



The QM Observer

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CAPTAINS OF SCHOOL

MARIAM NACHIF

With a new school year comes new captains of school, ready to take on the responsibility and leadership that comes along with the role. Mazen Kafienah and Estelle Asante worked hard and went through various rounds of rigorous interviews with the headmaster and members of staff in order to secure their titles of captain. The senior editors of the QMO managed to catch up with the new school captains in order to gain their perspective on achieving their coveted roles. When asked about how they felt about their new roles, Mazen stated that he 'felt a mixture of emotions' due to the fact that the role of captain is a 'huge responsibility'. However, he was proud to represent the school and is honoured to take this opportunity to 'positively influence younger students'. Estelle added that she is 'excited to work with the rest of the PSLT' who all have their different strengths enabling the team to be 'a team of change'. Being the female captain of school, it is important to Estelle that she comes across as an affirmative leader. Estelle, as well as being the second female in the history of the school to gain the role of captain, is also the first black female captain of school. This is a great achievement for her and hopefully a step towards more inclusivity and diversity amongst the leaders of today.

When asked about what they hoped to achieve in the upcoming academic year, Mazen stated that he wants to try and 'amplify student voices' as well as engage students in activities 'beyond the school curriculum'. Furthermore, he would love to 'organise volunteering opportunities and fundraising events chosen by the students themselves'. Estelle ended by giving advice to any students who hope to one day achieve captaincy; she declared "you are a leader...which requires a lot of work", "get involved in any opportunity you can in order to develop your leadership skills", "stand up for what you believe in", "have a good set of friends that will support you through the process of becoming captain". Lastly, she added, 'talk to the captains of school and gain advice from us, we are always around school and are happy to answer any questions'.

Well, it seems as if we have two very ambitious and determined captains. I know that you will join me in congratulating them and we wish them the best of luck for this upcoming academic year. Well done Mazen and Estelle!

CCF

CCF Farchynys Training and Field Days

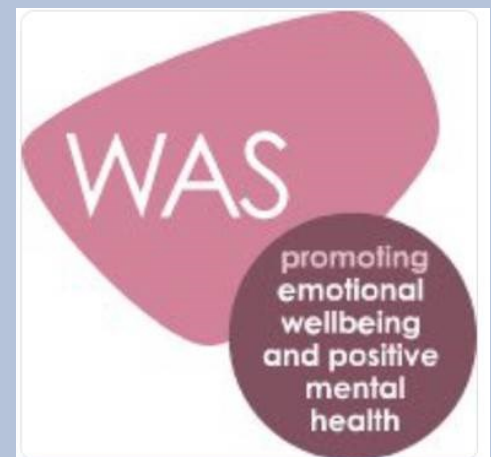
From 23rd-24th June, both army and RAF year 9 recruits had the privilege of visiting Caerwent training area for their field day. It was the first time the contingent had ever visited the training area, and the Year 9's first time in the field on an overnight exercise. Cadets covered basic field activities, which included learning how to set up a harbour area, followed by the group attempting it for themselves. Other lessons included how to cook in the field, a light and noise demonstration, plus night vision and thermal optics. This was very popular among the excitable cadets. Yet another successful field day!

NAOMI MARQUES – WIGGIN



WELLBEING AWARD *KEIRA TEMPLE*

On Thursday 7th July, our school received the prestigious 'Wellbeing Award', due to QMGS being "a school centred on emotional well-being and support, improving mental health provision for all pupils and staff". Well-being and mental health support is promoted throughout our school, especially through the Welfare Hub- a school facility that many of our students use for emotional support and for someone to talk to. Achieving this award is a huge success for QM, as the school is being recognised for the work staff and teachers do regarding emotional well-being. Mr. Langton commented, "I am delighted to say that the School has been successful in attaining the 'Wellbeing Award' for schools. After a rigorous process and verification visit, it was really pleasing to hear such positive feedback about the work that goes on in the School around well-being. Thank you to all staff, students and parents that were involved in the award." We believe that QMGS will continue being a school focused on well-being and we hope that more students will feel comfortable in sharing their feelings with one another on their well-being.



GOODBYE TO OUR YEAR 13S

Farewell to our Year 13s...

As someone who only joined QMGs in September, it could be said that it makes no sense for me to write this article saying goodbye to our year 13s. Unlike the continuers, I haven't been around them for the last 6 years; I didn't go with them on the infamous Year 7 Farchynys trip, but worst of all, I unfortunately never had what would've been the hilarious satisfaction of seeing them as little 11-year-olds in their brand new QMGs uniforms.



