



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, November 2023

First word

This week, we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the school purchasing Farchynys. The vision of Mr Darby, as head at the time, to buy and run the property has given thousands of young people from Walsall a chance to broaden their horizons and develop the life skills that have set them up for successful future careers. I speak at open evenings about Farchynys being a USP of the school and we are fortunate that so many people over the years have given their time and money to support the cause. It enables us to provide low cost residential trips and is very much part of the QM experience. Former student, Paul Walton, wrote 'Marians on the Mawddach' to chart the history of Farchynys and pays tribute via his blog, which can be found [here](#).

I have spoken in assembly on several occasions in the past month about social mobility and making sure that all students get the most out of their time at the school. Please do look over the section from Mrs Youngman in this newsletter, which focusses on avenues of support. I don't want any child in the school to feel that they can't take part in a trip or activity due to cost and we are working hard to broaden our support options.

There have been lots of other activities and achievements in November and these can be viewed on [social media](#), but parents will need to create an X account to see the posts of the various departmental accounts.

Christmas concert (Mr Vause)

The Christmas concert takes place on Wednesday 20th December at the school. Tickets can be purchased [here](#). Tickets are £5 (under 12's are free. Pupils participating do not need a ticket). This promises to be another fantastic evening of music featuring all our school ensembles: Orchestra, Jazz Band, Training Band, Intermediate Band, Choir, Clarinet ensemble, Guitar, String & Saxophone ensembles.

Taste of the World Event from the QMA - Sat 2 Dec 2023

Tickets are selling fast for the Taste of the World event. Please follow this [link](#) to purchase tickets.

It is now possible to buy raffle tickets and make contributions via your Parent Mail log in. The students have a non-uniform day to promote the event on Tuesday 28th November, which requires a minimum £2 contribution (either as a raffle ticket or donation). The top prizes are below and tickets can be bought up to Sunday 3rd December, with the draw taking place in assembly on Monday 4th December:

- APPLE AIRPODS
- SKULL CANDY WIRELESS HEADPHONES
- PRO RACING WHEEL FOR XBOX/ PLAYSTATION
- WBA MATCH TICKETS FOR BOXING DAY
- ONE ROUND OF GOLF FOR FOUR @ GREAT BARR GOLF CLUB
- TENPIN BOWLING @ WALSALL (6 PEOPLE FOR ONE GAME)
- MASSAGE CUSHION
- NINJA WARRIOR TICKETS & WARRIOR PACK
- £20 VOUCHER FOR LITTLE INDIA RESTAURANT
- MICHAEL MORPURGO 16 BOOK BOX SET
- PLUS LOTS MORE!

The dates for 2023-24 events are below and I have included some flyers on p2, for you to save the dates for the first two events. The QMA donated £20,000 last year to the Future Sports @ QMGS project and we are looking to raise as much as we can this year for the same goal.

Taste of the World Sat 2 Dec 2024 (non-uniform day for raffle ticket returns on Tue 28 Nov)
 Burns Night Sat 27 Jan 2024 (non-uniform day for raffle ticket returns on Tue 23 Jan)
 QM Arts Festival TBC July 2024

Each event holds a raffle in advance, which will be managed through Parent Mail. We are always looking for support in the running of the events, but also in the donation of raffle prizes, sponsorship and match funding. Please do contact us if you can help out in any way. Each QMA event has a committee to run it and we have a separate group who manage the running of the bar. We also have a separate group to support Farchynys. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please us via: alumni@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk.



**CELEBRATE
TASTE OF THE
WORLD**

EXPERIENCE MANY CULTURES, MUSIC AND FOOD AT...
Queen Mary's Grammar School

Tickets can be brought using the QR Code below:

