Orwell Youth Prize, to encourage all young people to think and write creatively and critically."

This year, students at QMGs are taking part in the Orwell Youth Prize for the first time and are preparing pieces of journalism, essays, short stories, blog posts, poems, and play scripts. This year the competition also includes video game designs. The theme for 2022 is 'Coming Up for Air: Writing the Climate Crisis'. Entrants are invited to write about how the climate crisis affects the people, places, and things around them.

The deadline for those who wish to submit their work and receive feedback is 22nd April and the final submission deadline is 3rd June.

MR WILLIAMS

## EDITORS' NOTE

*Thank you to everyone who worked on the QMO as a writer, and kept up with our many Teams reminders and group meetings! A special thank you to our design editors and Mr Kolaric for their support throughout. We have enjoyed all the time we've put in and received back. Most importantly, best of luck to the future QMO editors!*

SAVINA KATARIA & ALBERTA N'GUESSAN

## THE LAUNCH OF PHILOSOPHY CLUB

On 26<sup>th</sup> January, the first meeting of the Philosophy Society took place. Hosted by Mr McCusker and Mr Stirling, this very engaging and thought-provoking society is run in H1 at 13:30 for Y9. The society is currently working through a course. So far, the students have covered topics such as 'What is time?', 'Do we need school?' and 'What is art?'. The course will end with the students choosing to create an exciting project on a topic of their choice. The Philosophy project can be in many forms: report, essay, podcast and PowerPoint presentation and can be displayed on UCAS applications. So far, we have been delighted by the turn out and encourage others to join. Many thanks to Mr McCusker and Mr Stirling.

**JEEVAN SANDHU**

## QM PERSPECTIVES



Since the beginning of the Spring term, Mrs McPhee has been running the QM Perspectives group; a presentation and debating group for a vast variety of controversial topics. The group began with a presentation on Black-fishing and holding a debate surrounding this topic. It has since made other presentations on topics such as: Has photography been weaponised? ; Should pride flags be banned at international events?

QM perspectives can be attended by any student from any year, who can present a presentation on their chosen topic and put forward a debate. QM Perspectives has had a good turnout of new members and the group benefits from a constant stream of new members with interesting questions to diversify the views and perspectives shared within the group. It is highly encouraged that more students attend any QM Perspectives meeting on a topic they have an interest in or simply want to learn about.

**KAYLAN-ISHAN CHAUHAN**

## DEALING WITH EXAMS

In this Spring term, Year 11s have started experiencing the final stages leading up to the exam season in the summer. With mixed emotions around the last few weeks, managing emotions as well as sticking to revision can be difficult. However, with the selfless dedication of teachers across departments at QM, revision sessions at lunch time and after school have been made possible.

During mentoring / revision sessions, content that students often find challenging is recapped, allowing all students at QM to thrive in academic success, if at first they do not succeed. As well as being engaging and interactive, the sessions put on by teachers help to reduce stress levels. It is clear to see that QM are turning an intense period into a manageable one. Below are some tips to cope with the pressure;

- Get enough sleep. It is proven that sleeping 8 hours at night improves our memory, strengthens our concentration, and helps us to think critically.
- Avoid procrastination. Focus only on the work and stick to a plan. By sticking to a study plan from day one, the desire to complete another productive day of work will grow.
- Take breaks. By taking breaks we are learning; as information is being processed and understood subconsciously.

**VARUN DEWITT**

## SCHOOL COUNCIL UPDATE

This year the School Council has established an eco-committee to make QMGS an eco-friendly school. The School Council had several meetings with various members of staff such as the Headmaster and the Operational Manager of the canteen. The School Council discussed ideas and concerns raised by the forms of every year group and has discussed methods of decreasing our carbon footprint in order to be more environmentally friendly. For example; less plastic in the packaging of pre-ordered lunches.

