



The QM Observer

BURNS NIGHT

The great poet, Robert Burns is internationally acclaimed for his writings in the Scots language, notably different from both Standard English and what we refer to as Scottish Gaelic, the ancient Celtic language. Credited with the writing of Auld Lang Syne, Burns is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and a pioneer of the Romantic movement in Europe towards the end of the 18th Century. His work posthumously became a great source of inspiration to the founders of both liberalism and socialism, and his influence has long been strong on Scottish literature.

At QMGS, we celebrate the anniversary of Burns' birth with the aforementioned Burns Night, an event notable for its high levels of attendance by alumni of the school. As a helper at the event, I felt as if I had stepped into another world; it's at times like these when the full history of the school weighs heavily on one's shoulders, and it is easy to become overwhelmed. The traditions that were enacted may appear alien to those outside the QM bubble; indeed, even as a long-time student at the school, I was surprised by some of the more obscure ones, such as the presence of a bagpiper to greet the guests, and the comically named "Address to a Haggis", based on the poem of the same name by Burns. The event itself consisted of a supper prepared by the catering staff, which included the traditional Scottish dish of Haggis served with Neeps and Tatties (swede and potatoes, for those of you like me who cannot speak Scots), speeches by those present (including one by our headmaster Mr. Langton), and Scotch Whiskey, sometimes referred to by the Scots as the "water of life". After the food had been served, the mingling of the guests was backdropped by performances by Ed Cusick and his band, reprising their roles as the musical entertainment for Burns night after rave reviews in 2022. As the night went on and our drink supply was drained, more people trickled onto the dance floor, until nearly everyone was dancing. The school reception was also temporarily converted into a casino, complete with a roulette wheel and multiple card games. It is worth noting that I was rather successful on the Blackjack table (for clarification, we were provided with chips, and therefore didn't gamble with real money).

Overall, the event was a triumph that raised a large sum of money for the QMA. I enjoyed my experience waiting tables, and I look forward to the opportunity to attend similar events in the future!

TOBIAS ROBERTS

CCF

CCF 'ANTARCTIC TRAINING'

On the 'Antarctic Training' weekend, many cadets brushed up on their air rifle handling and shooting skills. On Saturday, recruits worked on rotation and communication theory and air rifle shooting skills, improving their leadership abilities by completing a 'Blue Badge Communication and Leadership' task on Sunday.

CCF 'ADVENTURE WEEKEND'

Moreover, the following month, on 10th March, recruits enjoyed a CCF weekend of adventurous training at Whitemoor Lakes, a local activity centre. The weekend consisted of multiple activities that challenged the cadets across six key themes – teamwork, initiative, social awareness, leadership, personal development and physical challenge. Recruits enjoyed classic adventure style activities, such as high ropes, climbing and kayaking, as well as other testing activities such as orienteering, challenge courses and archery. This trip is new to the CCF, and it is certainly not one to miss out on!

NAOMI MARQUES – WIGGIN

CHANGE YOUR MIND

This year has been one of the most impressive years for the CYM programme to date. For those unfamiliar, at its core, CYM is an enrichment programme aimed at Y12 pupils whereby they visit local primary and secondary schools and deliver workshops on various life-skills to help prepare younger students for the often quite intimidating adult world. Already, the new 'Conflict Resolution' workshop has been delivered to a school in Sunderland, not only demonstrating CYM's national outreach, but standing as a testament to how proactive and hardworking this year's CYM team has been. Other new workshops include financial education, and government and politics, further demonstrating how assiduous this year's cohort is in their commitment to the programme. To produce these new workshops, 'CYMers' also participated in interactive workshops delivered by professionals, showing how CYM is as much about sharing your knowledge as it is about gaining new knowledge.

Opportunities for students within CYM have also expanded nationally, with a group of students participating in the Chameleon PDE student advisory board (a national PSHE networking meeting) and two students being selected to represent CYM in a national conference promoting the programme. Blog posts written by 'CYMers' have also appeared on the



programme's national website, helping further promote the programme to even more schools.

Overall, this year's CYM team has involved themselves in a wealth of impressive opportunities, which have not only been beneficial to their own personal development, but also that of students in the local and national community. Yet, none of these fantastic opportunities and programmes would be possible were it not for the immense dedication and hard work of CYM's coordinators, Mrs McPhee and Ms Morgan, so on behalf of the entire team I would like to extend to them our warmest gratitude.