However, though all the above is disappointing, it is nevertheless irrelevant because this group of people is so welcoming that you don't have to have known them all that long to realise that they're, excuse the cliché, 'special'. With a maximum of 300 words to attempt to sum up the collection of wacky, unique, multi-faceted and scarily intellectual humans who make up our year 13s, I'm genuinely at a loss as I can't find a single word that accurately matches their energy.

So instead, we want to say to our year 13s that, as a school, we will deeply miss the presence of these memorable individuals and we want to express how extremely lucky we feel to not only have met you, but to have cherished you as part of our community. Though you're all probably shaking your heads and saying this is cringe-worthy, keep us and each other close. The most important thing we take with us through each stage of life are people. Moments we experience are only as good as those who you share them with so, as you watch the world expand in front of you and become all-the-more exciting, make the most of every second and every person you meet on these new adventures you're embarking on, but also remember the people who have mattered to you along the way. You'll always have a home here at QM; we wish you the best of luck!

SOPHIA VALMALETTE-WRIGHT

SCHOOL TRIPS

Grimeboy SYS Theatre Trip

The See Yourself Group had the privilege of attending the Birmingham Rep theatre to see the new play 'GrimeBoy'. The See Yourself Group aims to incorporate more diverse stories into the English curriculum, enabling students to see themselves represented in the books that they read. 'GrimeBoy' is a recent play written by the upcoming playwright, poet, author and performer Casey Bailey. 'GrimeBoy' was commissioned by the Birmingham Rep to run in April 2022, and his other play, 'Please Do Not Touch' was selected as part of the Vault Festival in 2022. Bailey was born and grew up in Birmingham and the influence of this is evident in his work, such as his love letter to Birmingham, 'Dear Brum', and his 'my Birmingham story' distributed by the National Literacy Trust. This featured his poem entitled 'Step Step', which is a great piece of poetry in its own right.

'GrimeBoy' itself is a story about perseverance and strength as we meet the young protagonist Grime Boy who hopes to make it in the music industry of rap. The play touches on themes such as racial identity, loss and violence. Its beautiful portrayal of a young black man's struggle is aided by the fast-paced music and the use of lighting. It was definitely one that I will remember for a long time, and I am certain that the See Yourself Group thoroughly enjoyed this lively performance. **MARIAM NACHIF**

Battlefields Visit

On 25th May, 45 Y9&10 students went to Belgium and France for 4 days, led by Mr. Reynolds. It was also Mr. Franklin's first trip with QMGs, saying that "The First World War battlefields was somewhere I had always intended to go, but had never quite managed. You can read and watch – and teach – a lot about the First World War, but can never quite understand it until you are really there." The scale and reality of the War is still hard to imagine, but we returned with renewed gratitude and interest for the sacrifices of the soldiers there. Many of them would not have been much older than us! It was also a pleasure to have good company and the best tour guides you could ask for in Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Franklin and Mr. Rendu. Their knowledge and enthusiasm (especially from Mr Hughes) brought the trip to life.

Remembrance and scale were very clear at Thiepval Memorial, Tyne Cot, and Langemark Cemeteries, and for QMGs especially in St George's Church. Hill 62, Vimy Ridge and Newfoundland Park provided insight into the trenches of the war, with Lochanagar Crater showing its huge scale. The Shotat Dawn Post, Talbot House and Ulster tower provided insight into the experience of soldiers away from the front line,

We thank Mr. Reynolds for organising the incredible trip, as well as all the other staff.

ZAYAN PANNUN

Year 12 History Trip

On the 8th of July, Year 12 historians had the opportunity to visit the oldest museum in the UK, the University of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum. Founded in 1682, it



houses millions of objects dating from antiquity to the medieval era and the Renaissance, all the way to the mid 20th century. Roman statues, Egyptian sarcophagi, a Boeotian war helmet, Mughal art, Japanese prints and early Italian paintings. These were just some of the things that our students were able to explore across the four floors of the stunning museum.

Leading the QM students to Cornmarket Street for lunch, Mr Reynolds took on the role of the students' very own tour guide around the city. He continued with his enriching comments during the students' walk to the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Museum of Natural History, giving brief historical accounts of major monuments, buildings and streets.

In the Museum of Natural History, the students were able to admire imposing dinosaur bones, colossal taxidermied land and sea animals, and different stones, minerals and rocks. The Pitt Rivers, focusing on anthropology, transported the students to the practices of our ancestors, displaying a formidable collection of ancient games, dolls, theatre masks, playing rackets, weapons like guns and spears, and everyday objects of society expanding from all continents and times.