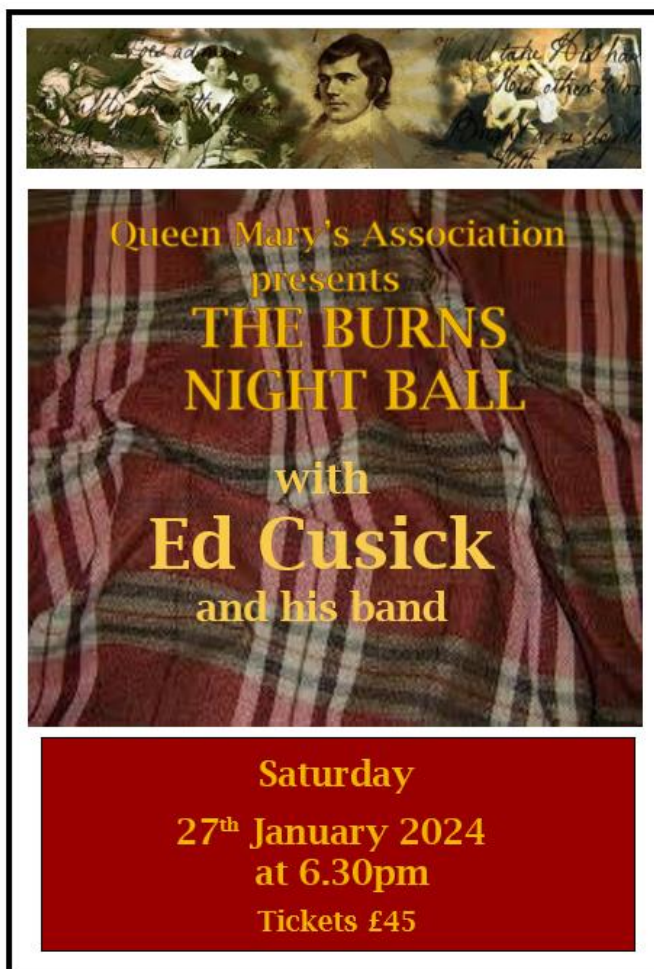


**DECEMBER
2ND**
18:00 - 21:00

QMGs Students & Under 18s: £5
 Adults: £15
 Family* : £35
 *(2 adults, 2 children)

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE!
 Prices include entry, entertainment and food from each stall
 There will also be dessert stalls, mehndi artist, games and a licenced bar for an additional cash fee

Celebrating the rich culture of QMGs
 Performances from the Mandarin Excellence Programme
 Open Mic Talent Competition
 And Much More...



Queen Mary's Association
 presents
**THE BURNS
 NIGHT BALL**
 with
**Ed Cusick
 and his band**

**Saturday
 27th January 2024
 at 6.30pm
 Tickets £45**



Through Easy Fundraising we have raised a total of £6,445.14 for the school from 300 parent and staff supporters, with the leading supporter having single-handedly raised £755.84 towards this! Just imagine what we could raise if every household signed up, and used, Easyfundraising. It would help us to provide even more opportunities and facilities for our young people. Please support this initiative which does not cost you anything as it is the retailers who donate on your behalf based upon the amount that you spend with them.

- Easyfundraising has over 4,400 shops and sites which will donate to us at no extra cost to yourself, including lots of big name retailers like John Lewis, Argos, Uswitch, eBay, M&S, Just Eat, Now TV, Domino's Pizza and Audible.
- Donations are applied on everyday brands and shopping outlets such as Amazon (Up to 1.5%), TK Max (1%), George at Asda (5%), Selfridges (8%), M&S (Up to 3%), Argos (3%), Groupon (Up to 8%)
- There are big donations on travel bookings, such as Expedia (Up to 5%) and Booking.Com (4%)
- All you have to do is sign up to support us using the link below and the next time you shop online go through the Easyfundraising website or App and we'll receive a free donation.
- You can find our Easyfundraising page at this [link](#)

University of Oxford ACS: Visions

The school are working in conjunction with a former student (Sam Bankole, QM 2015-2022) to promote an event for students in Years 9-11 of African or Caribbean heritage. Sam is currently serving as the President of the African and Caribbean Society at the University of Oxford and is in the second year of his degree.

The event specifically tailored for African and Caribbean students in years 9 to 11, noting the underrepresentation of that community in Oxford. The event aims to encourage and inspire these students to consider pursuing higher education, with a special emphasis on showcasing the possibilities available at the University of Oxford. The goal is to provide valuable information, dispel misconceptions, and foster a supportive environment that nurtures academic aspirations. The details of the event in Birmingham are as follows:

- Event Name: Oxford ACS: Visions
- Date: 9th December
- Time: 10am-3pm
- Venue: Natwest Accelerator Hub, Birmingham
- Here is the link to our LinkedIn post for more information:
- <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7124838534170984448>
- You can sign up via: [Visions Workshop - Birmingham 2023 \(google.com\)](#)

The program includes engaging sessions, informative presentations, and the opportunity for students to interact with current Oxford students from similar backgrounds. By participating, students will gain valuable insights into the university application process, receive guidance on preparing for higher education, and have the chance to ask questions directly to those who have successfully navigated the journey, along with University Admissions staff.