HARRY SHARMA



MUSIC- SOLOISTS CONCERT

The evening of February 9th saw a return of the Music department's soloists concert, showcasing the multitude of talented musicians we have within our school community. With stunning solo and group performances throughout every year group, it was also a fantastic opportunity for individuals to perform in front of an audience, many for the first time. This demonstrated what can only be deemed as a truly impressive feat of courage and commitment. In addition to a wide variety of fantastic performances, from beautiful vocal duets to lively guitar solos, all of which the audience and I thoroughly enjoyed watching. Just a few highlights of the concert included a mesmerising rendition of Joe Hisaishi's *'Merry-go-round of life'*, both intricately arranged and played by Aidan Fernandez, along with an electrifying grade 8 drum kit rendition of Black Sabbath's *'War Pigs'* by Robin Arnott. Moreover, Tobias Roberts composed a brilliantly named original jazz piece, titled *'Song for the Imminent Alien Invasion'*, which he performed with Joseph Waterman, William Kenyon and Mia Pell, with improvised solos from all the band members. This did not fail to impress! Up next was a magnificently intense performance of the rapid and incredibly difficult grade 8 violin piece, Kreisler's *'Preludio + Allegro'*, by Ewan Cutts. Finally, Jonathan Peacock concluded the concert, performing a diploma level piece of music, Chopin's extremely challenging *'Fantasie Impromptu'* on piano, leaving the audience with a superb finale. Mr Vause and the music department would like to show our appreciation to all who took part in making this concert as excellent as it was. Thank you.



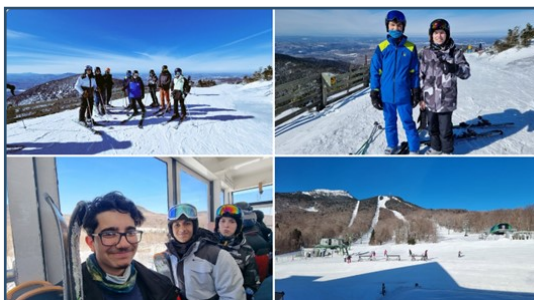
BILL WONG



SCHOOL TRIPS

VERMONT SKI TRIP

In February 2023, QMGS students, led by Mr Rendu and fellow staff members, embarked on the Jay Peak Ski Tour located in Northern Vermont and spent 5 days skiing. Jay Peak is only 5 miles away from the Canadian border and receives over 350 inches of snowfall. As well as skiing, the resort offers many other activities such as indoor swimming, rock climbing, games and arcade areas, and several restaurants. In Vermont, the skiing conditions were at times challenging, but that only made the experience more rewarding and enjoyable. Students were put in groups and as each day passed, they were able to grow in confidence and develop their skiing abilities. On the trip, students also got a chance to partake in other fun activities such as attending an ice hockey game, taking a trip to a waterpark, rock climbing, bowling, watching a film at the cinema, and going to the resort's arcade. Students also visited a nearby town called Manchester with a shopping outlet and then travelled to Boston for further sightseeing. When asked about his experience, Year 13 student Nat Jackson said he would definitely recommend the trip, rating his overall experience a perfect "10/10" score. I would certainly agree!



MARIAM NACHIF

YEAR 12 GEOGRAPHY TRIPS

The Year 12 A level geography students have embarked on multiple day trips this academic year, travelling to a range of areas such as the Olympic Park in London, Digbeth and Stratford. The purpose of these trips were to survey environmental quality, building quality, the use of the land, how they felt in the area and whether the area was a clone town - how unique the area was based on the shops.

A student described Stratford as very 'modern' and 'tourist-centric', having completely transformed as it was only recently developed. Similar to Stratford, the Olympic Park in London was described as very 'modern' and 'well-developed'; a lush area containing sustainable buildings and an efficient use of land. However, the trip to Digbeth showed a contrast, clearly still being developed with lots of building work being completed and cranes always in sight, in addition to containing a copious amount of mosaics and graffiti.

Overall, these trips were a means of allowing the Year 12s to conduct surveys themselves in various areas, some of which were very highly-developed, while others were currently developing, which allowed them to compile unique data and produce a range of surveys. The students thoroughly enjoyed this experience and are enthusiastic to set out on more trips.

KRISH VARIA

BARCELONA ART TRIP

During the second week of February, art students from Year 11 and Year 13 had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Barcelona, Spain, a city rich in art, architecture and culture. From traditional Catalan art at Museu Nacional d' Art de Catalunya and contemporary art at the MoCo, to the architecture and art of household names such as Gaudi and Picasso, the students were able to draw vast inspiration for their own art pieces- be it for their A-Level art examination, or a graffiti piece for their GCSE coursework.



Moreover, after their daily trips to world-renowned art museums and architectural landmarks in the Spanish capital city and travelling through the city on the Spanish metro, the QM students and teachers indulged in a different Spanish restaurant every night, trying traditional foods such as tapas. Mrs Gray, one of the staff members organising the trip, commented "[the students] did us proud!" mentioning the students' responsible behaviour during the trip, and concluded it was an all-round highly successful trip!