MEHTAB KAUR

SOCIETIES

School societies have been incredibly prominent and active throughout this term, with many students from Y7 to Y12 all engaging and enjoying the wide range of societies the school offers. The societies take place at lunchtime, allowing our students to have the opportunity to socialise with students from other year groups who have the same interest as them, as well as helping the students in improving their understanding and knowledge of their subject. E.g. Med-Soc is a society that is led by Mr. Rendu, and is specifically for Y12 students who want to pursue a career in medicine. It involves student-led presentations of medicine-related topics, such as 'The History of the NHS', 'What can you do with a medicine degree?', and 'Different Roles in Medicine'. Led by Y12 student Taran Chana, Coding Club teaches Y7 students how to build various games using interactive pieces of technology. PhilSoc is a society that is led by Mr. Stirling and Mr. McCusker

NAOMI MARQUES-WIGGIN

and is an engaging and thought-provoking society for Y9 and Y12 students, which involves presentations and discussions on philosophical topics such as 'What is time?' and 'What is art?'. Lastly, History Society is led by Mr. Franklin and is targeted at any students in the school who have an interest in controversial topics, such as current world affairs involving Ukraine and Russia, and also debates on whether American democracy is working. Ajay Jabbal- a Y9 student who attends both PhilSoc and History Society- stated, 'I find the societies enjoyable as they both have a grand atmosphere, which allows me to relax and learn at the same time.' These societies are all very successful, and we are hoping that more of our students take part in them next year.

KEIRA TEMPLE



CHANGE YOUR MIND

As we celebrate the success of the 6th year of Change Your Mind, the future looks even brighter. From September 2022, Mrs McPhee has ambitious plans to expand the scheme from 36 to 48 pupils in Year 12, while adding 2 new workshops (one exploring neurodiversity, and another on further first aid). All members of CYM will have a pupil in the lower school to mentor (from difficulties with emotions to behavioural support or even organization skills). Following these changes, expansion across both the Mercian Trust and across the country is planned to continue. By end of the following school year, CYM will have 116 schools involved across 75 local education authorities across the UK. Consistently, pupils have demonstrated their generosity by giving up their time at very short notice, being prepared to deliver workshops where they have not seen the materials before and also revealing their wisdom and knowledge about difficult topics such as diversity, conflicts within the home and dealing with complex emotions. A public thank you for Ms McPhee for the success of the sixth great year of Change Your Mind! Here's to the next six years!

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT

The Queen's Players made their debut on the QM stage with performances from a selection of Shakespeare's most beloved scenes and plays. The anthology, dubbed 'A Midsummer Night', called forth actors and actresses, light technicians, and backstage coordinators from the youngest years to the Sixth Form. Mr Williams put together a royal ensemble, boasting two kings- Richard III and Henry V - Queen Titania, the bloody Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The sinister witches brought forth their cauldron from a trapdoor, reopened for the first time in decades for this very performance. Following three sonnets and a Ted Talk, there was a fitting recital from the end of 'A Midsummer's Night Dream', promising to 'make amends ere long' and wishing goodnight to the audience, who heartily gave their resounding applause. Mr Williams spoke of the future awaiting the Queen's Players, with this performance being the first of many more to come. Following the showcase, an art exhibition was run by Sara and Rita, who displayed the best works created by QM students on the theme of the play.

MEHTAB KAUR



PRIDE MONTH

On Thursday 16th June, Manha Ahmed and I delivered a 'Pride Month' assembly to Y12. This was a nerve-wracking assembly to deliver, but Manha and I felt that it was necessary to show our pride; not only to educate our peers on the issues the LGBTQ+ community face, but also to inspire and strengthen those who are a part of it. The assembly went smoothly, with the audience listening intently and respectfully. We covered topics such as queer figures throughout history, misconceptions about LGBTQ+ identities and the history behind pride. The most frightening part of the assembly for me was sharing my own story and experiences as a bisexual man. It took a lot of gall to face the entirety of my year and share something so personal to me, but as soon as I did, I knew it was worth it. I hope that by outwardly expressing myself, someone in the room was inspired to face whatever challenges or fears they may have, sexual-identity related or not. It is important to take the time to read LGBTQ+ books, watch LGBTQ+ movies and shows, or even listen to the genuine experiences of queer people. A book and TV show that I highly recommend is the 'Heartstopper' series by Alice Oseman, which is a heart-warming story about two boys from an all-boys grammar school falling in love and the challenges they face. The feedback from both students and teachers alike has been overwhelming; it is touching to see that the school is so accepting and welcoming of people from all identities. I hope that tolerance and respect towards those who are different to us continues year-round, and not only during 'Pride Month'.