This is not a school trip, and parents should take responsibility for consent and attendance, but I felt that it was an important opportunity to pass on to yourself.

Want to learn more about the ACS, Oxford University, the application process, and how to best prepare?

OXFORD ACS PRESENTS:
VISIONS 2023

WHO'S ELEGIBLE? State school students in Years 9, 10, or 11 with African and/or Caribbean heritages, as well as their parents

WHAT'S 'VISIONS 2023'? A series of Oxford ACS student panels, interactive sessions on how to choose your A levels and, later, your degree. There will also be Q&A sessions with a member of the Oxford admissions team.

WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

- BIRMINGHAM Natwest Accelerator Hub
- University of MANCHESTER
- LONDON Academy of Excellence (Tottenham)

WHEN ARE THE SESSIONS?

- Saturday 9th December 2023
- Saturday 16th December 2023
- Friday 5th January 2024

HOW DO I SIGN UP? By submitting the application form! Moreover, following 'Visions', you will also receive assistance in applying to Oxford.

Welfare and Support (Mrs Youngman)

At Queen Mary's we want every student to reach their potential and participate fully as valued members of our community irrespective of background or family circumstance. To ensure the right support was being put in place, we opened the doors of the Welfare Hub in September 2020 and in June 2023, we set up the new Community Hub. On our school website, which can be found [here](#), you will be able to find information about a range of support being offered. This is where to find the main areas of support on our website.



The Welfare Hub: more information about who is based in the Welfare Hub and what support is available can be found [here](#).

Avenues of Support

As the cost of living continues to impact families daily, the school has worked hard to ensure there are a range of avenues of support for those families that require additional methods of support. An overview of the support can be found [here](#). This ranges from the pre-loved uniform and food hampers that Mrs Hill oversees from the new *Community Hub*. Application for the support can be done through this [Microsoft Form](#).



Did you know we can also help some students with *technology at home* so they can use a laptop to complete their homework as we now use TEAMS extensively? If you would like support in this way, please complete this [form](#). We also know that though education is free of charge at Queen Mary's, there are still indirect costs involved in your child's education that we may be able to support with via the *Financial Assistance* support. The form can be found [here](#).

Queen Mary's Foundation Support Bursary

Queen Mary's prides itself in having a wide range of co-curricular opportunities which is a crucial part of our ethos. We would like all students to be able to take part in these but are acutely aware that there are many families who may struggle to afford these opportunities open to their child. Therefore, we have recently launched the *Queen Mary's Foundation Support Bursary* which works on a 3-tier system.

More information can be found via the [Avenues of support page](#) on our website and the form to complete can be found [here](#). On the school website under "Parents and Students Tab" you can also find more information about [Pupil premium and Free School Meals](#) and the [16-19 Bursary](#). If your child was under the umbrella of Free school meals or Pupil Premium in Year 11, we would encourage them to apply for the 16-19 bursary if they haven't.

QMGS Breakfast Club (Mrs Hill)

The breakfast club, in partnership with the National Schools Breakfast Programme, offers free bagels and spreads every morning from 8am until 8.30am in the Canteen - all pupils welcome! Click on the [link](#) for more information on the National Schools Breakfast Programme, weekend breakfast ideas and quizzes

Mental health and wellbeing

The school continues to support staff and students with their wellbeing through the usual communication channels. We work with a number of organisations and any member of the school community can raise concerns via the wellbeing or safeguarding email addresses. These will be checked during the holiday, but there may be some delay in response.

Qmgswell-being@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk

qmgssafeguarding@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk

This account is monitored by the SEMH team and is checked regularly:

- Mr Collins (Assistant Head and DSL)
- Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer)
- Miss Daniels (SEMH mentor)
- Mrs Mohan (6th Form Operations Manager)

Sports Store changes

We are undergoing changes during this academic year, with Clive Mark taking over the management of sports wear, as well as school uniform. They will be taking on the Samurai stock of kit from January, some of which is running low in supply due to the changes. We will communicate more in due course about these changes. We still have kit that needs to be collected from the sports store that has been ordered at the beginning of term and this should be collected as soon as possible.

