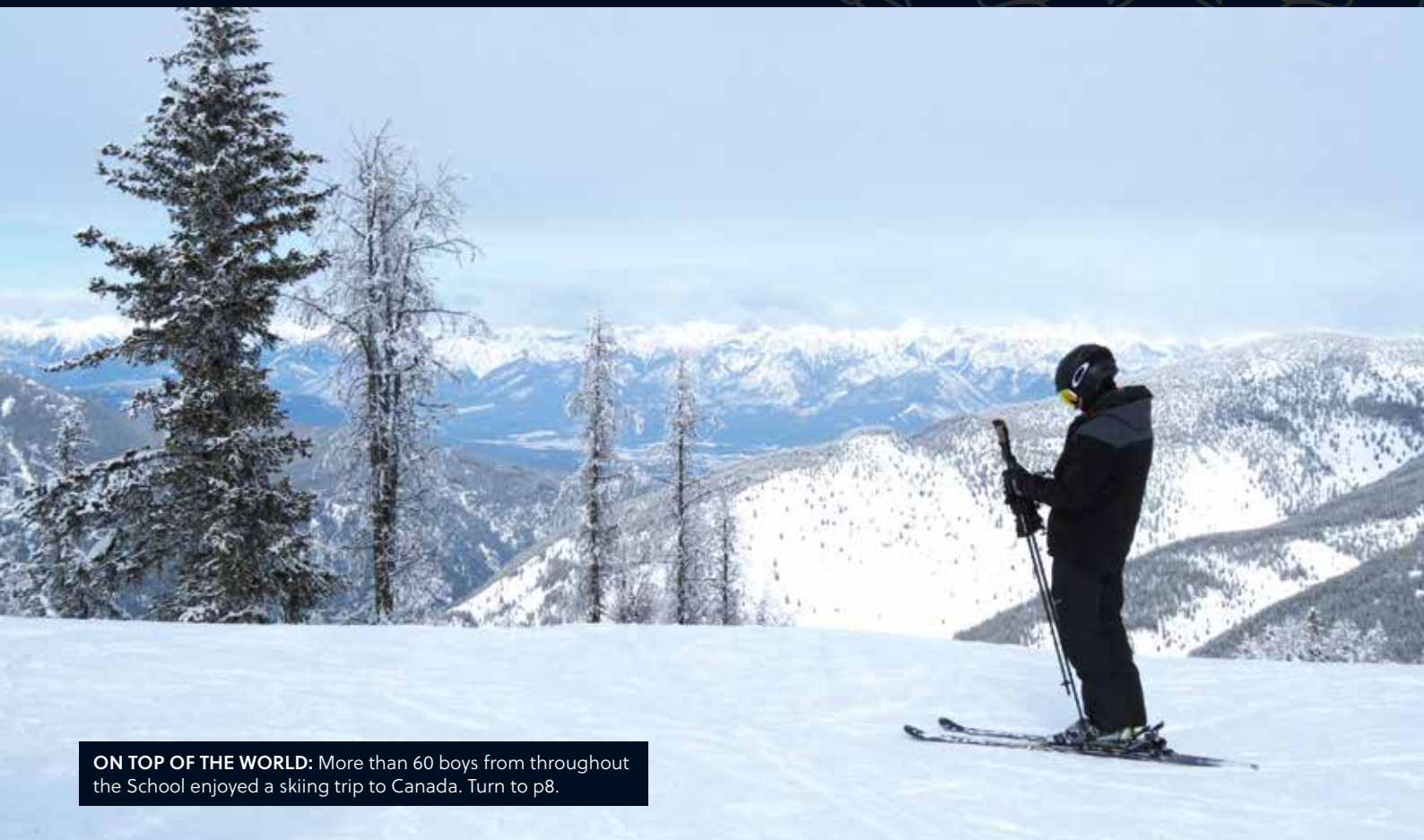


Queen Elizabeth's School

# The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

SPRING 2019



**ON TOP OF THE WORLD:** More than 60 boys from throughout the School enjoyed a skiing trip to Canada. Turn to p8.

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

**Now that the Easter holidays are fast upon us, I know thoughts will be turning to next term's examinations – for which, I wish the boys every success as they settle down now to their final preparations. With this in mind, my colleagues and I have been further reflecting on questions of how young people study, of effective learning habits and of the best ways to revise.**

A recent staff training day focused on how to improve information recall. Research has indicated that reading

through notes and highlighting are poor revision strategies, popular as they are. As a general rule, the more active the strategy the better: in fact, even the simple act of reading aloud makes a significant difference to pupils' ability to recall facts and ideas in an examination. Reading through notes infrequently followed by repeated testing is much better than infrequent tests interspersed by endlessly reading. Short but frequent periods of revision are more effective than one long 'cramming' session.