MEHTAB KAUR



RUGBY

The arrival of Spring has seen many successes across all the year groups' rugby teams. The season began with a victory again Bishop Vesey's Grammar school. U13 students scored 45-0, with both Al-Amin and Darren being awarded man of the match. This in turn lead to Student Sports ranking it as the best U13 team in the country. Following this accomplishment, the U16 team were able to progress onto the semi-final of the County Cup after a victory of 19-7 against Trentham. The U14 team also progressed to the semi-final, following a victory against Westwood College of 52-15. Many impressive successes followed, such as matches from U12 and U13 teams which resulted in wins of 50-0 and 45-5 respectively. The U13A team also defeated King Edward's with 45-20 making Jason the man of the match. U13B was also victorious with 45-5. The Year 9 and Year 10 teams both defeated King Edward's Camp Hill on separate occasions with 57-5 and 29-27 as the results. Eight boys from Year 9 were also invited to the Midlands Rugby Academy, highlighting their perseverance and talent. Year 7 and Year 8 were also victorious against King Edward VI School, with U12A winning 25-20. U12B won with 45-10, U13A won 40-10, and U13B drew at 10-10. The U15 team won against King Edward's School finalising the match at 24-12. All students that have represented the school at rugby matches have contributed to these successes and we'd like to extend our gratitude to them and encourage them to take pride in what they've achieved. We also say a big thank you to the PE staff!

AMIT KANT KAUR

HOCKEY

The QMGS Hockey team continued to display the extent of their ability this season. This began with U15A beating King Edward VI Aston School 11-2. U15B also participated in a match being victorious over Old Swinford Hospital, with Sadrach scoring 3 and Joe being the player of the match. The U14 team finished as runner ups in the Country tournament, qualifying for more important matches in the Midlands finals taking place in March. During this, Floyd scored 5, Abdullah 4, Calvin 2 and Ariyan 1. This resulted in the scores of 3-0, 0-1, 7-0 and 2-1. The First XI team were able to compete in the Staffordshire U18 tournament and reached the final stage of it. Unfortunately, however, they lost it due to penalties. Later, the first XI team managed to play 10 games unbeaten and defeated King Edward VI Fiveways school with 5-1. During this, Alfie scored 2 goals and Karam, Maanav and Diraj all scored too. In

different competitions, U12, U14 and U15 all won against King Edward VI Fiveways School, scoring 6-0, 3-1 and 4-2. U12 A and C again secured victories against Wolverhampton Grammar School at 2-0, with Rayan scoring 2 and 6-0 in the other match. The U13 team almost successfully secured four victories, with team A conceding twice in the last 2 minutes of a close match resulting in 3-3. Team C won with 7-1, with both matches being against King Edward VI Fiveways school. Team B and D both beat Wolverhampton with 3-0 and 2-1. In addition to all their prior accomplishments, the U13 team proudly finished third place on the Staffordshire cup after 3 successive draws and a victory of 4-0 against Newcastle. We are grateful to the students devoted to Hockey at QMGS who have managed to prove themselves to be some of the most dedicated to their sport in the country, and we hope that they will enjoy a restful Easter break in preparation for the next season.

AMIT KANT KAUR

SPORTS LEGACY PROJECT

The Headmaster, and the Campaign Chairman, Mr John Walters, have planned a £1.8 million project for QMGS. This project will greatly enhance the school's sporting performance and wellbeing through numerous new sporting opportunities. The Sports Legacy Project will bring a new and brighter dawn for sports at QMGS, creating a community legacy. The three-phase project will first see a full-sized Second-Generation AstroTurf pitch be built, able to house several sports clubs allowing for home hockey and tennis matches and for 5-a-side football. Students know that the field has been difficult at times, especially with the frequent patches of mud forming mini bogs after rain, which will be tackled with a new drainage system under the field and cricket square. The second phase will give rise to grass pitches fit for purpose and perfect cricket, rugby and a range of field events. The third phase will see the development of a new pavilion, with an extension allowing for external sports clubs, the local sporting community and students to stand and view the project in its entirety. Although the project is set to begin in the next academic year, there will be a variety of fun fundraisers and the opportunity to gift to the project, with the chance to have parts of the project named after key donors. We hope the images give a flavour of the exciting things to come!



ZAYAN PANNUN

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Friday 27th January 2023 marked the Holocaust Memorial Day - an important day remembering the millions of people brutally murdered under Nazi Persecution. It is remembered on the 27th January, as this was the date that Auschwitz- Birkenau (the biggest Nazi death camp) was liberated by Soviet troops.

On this day every year across the UK, thousands of events occur, including candle lightings, readings, and talks. Occurring between 1941 and 1945, the Holocaust took place less than 80 years ago. Six million Jewish people lost their lives, as well as Roma and Sinti people, black people, homosexual people, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Slavic people- all for not being part of the 'pure Aryan race'.

