



# The QM Observer



## Recycle For Sight

This term, members of our school community gathered any unwanted or damaged spectacles to donate to the Lions Clubs International Charity, which recycles the glasses for visually impaired people in less fortunate parts of the world, as part of a house competition. I was inspired to carry out this project after realising how many unused spectacles that I had lying around, gathering dust in drawers and cupboards. Many of them were damaged or had not been used for years. After further research, I discovered that this was a common problem in most households, and is a major global issue which few are aware of. The billions of glasses thrown away annually either end up in landfills or are incinerated. Spectacle lenses are not biodegradable and can take centuries to break down. This process negatively affects the environment and is unsustainable in the long term. Whilst looking into how we could dispose of my glasses in an environmentally friendly way, I discovered the Lions Clubs International Charity, which collects over 1.5 million pairs annually. The charity either reuses the glasses or raises funds from the salvaged scrap metal for eye related projects in the UK and overseas. Volunteers select the glasses that are suitable for recycling and sort them for distribution to over 25 countries. The lack of spectacles in these countries denies children and adults opportunities for education, employment, and a better quality of life. After the collection ended, students and staff had contributed a total of 590 pairs of spectacles. The charity was delighted with the generosity of our school and highlighted the positive impact which the donations will have on less fortunate people. I also took the opportunity to discuss with them how the charity operates, and the various ways in which our donations will be utilised. I would like to thank Mr. Thompson for helping to organise the collection, as well as anyone who donated a pair of glasses.

*Harman Ahluwalia*

## Wear It Pink

On 4th February, World Cancer Day, students and staff at QMGS took part in Wear It Pink Day, organised by the school to raise money for Cancer Research UK. A large number of students and teachers embraced the theme, showing their support by wearing pink accessories. From pink hats to ties, socks, and even bows, pink was the colour of the day, raising awareness of the vital work Cancer Research UK carries out across the country. The event also encouraged donations, with all money raised going directly to CRUK to help fund essential research in the fight against cancer. The day was not just an excuse to dress up but also an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to a cause that affects so many lives. A special mention should also go to Faith, a Year 12 student, who took fundraising into her own hands. She set herself the incredible challenge of completing 2,800 squats throughout February to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust. Successfully raising over £100 on her own, she described the challenge as "rewarding and inspiring for others." Faith shared that she would "definitely continue her charity efforts in the future." This act of dedication highlights the commitment we share as a school community to making a difference. Together this term, as a school, we have shown that every effort—big or small—counts in the fight against cancer.

*Keona Williams*



# Generous in Approach

## QMGS Quiz

Thursday 21st November 2024, the day that saw the first snow of that winter, also saw QMGS's first team enter the Lord Mayor of Birmingham's Sixth Form Mega Quiz to support the Lord Mayor's charity. Our team of 5 Year 13s braved the freezing temperatures, ably driven by Mr Matley, to answer questions on subjects as diverse as Geography, Social Media, Mathematics, Business and Music against 41 teams of 6 from across the Midlands.

After hours of arduous trivia, QMGS A placed 3rd, defeating Solihull School and KES, and giving an excellent account of themselves on their first attempt, but narrowly losing out on a cash prize. We are already hungry for glory in next year's competition, and Mrs Thomson will soon be looking for a team to bring the £2,000 first prize, and the Lord Mayor's Cup, to Walsall.

*William Stevens*

## Houses at QMGS

The school's House system is buzzing with excitement as students continue to excel in various competitions and activities. From sporting events to academic challenges, there are plenty of achievements to celebrate and upcoming opportunities to get involved in.

In the KS3 Science Bowl, Aragon secured first place, followed by Gryphon, Darby, and Petypher. However, Petypher secured victory in the Glasses Competition, while Darby finished last. Despite these varied results, the latest house competition results based on community awards, competitions, and house point totals place Darby as the overall winners with 13,975 points, closely followed by Petypher with 13,300. Aragon ends with 12,075, while Gryphon stands at 11,375. Head of Darby, Mr Francis, stated that it's not just about the success of Darby that matters but rather the idea that "everyone is contributing to their house and gets to share a part of their identity."