We encourage boys to make intelligent use of technology in their study, but that

technology can be a double-edged sword. It has been shown that the apparent efficiency of multi-tasking is illusory, because this habit does not take account of the way the brain actually works. Separate tasks, such as studying while trying to listen to something else, are handled by different circuits in the brain, so if you pay more attention to one task for a moment, you are necessarily paying less attention to the other. Moreover, trying to learn new facts and ideas while multi-tasking can result in that information being sent to the wrong part of the brain, with the result that it is harder to retrieve it later. Thus, the danger is not so much that





WAS MACHST DU DA?! The Onatti theatre group got Year 9 practising their listening skills with a high-energy, fun production, So eine Nervensäge (Such a pain in the neck), performed entirely in German.



excessive time spent on smartphones and social media is harmful in itself, but that it displaces really useful thought.

I know that, when not actually in lessons, many of our pupils are always ‘plugged in’, smartphone, earbuds and social media at the ready.

Some may even *fear* the prospect of boredom.

While the urge to reflexively pick up your phone in moments of ‘downtime’ is understandable – the novel experiences gained from swiping and scrolling produce a dopamine ‘hit’ in the brain, albeit one that diminishes over time – in my view there is much to be said for embracing boredom. Spending time on your own with only your thoughts for company gives you the opportunity to play them out in your head, to explore those ‘new ideas and new solutions’ – concepts not yet sufficiently developed to be shared with others – that form part of free-thinking scholarship. Advances in neuroscience have confirmed physiologically that allowing the mind to wander can engender deep insights and strategic clarity, while also enhancing mental health. The development of such habits accords well with our mission’s aim of “promoting boys’ general wellbeing and their enjoyment of learning, rewarding effort and celebrating success”.

Periods of reflection (‘daydreaming’) can absolutely be productive. As I told guests at our Senior Awards Evening, where we welcomed as our guest of honour, Professor Michael Arthur, President and

Provost of University College London: “Creativity cannot be scheduled, nor inventiveness timetabled.” Richard Feynman came up with his Nobel Prize-winning ideas about quantum electrodynamics by reflecting on a peculiar hobby of his — spinning a plate

on his finger. And without a time of solitary reflection,

we might never have had Harry Potter. J K Rowling traces the boy wizard’s genesis back to a railway journey from Manchester to London which she spent alone, without smartphone or even pen and paper. In four hours on the West Coast Main Line, she came up with the idea for Harry and for many of his adventures. I have no doubt that contributors to our feature on creative writing (pp4-5) could give examples of the importance of thinking time.

The need for such periods to be cherished and, so far as possible, protected from interruption is illustrated by another famous episode from literary history. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had awoken from a vivid dream and immediately began dashing off lines of his great poem, *Kubla Khan*. Unfortunately, as Coleridge recounted, he was suddenly “called out by a person on business from Porlock”. When he came back more than an hour later, the vision had almost entirely faded. The poem remains forever unfinished.

At other times, creativity can be stimulated by articulating one’s thoughts and discussing them with others. Here, the time that boys spend in School is important, and QE offers them just the right sort of interlocutors – a combination of equally able and interested peers, together with staff who have deep knowledge, expertise and a well-developed interest in the subjects they teach. Even with such useful applications of technology as podcasts, sometimes the real joy is when you pause them and then think about them, or discuss them with others – both approaches help consolidate what one has learned.

In this age of always-on technology and Google, some question whether we need to memorise facts at all. A pragmatic answer is that effective recall of information has become more important for schools because of recent educational reforms and the return to linear assessments and final examinations.

Our senior boys simply must develop the skills of retaining information. One way of achieving this is to train the brain through enjoyable but stretching extra-curricular activity: the learning of lines required for drama productions such as this term’s *Lord of the Flies* is a good example. But beyond the drive for examination success, there are deeper reasons for our insistence on the importance of knowledge acquisition. For one thing, learning words and grammar is a *sine qua non* of foreign language-learning. More broadly,

in order to think profoundly about ideas, it is first necessary to have certain content securely lodged within your brain. You cannot be really effective in a debate if you have to keep looking things up: that information should be absorbed beforehand, so that it can readily be used in formulating arguments and responses.