In addition to this, the School Council has been discussing fundraising opportunities for QMGS and charities. These include raising money for the Charlie Waller Trust or DSM Foundation, a 24-hour "mile run" and the University Challenge, which is already taking place for sixth formers. Proposals for more vegetarian and halal options and lower costs for products have also been made. As well as this, School Council members discussed ideas for improving QMGS infrastructure like repainting the basketball hoops, building more bins in classrooms amongst many others. In conclusion, exciting changes are being made to the school. Students continue to voice their ideas and together, try to improve the school in a way that best suits all the pupils of QMGS.

**JUSTIN OKOLI & TIM-TONI IDRISU**

QMP Schedule		
Date	Title	Leader
22/03/2022	The use of photography to change perspective in the media	Gianbir Grewal
29/03/2022	Is Britain a free and just society?	Thomas Sharma
05/04/2022	Parenting: A lost cause?	Sasha Shadrourh
16/04/2022	Should embryos be used in medical research?	Susaan George
03/05/2022	Does the rule of law apply in Britain?	Harry Sharma
10/05/2022	Is Britain a tolerant country?	
17/05/2022	Is Britain a democratic country?	
24/05/2022	Student Choice	

## SEE YOURSELF GROUP

As the school year progresses, we continue the discussion of diversity within our school curriculum. In light of the new changes made to the English curriculum, we have expanded the conversation to younger year groups, specifically Year 7 and Year 8 in the recent meeting of the See Yourself group. In doing so, we took into consideration every response we received from our pupils. Our Year 7s and 8s views were incredibly important and continue to help with improving racial diversity in our school curriculum so that each student is heard and represented in the books that are studied at school.

Hearing back from our pupils, the changes have been even more of a pleasure than expected with students confirming the help it has been for them to read such insightful books. We continue to be a school with an academic focus, teaching pupils the importance of our identities being seen and represented well in the books we read. Many thanks to all the teachers involved and Mr Fadden, Head of English, who leads these meetings and allowed pupils across year groups to be the center of these discussions. The See Yourself group meets every term and continues to uphold the high standards of this school; ensuring every voice is heard and every identity is respected.

ALBERTA N'GUESSAN



## SPORTS NEWS

### AN INTERVIEW WITH U18 RUGBY

Will Roberts, Captain of the Senior Rugby Team, sat down with Nkembeng Nkengfoa, prior to the Staffordshire County Cup final.

**Coming out of COVID restrictions, how has the return to rugby been affected?**

I definitely think that the squad's handling and fitness had suffered as a result of Covid restrictions, which was probably to be expected. This was reflected in a rough start to the season for the

First XV. However, the improvement over the season has been outstanding for every player in the squad - which is reflected in the progress in the Staffs County Cup.

**What has been the most memorable match of the season so far?**

For me, it is definitely our semi-final victory over Newcastle-Under-Lyme School - and I'm sure most of the squad would agree. This was a sensational game, in which every player gave their all in order to snatch victory in the final play of the game. Not only facilitating our progress to the final (still to be played), this performance galvanised us as a squad and gave us confidence to carry forward.

**Ahead of the U18 Cup Final, what is the current mindset of the team? What will it take to win?**

The final sees us play King Eddies Lichfield, an unknown challenge. Whilst we know that we will enter as underdogs (like the semi-final), the mindset of the team is strong - with every player aware of their ability and what they need to do to. We know that we can hurt teams with our expansive style of play, circumventing many of the more physical sides that we have faced. If we can match the physicality of the opponent as well, we have a



very good chance of victory. A massive congratulations to the U18 Seniors Rugby Team for their joint win alongside King Edward Lichfield. QMGS performed particularly strongly in the second half, finishing on 24-24 draw— sharing the title.

NKEMBENG NKENGFOA

## HOCKEY— AN UPDATE

Hockey for the XI team QMGS this year has been difficult. We haven't won many games but we put up a fight against whoever we came up against. From a personal point of view, this has helped me and many other members of the squad build resilience, courage and strength to preserve us through difficult periods.

There has been an interstellar performance amongst younger years, with the U14 Hockey team winning 13 games out of 18 this season! Over 40 pupils have played in the U13 team this season. Lower schools' contribution in school hockey is sure to influence the seniors' team. I hope next year QM 1st XI win a few more games as there are a couple of incredibly talented players.

HARPREET KALIA