

Queen Elizabeth's School

The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

SPRING 2020



REWARDING EXCELLENCE: More than 60 boys from Years 10-12 received prizes at Senior Awards. The Guest of Honour was Professor Shearer West, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Nottingham.

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

One undoubted highlight this term has been the news that 40 boys have been offered Oxbridge places. This is a new record for QE and represents a very considerable achievement, for the boys individually and for the School. Twenty-seven places are for Cambridge, the remaining 13 for Oxford.

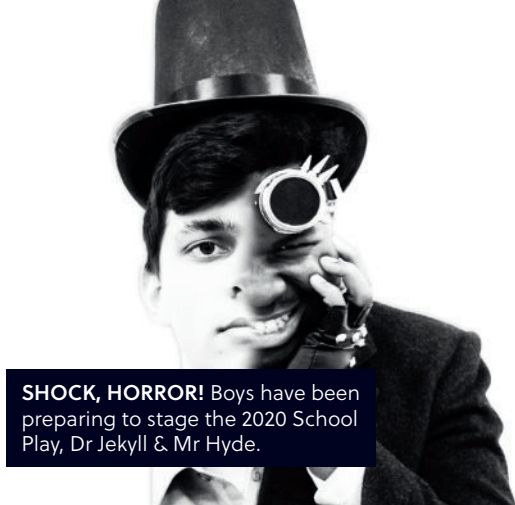
For any school in pursuit of academic excellence, Oxbridge places constitute a useful metric. It is evidence that, as a state school and a meritocracy, QE is effectively providing pathways to world-leading universities for bright students, regardless of their social, racial or religious

background. As the speaker at our Year 12 luncheon, Sonita Alleyne OBE recently told our sixth-formers: "If you get the grades, you belong." Since she is the first-ever black Master of any Oxbridge college and the first female Master at Jesus College, Cambridge, this message carries special resonance.

Oxbridge offers should certainly be celebrated, and there has been great news for others, too. Twenty-five boys currently hold an offer for Medicine and five for Dentistry. These figures may well go up! There are interesting opportunities overseas, with 12 boys applying to US universities and one to Japan; one pupil has been awarded a \$180,000 scholarship

to study at the University of Toronto, based on academic merit – our first-ever offer from a Canadian university, as far as I am aware. Applications have been made across disciplines including Arabic, Classics, Criminology, Music, and Optometry, alongside subjects more commonly chosen by our boys.

Nottingham remains a popular choice, with some 50 Elizabethan undergraduates currently studying there, not to mention post-graduate students. I was therefore pleased to welcome as our Senior Awards guest speaker, Professor Shearer West, Vice-Chancellor at Nottingham. At the ceremony, we recognised the scholarship and endeavours of boys from Years 10–12.



In a new departure, Year 13 will have their own valediction event at a more timely point in June, immediately following their examinations. I look forward to welcoming them and, no less importantly, their parents on that occasion, and then to celebrating in August what will hopefully be another strong set of A-level results.

The outcomes our senior boys achieve reflect the impact of the detailed work done to support them through initiatives such as our USP (Universities Support Programme) and the inaugural Mock Interview Evening that was so well supported by our alumni. Very importantly, too, as I made clear in my speech at Senior Awards, those outcomes are the result of our emphasis on free-thinking scholarship throughout the entire School. The word ‘scholarship’ should, however, be rightly understood. For some, it conjures up images of wizened professors, dusty tomes and gothic libraries. There is, of course, nothing wrong with those things: many of our boys aspire to be part of venerable university settings, and here at QE, particularly on formal occasions, we adhere to practices such as the wearing of gowns that are cultural signifiers of this tradition.