Moreover, we are in the business here of nurturing and equipping young men who will in the future take up places as leaders in society nationally and internationally. And, simply put, to be a sophisticated adult of that ilk, there is ‘stuff’ you need to know. To this end, we have been turning our attention to the curriculum in the Lower School, asking ourselves if we have got the content right. Cognisant of the fact that boys will inevitably study some subjects for only three years, we are considering what cultural capital every student of Queen Elizabeth’s School should acquire as a minimum. For example, after nine terms of Music lessons, will all pupils be able to appreciate the different genres?

This term, I have enjoyed opportunities to meet parents, current pupils and old boys. I spent a happy lunchtime congratulating our roboteers on their successes as 30 of them prepare for this year’s international VEX Robotics international finals in Kentucky. It was good, too, to see so many members of the Elizabethan community turning out for the Rugby Sevens.

My best wishes for the holidays,  
**Neil Enright, Headmaster**

## Just magnificent! QE’s all- conquering roboteers head for the US

QE roboteers are on track to emulate the world-beating feats of last year’s champions after five teams qualified for next month’s world championships in Kentucky.

Forty-four boys made a hugely successful visit to the VEX Robotics national finals at the Telford International Centre, where they fought off the challenge from 120 other schools. They won a string of trophies, including those for Excellence, Robot Skills, Teamwork and Design, as well as the Build Award, Judges’ Award, Sportsmanship Award, Amaze Award (twice) and the Teacher of the Year prize for Head of Technology Michael Noonan.

Four IQ teams of five boys and one EDR team of eight will go to Louisville, with four members of the EDR team in Year 11 unable to travel because of examination commitments.

## Talking up a storm

**An eight-strong Year 12 team’s “fantastic performance” in the South East Forum of the European Youth Parliament sent QE storming through to the national round of the debating competition for the third year in a row.**

Academic Enrichment Tutor Helen Davies said: “The team were head-and-shoulders above their rivals, being described as ‘too keen and too good’ by the chair of the session!”



## “Important and timely” message on knife crime

**An anti-knife crime campaigner gave a special assembly to Year 11 just days after the high-profile murders of teenagers Jodie Chesney and Yousef Makki in London and Manchester. Katharine Harper, a family friend of Billy Dove, who was stabbed to death in Hemel Hempstead in 2011, is the Education Officer for the Billy’s Wish education charity.**

The talk explored the reasons some give for carrying knives – for protection, or through fear, for example – but explained that if you carry a knife, you are 80 per cent more likely to be stabbed yourself.

The Headmaster said: “No school can be complacent about this issue, or think it cannot touch their community. By educating our boys about the dangers of carrying knives, or becoming involved with people who do, we hope to empower them to make choices that protect themselves and others. This was a very important and timely message.”



# Putting it into words

The growing importance of creative writing at Queen Elizabeth's School is a reflection of the benefits it brings to the boys.

Of course, such writing stretches pupils linguistically, since it involves the discovery of language in all its complexity and subtlety, taking in vocabulary, grammar, syntax and register. Anyone engaging in creative writing necessarily develops his reading and comprehension skills as well as his ability to write.

But there is more to it than that. Creative writing facilitates young people thinking deeply about themselves and the world they inhabit, helping them find their own identity, away from the white noise of social media and the levelling effects of peer pressure. As some of the poems on these pages demonstrate, they can explore complex emotions, both positive and negative, in a safe and appropriate forum. The very process of analysing and then expressing painful feelings, perhaps for the first time, can be cathartic and, moreover, often helps the writer develop empathy and compassion towards others who are similarly suffering.

Thirdly, creative writing naturally encourages people to use their imaginations, helping them to think laterally and to venture 'outside of the box'. In a complex, global world, such qualities are greatly in demand,

not least from employers who are looking for flexible thinkers able to find solutions both to intractable existing problems and to newly arising challenges.

Finally, and by no means least in importance, creative writing is fun! Many find it a great source of enjoyment, relishing the opportunity to flex their literary muscles, indulge flights of fancy and fantasy, and savour the sheer richness of the English language.

In addition to the opportunities provided in English lessons, creative writing is offered through the School's academic enrichment programme. This provision is supported by having a poet-in-residence, Old Elizabethan Anthony Anaxagorou, and a writer-in-residence, Caroline Green.

Headmaster Neil Enright said: "Creative writing is an aspect of our School life which is truly flourishing at the moment. Both Anthony and Caroline are impressive individuals in their respective fields, and the workshops and clubs they run are deservedly popular with the boys. It is an important part of the rich offer that we have in place through The Queen's Library."