In sports, house teams have shown incredible determination. Both senior and Y10 basketball delivered a strong performance demonstrating skill and teamwork in recent matches. Also, Y7, 8 and 9 Cross Country events saw impressive participation, showcasing the students' endurance and competitive spirit. There are plenty of exciting events on the horizon. Y7 and Y8 Basketball along with Y7 Badminton, competitions are coming up, offering students the chance to represent their Houses and earn valuable house points. Students are encouraged to sign up, practice, and bring their best performance to the court.

With so many activities happening, now is the perfect time to get involved. Whether through sports, academics, or community contributions, every effort counts toward the success of your House.

*Tajah Robinson*

## XLR8 Racing's debut

On the 6th of February, our school's F1 in Schools team, XLR8 Racing, made history by competing in the West Midlands Regional Final at Aston University. This was our school's first-ever entry into the competition, and what an experience it was!

Competing against 48 other teams, we put our engineering, teamwork, and presentation skills to the test. We secured an impressive 7th place overall and were thrilled to win Best Verbal Presentation—not bad for a newcomer. One of the most exciting moments of the day was facing off against Bishop Vesey's in the racing event, where we managed to beat their car's race times. The day was about more than just racing. We had



an amazing time meeting other teams, networking, and learning from different approaches to design and engineering. The event showcased the dedication and creativity of all teams involved, and we are proud to have represented our school in one of the biggest STEM competitions in the world.

This incredible journey would not

have been possible without the unwavering support of many individuals and groups. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, Mr Hughes, the Resources team, and Mr Sepede, for their support throughout the competition. We are also deeply appreciative of our entire school community for their steadfast support every step of the way.

We are now recruiting next year's team and are excited about expanding our school's involvement in F1 in Schools. If you're interested in STEM, teamwork, or fast cars, this is your chance to be part of something special!

To stay updated on next year's team, upcoming competitions, and the future of XLR8 Racing, follow us on Instagram.

*Vikraanth Rajkumar*



## STEM Olympiads

This year has seen many of our students engaging in Olympiads and displaying their talent and great passion for their respective subjects. Starting with Maths, our year 11 students took part in the UKMT Intermediate Mathematical Challenge. This was a 60-minute test which consisted of 25 multiple choice questions. Additionally, our year 12s and 13s participated in the annual UKMT Senior Mathematical Challenge which was a 90-minute test comprised of 25 multiple choice questions. As stated on the UKMT website these challenges 'encourage mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency to make students think.' Despite the complexity and difficulty of these challenges, our students have been able to find great success with 27 students qualifying for the Senior Kangaroo and 1 student doing well enough to qualify for the British Mathematical Olympiad! - both follow-on rounds from the Senior Maths Challenge. In Chemistry, a handful of year 12 and 13 students took part in the UK Chemistry Olympiad hosted by the Royal Society of Chemistry. Just like the Maths Challenges, these are designed to test students' current knowledge in novel problems, as well as helping to develop their problem-solving skills. Last but not least, the Biology Olympiad. It was also primarily a problem-solving based challenge that the group of year 12 students participated in. Perhaps the hardest challenge of them all since in previous years, the highest score has been a "highly commended." However, this year, the cohort were exceptional, exceeding all expectations, with some achieving bronze and silver and 5 Year 12 students achieving a Gold. When asked on their thoughts on the Olympiad, one student said, "I enjoyed it, because it pushed us beyond what we had been learning in lesson and allowed us to apply our learning to interesting scenarios." Overall, a big well done to all who participated in these various challenges and with many more Olympiads to come, we are excited to see how you will all perform.

*Emmanuel Ojo*

## Medicine Society

Whether you aspire to pursue a career in the medical field or enjoy learning about the world of science, Medicine Society is for you. Throughout the year, members of Year 12 research different areas of the medical field for presentations to other students developing not only their scientific knowledge but also public speaking and initiative skills. These are transferable skills that are beneficial for a future career in medicine. In recent weeks we have learnt about Oncology, Rheumatology, Dentistry, Neurology, Gynaecology, and the history of the NHS. This society is also a great opportunity for those interested in medical law, as we explored medicine-related cases such as that of Lucy Letby. For those in KS5 who desire to kickstart their medical career, a junior medicine society led by Y12 students allows them to get a head start. By attending these sessions, you'll gain insight into different aspects of the medical field, receive valuable guidance on developing a strong university application and advice for interviews as well as many other key skills to build your knowledge. This society also gives you opportunities to network with other students who share your passion. Sessions are held every Thursday at 1:25 in S12. For more information and to be added to the Teams to receive regular updates, speak to Mr. Rendu. We hope to see you there!