MUDIWA MUDEKUNYE



SPORTS NEWS

SPORTS WEEK

No school year at Queen Mary's Grammar School would be complete without our annual Sports Week! A widely anticipated event for participants and supporters alike, the event brings forth an opportunity to unite the school in comradeship and school spirit. After all, these points go towards the House Cup. At the start of this exciting week, Aragon and Petypher found themselves in first place, followed closely by Gryphon and Darby. June 27th saw the first day of Sports Week, with over four hundred students participating in a variety of games. Over the course of the week, our students took part in many of the classics – football, dodgeball, athletics, and cricket – as well as the not so classic diamond cricket and softball. A special congratulations to Lucas (Y7), Benjamin (Y8), Joseph (Y9) and Ethan (Y10) for being this year's overall winners, and also Ben Omoleye (Y8) who broke the school record for discus throwing with a shocking 33.97 metres! But Sports Week would not be complete without our senior games and so, on Wednesday afternoon, our Year 12 and 13 students went out onto the field to participate in a number of activities. Highlights of these events include Darby beating Aragon in the tug of war in a surprising turn of events, as well as the 4x100m. Congratulations are due for Aragon, coming in first place overall after the events of Sports Week, with Darby coming in a well-earned second place and Petypher and Gryphon as runners-up. Thank you to all the participants, supporters and teachers (without whom this event would not be such a roaring success), for displaying such great sportsmanship and proving yourselves to be the epitome of school spirit.

AMAL USMAN

SUMMARY OF THE CRICKET SEASON

Once again, the Queen Mary's cricket season sits on the verge of completion, our first XI grafting their way to deserved successes. These successes spread over our years, including U13 triumphs with their stellar progression in the annual County Cup, of which our U15s further advanced in. However, it's been a difficult season for our First XI; with 5 wins from 13. Our boys have persisted against some of the most skilful in the country. We asked Daves Singh, Captain of the First XI, a few questions to reflect on the current season.

How have you been faring in the face of these fixtures?

'We've had a couple of tight losses at the start of the season and made too many errors. As the season progressed, we made improvements and began to win games. There is lots of potential in this squad, all as long as they put the hard work in. I'm proud of the fight that's been shown in times of struggle.'

What's been the highlight of the cricket season?

'There has been many individual performances so far this season:

Daves's 90 against Vesey's, and his 72 against KES, capping off two fine displays;

Mani's performance against JHGS, scoring 50 whilst taking 12 wickets this season, the most of all the first XI;

Aryan with a superb 59 against Camphill;

Shivansh with a 47 against Solihull, whilst providing the team with a terrific partnership alongside Yusuf against Vesey's.'

What can you improve on for the next season?

'In the batting, the top order has collapsed too easily at times. We need to take more responsibility. Bowling was our strongest position this year with Shivansh, Mani, Harpreet and I leading the attack. The number of extras at the beginning needed to be restricted and has since improved significantly.'



BEN SIMPSON



SCHOOL SPIRIT

On Friday 1st July, members of the school, including the Pupil Senior Leadership Team, Y7 students, and teachers, travelled to Westminster Abbey for a prestigious annual QMGS event- one of the most important events in the school calendar: the wreath laying. The school tradition of wreath laying involves the youngest student of the school laying a wreath on the tomb of our Patron, Queen Mary. This event was joined by old Marians, as well as a Priest, who concluded the ceremony with prayer. Afterwards, tours around Westminster Abbey and London were conducted, which included seeing the Globe Theatre, 10 Downing Street, and The Supreme Court. Estelle Asante- our new Captain of School- stated, 'It was my first time attending the wreath laying event, and I feel so lucky to have been able to be a part of it.' It was an enjoyable and special day for all of our students and teachers who had the privilege of attending.

KEIRA TEMPLE

OPEN EVENING

For the first time in 3 years, QM has opened their doors to visitors again. The evening showcased our school community and inspired prospective students to enrol in our school. It was held on Thursday 9th June and was an overall great success, with almost 2000 people attending – significantly higher numbers, in comparison to pre-pandemic years. The excitement of the evening was apparent, with 1400 people arriving in the first hour! Throughout the evening, there were many different activities in each subject for visitors to participate in. The science department was memorable with the chemistry department providing interactive activities. DT was also popular; they could create and personalise their own keychains. The science department also encouraged stem cell donations. There were many activities that made the evening a triumph. Mr Kolaric – the organiser of the event – received a lot of positive feedback. Many visitors commented on 'how excellent the students were'. The evening was a true reflection of the school and its values and ethos, as well as the school community that I am very proud to be a part of. All students embodied the core values of the school in this evening. Mr. Kolaric stated 'It was a privilege to see our students interacting with our visitors in such a mature way.' Thank you to everyone who took part and we hope for the same great outcome next year.

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