## Anthony Anaxagorou

(OE 1994–1999)

Poet-in-residence

*Anthony Anaxagorou is a British-born Cypriot award-winning poet, fiction writer, essayist, publisher and poetry educator. He has published nine volumes of poetry, a spoken-word EP and a collection of short stories. In 2015 his poetry and fiction writing won the Groucho Maverick Award.*



## Caroline Green

Writer-in-residence

*A Sunday Times-bestselling and prize-winning author, former journalist Caroline Green has written several prizewinning young adult (YA) novels and an adult thriller. Dark Ride was her first YA novel, published in 2011.*

*In addition to her work for QE, she runs writing workshops for young people in schools all over the country and is also a Visiting Lecturer at City University, teaching a course on Writing for Children.*

The excerpts on this page are from a selection of poems curated by School Librarian Ciara Murray following an Anthony Anaxagorou workshop with Year 9 boys.

She says: "Several are inspired by poems that Anthony has used as prompts, such as *Citizen Illegal* and *Ode to the Little 'r'* by José Olivarez and Aracelis Girmay respectively, both American poets. Others were written about an object that was incongruous or lost in some way."

## Surush Ghosh

ODE TO THE INVISIBLE 'H'

The invisible 'h' somehow dissolving  
in my name,  
soaring back through my memories,  
a large plane that left Calcutta, 50  
years ago,  
and they would sit there waiting  
to reach urban lands that they had  
dreamed of,  
looking, for work, wealth, merriment,  
the 'h' in their surnames,  
mispronounced with both purposeful  
and unforced intention,  
In top cities like London, Manchester,  
Birmingham,  
where your 'colleagues' say 'Tell me  
your name, mate', in a sneering voice,  
But listen 'h', you are brave and bold,  
the most wonderful letter in my  
surname,  
And O beautiful letter,  
You shall stand victorious for eternity,  
Oblivious to the screams of abuse,  
hurling around you

## Alan Yee Kin Yan

ODE TO TWO 'E'S

Hello, my friend  
Two of you in joy together  
Like a King and a Queen, with a crown  
on its side,  
Sipping from the same wine-cup in 'Y'.

## Utkarsh Bhamidimarri

ODE TO THE LEAST USED VOWEL

My letter, the magnet reversed  
lonely citizen that stands at the  
bottom of the horse  
It attracts metals to say my name  
The horse travelled from a far land  
And was stamped by others for its  
poor hoof.

## Akshyat Sainju

ODE TO THE IMAGINARY 'A'

The extra sound  
Between the h and Y  
Creating an unseen bridge  
Connecting me to a common  
Just another Akshay  
But much more complex  
No 'a' to be seen  
Where the 'a' is to be said

## Oke Onyebuchukwu

SECURITY FLOATING IN CHAOS

A circle of chaos surrounds the sea of  
solitude where you find yourself  
pondering.  
You never knew that you would be the  
ground that they would step on.  
Exposed, vulnerable and planted  
to the earth by a force you can't  
overcome: Fear.

## Jashwanth Parimi

MESSENGER OF SATAN

The innocent boys  
Axe knocked down,  
in the mud,  
They go sprawling.

Who does  
These dishonourable deeds I hear,  
Well none other  
Than Satan's commandeer.

This unexpected sinner,  
Is a ghastly goat,  
Who did not descend from the  
heavens,  
But rather the deepest smokes of  
hell.

This messenger of Satan,  
Could be any one of you,  
And all that is left,  
Is a tooth on the Rugby pitch  
floor.

## Aditya Khanna

THE GLASSES

The hot hard ground sparkled angrily,  
it lay there half asleep daydreaming  
with its cracked and nervous lenses  
and determined frame.

## Ben Chan

PARK

Into the park, into a world of its own,  
The silence which drowns the words of  
the city,  
Where the children sang, and the sun  
danced with them,  
Rhythmic footfall, as the wind whistled  
a subtle melody,  
The park exhaled, a pocket of nature  
Encased in glass and stone.

## Vishnu Suthaharan

SUGAR CRUMBLING FROM  
SKIES ABOVE

Swirling milk white  
Running down from the sky, from the  
heavens  
Thick, white blankets of snow laying  
themselves on the floor  
Creating everlasting footprints as man  
treads.

Floating clouds silky  
Watching men walking with haste  
Tripping and sliding on what children  
see as joy  
As they try, try and try to walk with  
haste.