*Abigail Thomas*

This February, 40 students had the opportunity to go on the school's annual ski trip, to Aprica, Italy. On Saturday 15th, we had an early start to catch our coach to Manchester Airport, where our flight to Verona awaited us. On our first day, we got assessed and we were allocated to our groups. As the week progressed, so did we, climbing from the magic carpet to the drag lifts and finally to the gondola, where we experienced the highlight of the trip: skiing down an exhilarating 800-meter descent. The alpine Italian weather was perfect for skiing. The mornings were cool and windy, while the afternoons brought warm sunshine, giving us a welcome temperature boost. Another high point came on Tuesday, when we dined at a local pizza restaurant, where we experienced the true perfection of Italian cuisine, with a wide selection of mouth-watering pizzas to choose from. Our favourite activity was night skiing; on Thursday, we skied for 2 hours underneath floodlights illuminating our path in Europe's largest floodlit ski run. The staff on the trip, Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Finch, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Magee, Mr. Lax and Mr. Rendu, all ensured that we had an unforgettable week. The annual fancy dress competition was enjoyed by all, with the winner being Devjot, who dressed up as Gandalf the Grey from Lord of the Rings. The students and teachers loved the trip, with Mr. Magee saying that it was "The best ski trip the school has ever had, made possible by amazing staff and students." Overall, the ski trip was an amazing opportunity for everyone to have experienced, providing a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse into Italian culture, skiing, and fun, all interwoven with the company of good friends and teachers, to create the perfect trip.

*Franco Bragoli*



The QMGS under 16s hockey team has claimed the Staffordshire County Cup, showcasing their outstanding talent and determination throughout the tournament. Their dedication was present in all their matches, ultimately awarding them a well-deserved triumph. The competition opened with a testing first match at Wolverhampton Grammar School. In a close-run affair, QMGS remained calm and achieved a narrow 1-0 victory. It was a strong start to the tournament, with the team demonstrating discipline and skill to outclass their opponents. Next, we faced The Friary School. The team were determined in their attack, led by Abdullah who scored four goals, securing a 5-0 win in a display of the attacking power and teamwork that saw them through to the final. The final promised a thrilling contest, as QMGS took on Newcastle-under-Lyme. The match was an intense battle, with both teams exchanging attacks. As the clock ran down, Henry and Abdullah launched one final offensive move, culminating in Henry scoring the decisive goal. The dramatic 1-0 victory showcased the team's resilience and performance under pressure. Congratulations to the entire team on their fantastic cup victory!

*Aaryan Patel and Muhammad Saadi Ahmed*

## Hamlet at the RSC

On Tuesday 4th March, the Y12 cohort had the chance to experience a truly unforgettable performance of Shakespeare's Hamlet at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. We could tell this was going to be a truly spectacular performance from the minute we sat down. The stage design immediately entranced us into the dark, tense world of Elsinore Castle, coinciding with Hamlet's emotional chaos and the political instability in Denmark. The rocking and creaking of the boat and the dim lighting all evoked a sense of entrapment and uncertainty. Luke Thallon, as Hamlet, was marvellous in capturing Hamlet's inner conflict and emotional rollercoaster. He shifted between deep philosophical moments and intense outbursts seamlessly, and immersed us in his pain. His interactions with the other characters, especially his conflicting attitudes towards Ophelia and Gertrude, only added more weight to his portrayal. Nancy Carroll's Gertrude was full of nuance, showing her inner struggles without being overdone. Jared Harris, as Claudius, perfectly embodied the manipulative and cold king, making his eventual downfall feel even more satisfying. Nia Towle's Ophelia was heartbreaking; her descent into madness was so captivating and utterly upsetting, we couldn't look away. Aside from the performance itself, the whole trip was a fantastic experience. For many of us, it was our first time seeing a Shakespeare play in such an iconic venue, which made the whole evening even more meaningful. When the final scene ended and the theatre went silent, the

applause that followed was overwhelming. The production had clearly made an impact on everyone in the audience as we came out to a bustling crowd, and on the journey home, the conversations about revenge, fate, and madness were non-stop. It was proof that, even centuries later, Hamlet still speaks to people of all ages. This trip was not just about seeing a play, it deepened our understanding of Shakespeare's work and made us appreciate his timeless legacy even more.

*Avaani Deol*

### Editors:

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