It is important to remember on this day the unexplainable, inhumane, and horrifying pain that millions of humans had to go through.

Mr Bradley conducted a highly informative assembly focusing on the individual experiences of the victims of the Holocaust. In this, he paid particular focus to the young children who were forced to part from their families, scared and afraid of never seeing them again, which was the distressing truth for most families. Many of these victims were treated appallingly, packed into a claustrophobic and tight train, sent to a gas chamber, and then forced into mass graves without a funeral. Mr Bradley ended his thought-provoking and highly emotive assembly with a heart-warming prayer.

KEIRA TEMPLE



EXTRA CURRICULAR

QM ALLIANCE

QM Alliance is an all-inclusive lunchtime club held on Fridays at 1:20pm by Miss Morgan in H4. The purpose of the club is to provide a safe place for students who may feel isolated otherwise; it is a place in which students can feel safe. It allows them to express themselves and make friends with people from different backgrounds and sexual orientations. It provides the foundation for meaningful and insightful conversation around people's identities allowing for a more understanding and cohesive environment within our school contributing to our school values: "CREDIT".

Within the classroom there are an array of board games, arts and crafts and activities to participate in, with new people you may have never spoken to before. Personally, my favourite board game is "Sussed?" a game in which you are given scenarios with reactions a, b, and c, after which you guess how your peers are most likely to react to said scenario. Activities like this encourage conversation and connection with people across years and social circles, a characteristic I feel is at the core of QM Alliance. QM Alliance is an integral part of this school which I feel all pupils should try to attend if they have the chance to.



LEAVERS' EVENT

On the evening of the 5th January, last year's Year 13 students reunited to celebrate the excellence of individuals in our year in all their interests – from biology and history to sports and music. Mr Matley started off the evening by welcoming the students and parents, followed by Mr Lax announcing the prize winners, who were deservedly honoured in front of their peers and parents alike for their achievements.

Mr Langton then proceeded to re-iterate congratulations to the prize-winners and provide words of wisdom and encouragement to the entire cohort, after which I and Katie Powell (former Captains of School) gave a few final words. The evening ended quite fittingly with a replay of our leavers' video – much to the delight of our parents, and probably less so to us students! Following the end of the formal proceedings, students and parents were able to catch up with each other – many for the first time in months. It was heart-warming to see old faces, especially those of people we had lost touch with. The time that had passed between results day and prizegiving had felt like a whole lifetime; but stepping back into the school hall felt both like travelling back in time and time was standing still, as we laughed and cringed at the past, whilst appreciating and lamenting the present.

DANIEL NDATY

STEP-UP PROGRAMME

As part of New College's Step-Up program to help state school students get into Oxford University, thirty high performing Year 11 students were given the opportunity to visit New College's beautiful campus and hear from current students and staff on Wednesday 8th February.

Despite the 7.30am start, we were excited to take a tour of the historic buildings, listen to Richard Whittington (a professor at the Saïd Business

School) speak about various aspects of university study and support, and question current students on areas like the applications process, college living and even the nightlife of Oxford. We are grateful to Mr Mackenzie and Mrs Walker, who joined us. We are also grateful to Shelby, New College's outreach officer, who made the visit possible and enjoyable, and grateful for the opportunity. This is only afforded to 37 state schools across the country.

WILLIAM STEVENS



SCHOOL SPIRIT

6TH FORM ANNEXE

As part of ongoing efforts to expand the school's capacity, we saw the opening of the new sixth form annexe. Located next to the existing Collier Centre, the annexe will form a key part of school life for sixth-formers. It



will be available for supervised study and as an alternative to the Bateman room for Year 12 students in need of a common space. The annexe's use will not be limited to these activities, having the potential to be another venue during exam season. In fact, the annexe has already proved a useful part of QMGS' primary school outreach initiatives when, on 8th March, students attended a maths taster session that was hosted there. Alongside the new building, other improvements have been made to the site: for example, memorials to former students have been moved to more prominent spots near the main paths around the school. These changes have all been made possible by fundraising for the school, and it's great to see the benefits from this hard work now being reaped.

THOMAS SHARMA

SENIOR EDITORS' NOTE

We both want to say a big thank you to everyone who was involved in the past three QMO newsletter editions! Everyone put in such great work! As well as all our reporters and writers, we both would like to dedicate a special thank you to Mr Kolaric and to our Design Editors, Adnan and Ula. Both of us have thoroughly enjoyed all of the meetings with the QMO Team and reading everyone's articles. We have had so much fun as your Senior Editors! Best of luck to the new editorial team. Again, thank you all.

SENIOR EDITORS: MARIAM NACHIF, KEIRA TEMPLE

DESIGN EDITORS: ADNAN KHAN, ULA LAWNIZCAK

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