## Musab Alam

THOSE WHO ONCE BELONGED

The children of the iodine sky  
crookedly emerge  
Yet strewn across this abstractness in  
frozen patterns,  
Neglected treetops howling,  
The stretches streaked incarnadine in  
pain



# From the archives: remembering Harold Fern



president of swimming's world governing body, FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation). In 1914, he was part of a three-man delegation who successfully persuaded the Board of Education to include swimming in the school curriculum. He swam in the pools at both QE and Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School, which his daughters had attended, until two years before his death.

He was a member of Hertfordshire County Council for 51 years, an alderman for 37 years and chairman of the county education committee for 20 years.

His name lives on not only in the Fern Building and in Harold Fern House, the Amateur Swimming Association's headquarters in Loughborough, opened in 1973, but also in the H E Fern prize for Social Service, which he generously endowed. First awarded on that 1974 Founder's

This summer, QE's Fern Building will undergo a substantial programme of internal renovation and improvement, following the £940,000 replacement of its roof in 2013-2014. It will be 45 years since this large building was opened by the man in whose honour it was named, Harold Fern.

later on 21st August, the *Elizabethan* magazine recalled the day in an obituary: "It was wholly typical of the man that, at the age of 93, he should insist on spending well over an hour inspecting every part of the building." The new block housed a Sixth Form

A quietly spoken chartered secretary of small stature, Alderman Fern was a giant in the world of amateur swimming administration, who also served with distinction in local government and was a governor of the School from 1921 to 1965, including a period as chairman.



He came to Founder's Day on Saturday 15th June 1974 and cut the ribbon, overseen by Headmaster Tim Edwards and senior teacher Eric Shearly (who also had a QE building named after him, the Shearly Hall). Following Mr Fern's death weeks

common room, design studios and workshops, tutorial rooms and classrooms.

Mr Fern gave 70 years of unbroken, and unpaid, service to swimming. He was a member of the British Olympic Association and the

Day to pupil Richard Cave, it went this year to the School Captain, Bhiramah Rammanohar.

Mr Fern moved to Barnet in 1907 on his marriage to his wife, Lizzie. He won an OBE in 1946 for public service and a CBE in 1960 for service to swimming.



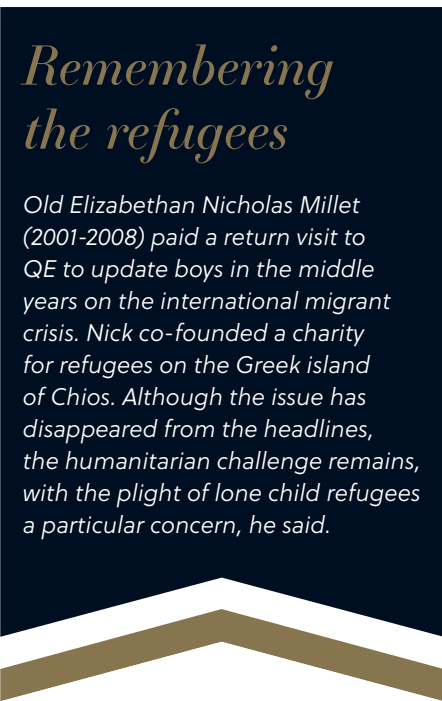
## Equal measures

QE's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors (Year 12's Leo Kucera, Vithusan Kuganathan & Josh Osman) marked their appointment with a special noticeboard display supporting International Women's Day. Another highlight was a visit by Year 12 boys to hear a lecture by Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project.



## Tribal rights

Gabriella Rutherford, of Survival International, told a Lower School assembly of the threats and challenges facing tribal peoples. She encouraged the boys to think about 'otherness' and how such peoples' lives are different from, but sometimes surprisingly similar to, their own.



## Remembering the refugees

Old Elizabethan Nicholas Millet (2001-2008) paid a return visit to QE to update boys in the middle years on the international migrant crisis. Nick co-founded a charity for refugees on the Greek island of Chios. Although the issue has disappeared from the headlines, the humanitarian challenge remains, with the plight of lone child refugees a particular concern, he said.



## Your decisions, your words, your actions

Dame Helen Hyde, who left a career as a successful headmistress to become a social justice campaigner, issued a resounding challenge as guest speaker at the Year 12 Luncheon.

She called on pupils to consider "your decisions, your words and your actions" and to make a difference in the world. In 2016, Dame Helen left Watford Grammar School for Girls. In her address, she spoke about Apartheid in her native South Africa, before examining the Holocaust, in which members of her family died, and other genocides. She is co-director of Rwandan Sisterhood (which helps expectant mothers), and co-founded the Refugees to Recovery charity.