Homework club

Homework club continues to run again in the autumn term, on a Monday-Thursday. More information can be found on the School's website

Litter and parking

I have written regularly in previous newsletters with regards to safe parking, traffic manouvers and general use of the roads around the school. I have continue to receive regular communications from parents and local residents about this matter and urge you to please consider other members of the community. We are continuing to work with the local council and police, to ensure a presence and intervention around peak traffic times. A red line has been placed at the entrance to the flats at the corner of Princes Avenue and Sutton Road; parents (and others collecting pupils by vehicle) must not cross this line under any circumstances. There has been a recent increase in encroachments by parents etc. on to this private property along with highly inconvenient parking at the main entrance to the flats, located in Princes Avenue near to the junction with Sutton Road. Can I also please ask that parents are students are mindful of litter in the community, both in the school grounds and around the local area? We are a busy school, but can make a difference if everyone plays their part.

Dates for your diary

The full school calendar can be found the [School website](#), but I have included some key dates for the summer term below:

Sat 2 Dec	Taste of the World
Mon 18 Dec	Leavers' event
Wed 20 Dec	Music concert
Fri 22 Dec	Autumn term ends at 2pm
Mon 8 Jan	Staff training day
Tue 9 Jan	Spring term begins at 8.45am
9-19 Jan	Year 13 mock exams
Sat 27 Jan	Burns night

Future Sport @ QMGS: A community legacy project

I have spoken at various events about our £1.8million Future Sports @ QMGS project, designed to revolutionise our outdoor sports facilities. Thank you to those members of the school community who took part in the Walsall Arboretum Parkrun event on Saturday 23rd September. I have included some plans below and more can be found out about the project [here](#). Current pledges are just under £700,000, which is a great start, but there is lots of work to do. If you would like to discuss how you can help please email our Alumni and Development Officer, Prveen Kataria-Raulia via alumni@gmgs.merciantrust.org.uk or you can make a monthly/ annual or one-off donation by following this [link](#).



PROJECT PLANS

- Above: Pavilion and viewing gallery
- Left: Aerial view of facilities
- Below: Pavilion view from artificial grass pitch
- Bottom left: Pavilion view from side
- Bottom right: Artificial grass pitch for hockey and tennis



Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) – Walsall Council

HAF is a free programme for children and young people. It runs over Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. Your child is eligible if they are:

- aged 5 to 16
- eligible for benefit-related free school meals

The [Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) funds the HAF programme and more details can be found on the Walsall Council website: [Holiday Activities Programme \(HAF\) | Walsall Council](#)

We work with providers to develop an exciting and enriching programme of activities. These include schools, local voluntary and community groups, childcare providers and local businesses.

Programme aims:

We want children who attend this provision to:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays - take part in activities which support their development and wider educational attainment
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services

We also want to ensure that the families who take part in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education

WALSALL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

A free and exciting holiday programme for children and young people aged 5 to 16 who are eligible for free school meals.

The programme is running over Easter, Summer and Christmas 2023.

To sign up or for more information please contact us on:
www.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/haf_signup
or email us WR4C@walsall.gov.uk
Contact number 01922 653899

Walsall Council | Walsall Right4Children | Department for Education

Absences for appointments and religious observance

May I remind parents/carers, as per the [Attendance Policy](#), the below process for absences relating to appointments during the school day:

- Medical appointments should be arranged outside of school time wherever possible
- The school must be notified a minimum of 3 days in advance of any medical appointment that have been made. Without this prior notification and proof of the appointment, the absence will be marked as unauthorised
- This notification should be sent to absences@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk with a copy of the appointment notification
- If you are attending the appointment from school you are required to collect your child from Reception and sign them out using the Exeat Book, you will need to sign them back in on their return

- If the appointment is before school you are required to accompany your child back into school and sign the Exit Book
- Parents are not allowed to drive onto the school site, please park off site legally and with consideration for local residents
- Parents need to ensure that their child is aware of what time he/she is being collected. The student will be responsible for making their way to Reception so that they are ready for collection when you arrive to sign them out.
- If you require some absence for the purpose of religious observance, please complete and return the form which is available on the school website via this [link](#)

Final word

Thank you for your continued support. I hope that you can attend one of our QMA events, or the music concert.

Mr Langton



Richard Langton

Headmaster

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