The luncheon, featuring toasts and a three-course meal, gives senior pupils experience of the type of formal occasions they will experience at university and in their careers.

School Captain Bhiramah Rammanohar compèred; Senior Vice-Captain Fozy Ahmed gave the vote of thanks. It was supported by FQE volunteers and Year 9 helpers.

## Sixth-formers' (eleven) grand charity dinner!



Parth Gosalia and Rishi Shah smashed their £5,000 target when they raised £11,434 for two charities.

The pair, who both have roles as Youth Teachers at Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth Jain School in Edgware, organised a

dinner with entertainment attended by 120 people.

Year 13 pupil Parth, who has an offer to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Christ Church, Oxford, and was a 2018 QE Vice-Captain, compèred, describing

## Medal-winning mathematicians

A trio of final-year pupils qualified for round 2 of the élite British Mathematical Olympiad after strong performances in the first round.

Bashmy Basheer, Nico Puthu and Niam Vaishnav were among nine QE boys to reach round 1 of the Olympiad, where Nico then scored 40 out of 60 and both Bashmy and Niam scored 37. These strong performances won each of them a certificate of distinction and bronze medal, as well as progression to round 2.

A Year 10 team gained the top points total in this year's Maths Feast after winning two of the four rounds. Andy Kwak, Alexandre Lee, Sheikh Mohiddin, and Dan Suciú scored the maximum possible in the Dessert round. The competition, run by the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme and hosted by the London Academy of Excellence in Tottenham, included A-Level Further Mathematics content as a 'surprise' element.

it afterwards as "eye-opening and very rewarding".

Current Vice-Captain Rishi, of Year 12, gave a presentation on the work of the charities – Debra, which supports sufferers from the Epidermolysis Bullosa skin condition, and Veerayathan Nepal, which is raising money for orphans from the 2015 Nepal earthquake. "I feel personally connected to these charities, so it was easy to present with passion," he said. Parth and Rishi worked with a third Youth Teacher, who is not a QE pupil. Year 11 QE boy Aaryan Sheth was among the helpers.





## 64 teams, 248 games, lots of weather... and the group of death!

The Elizabethan community turned out in numbers to make sure the 43rd QE Rugby Sevens were a great success.

Established in 1976 by Dave Maughan, who was QE's Head of PE/Games from 1974–2003, the tournament draws 64 teams from many of the country's leading rugby schools – including four from QE – who battle it out for the U16 and U14 Cups and Plates.

Wimbledon College emerged as U16 tournament victors, taking the Cup, while Whitgift School won the U14 trophy. Eton College achieved a tournament first, winning the Plate at both U14 and U16 level, after seeing off the challenge of Warwick School in both Plate finals.

Head of Rugby James Clarke (OE 1999–2004), who was the main organiser, thanked all the players, adding: "It is a real QE community day, with staff, student helpers from Years 12 and Year 7, FQE and former staff all out in force to ensure that it runs smoothly." Mr Maughan was among those returning to the School to help out. "So far as QE's players are concerned, we had a tough draw. Our U16A team found themselves in the 'group of death' with the Cup winners and the Plate winners. They nevertheless managed a 12-5 victory against Woodbridge School. The U14s also had a tough day, but battled well throughout."

## Second Brexit referendum? No majority in this House

The Inter-House debating competition produced lively argument across the first three years of the School. Broughton beat Pearce in the Year 7 final, successfully countering the motion *The film is better than the book*. Robbie Hyland, Head of English, said: "Thank goodness books won!" In Year

8, Broughton narrowly won, triumphing 51-50 over Underne in a debate on *This House believes technology does more harm than good*. The Year 9 final took on a political hot potato – *This House believes in a second Brexit referendum*. Harrison's, opposing the motion, edged out Stapylton 59-57.



## Ski trip scales new heights

Open to boys from Years 7 to 12, the annual skiing trip has become an established QE tradition – and this year's visit to Canada maintained it in some style.

The resort of Panorama in British Columbia boasts one of the highest vertical drops in North America, ensuring it offered the group some of the very best skiing in the world. And with the party's accommodation handily positioned not only close to hot springs but also within walking distance of the ski lifts – a rare 'slope-side hotel', in American parlance – the trip was deemed one of the best of recent years by organiser Richard Scally (Head of Aquatics & Head of Cricket).



Queen  
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