Day to day, though, our focus is not on such externals but on the fundamental attributes that underpin scholarship, which include the nurturing of intellectual exploration beyond the bounds of the examination syllabus. During a lecture, distinguished BBC journalist Mishal

Husain rightly urged our Lower School boys: “Keep your minds as curious as they are now.” We are open to expressions of scholarship which come in different guises and are inspired by different sources, such as the award-winning podcasts of George the Poet (George Mpanga, OE 2002–2009), or the work of another Old Elizabethan poet, Anthony Anaxagorou (1994–1999), shortlisted for the T S Eliot prize. We recognise that scholarship involves creativity (in the sciences as well as the arts), and that it can be emotional as well as empirical.

The feedback obtained from the independent survey of parents we commissioned from RSAcademics as part of our preparations for drawing up a new School Plan confirms that this emphasis on scholarship – QE’s academic nature – was the most important factor in their choosing the School. The outcomes further revealed that while public examination results were the thing valued most, the way QE stretches and challenges boys academically was very strongly endorsed by parents, too. Asked if they would recommend QE to friends, an overwhelming majority said they would, this figure being considerably higher than that for the selective independent schools against which we were benchmarked. The results identified the importance of teachers really inspiring their pupils, including imparting a love of their subject. We continue to focus on the

appointment, retention and development of excellent teachers, working with the staff body to facilitate innovation both inside and outside the classroom in order to give our boys the best possible grounding through their lessons and enrichment activities.

We are highly committed to excellence and to ensuring that it is evident in all the different facets of the School’s life. Our new Music School will be important as a venue for the creative arts and we recognise that the physical environment is a factor in the encouragement of scholarship. Alongside all the other ongoing improvement works taking place here, we are now out to tender for the build phase. We have ‘specced out’ the building, which will include a valuable social space (the atrium), and a recital hall. We hope to appoint the contractor early in the Summer Term and to get started in July.

Since the survey, the process of developing our priorities for 2020-2024 has continued. Staff have been working collaboratively to redefine our mission statement, and we are articulating the various priorities. A final draft will be prepared for ratification by the Governors in the Summer Term, before we launch the plan to parents in September. It is sure to herald another exciting stage in the School’s ongoing development.

My best wishes go to you all.

Neil Enright
Headmaster

Chances to shine

The Saxophone Ensemble qualified for the final of the highly competitive Pro Corda Chamber Music competition at their very first attempt. Director of Music Ruth Partington praised this “fantastic achievement” in the first year the School has taken part, also highlighting the success of the String Quartet and Celli Ensemble in reaching the semi-finals.

Also this term, QE Jazz Lounge (pictured above), the School's entry in Barnet's Battle of the Bands at Woodhouse College, enjoyed the opportunity to compete in a very different genre. The boys covered Saint Motel's *My Type* and performed their own composition, *A bit Squiffy*. Schools from across Barnet took part in the competition.

Boys from Years 7– 13 showcased their flair at the Jazz Concert. There were ensemble and solo performances of works including both jazz standards and new, jazz-influenced compositions.



And pupils taking AS and A-level Music performed at a special Recital Concert at the School. “It was a terrific event; the standard was exceptionally high. The boys were offered the chance to shine and certainly took it!” said Miss Partington. The eclectic programme ranged from much-loved classics by Johann Sebastian Bach and Frédéric Chopin through to work by contemporary composers Amy Quate and Justin Timberlake.

Pictured above is an artist's impression of the interior of the new Music School.

Food and firsts

The Year 12 Luncheon guest speaker was businesswoman Sonita Alleyne, first black Oxbridge college Master and the first female Master at Jesus College, Cambridge, in its 524-year history. She took the opportunity to meet Drew Sellis, Reza Sair and Bhiramah Rammanohar, of Year 13, who hold offers from Jesus College for the autumn.



Towering success

A total of five QE teams have won places for the VEX Robotics World Championships after a string of exceptional performances at the UK National Championships.

Three senior EDR teams qualified for the global finals, as well as two junior IQ teams, during a weekend of high excitement in Telford, where QE won the coveted Excellence Award in both competitions.

Team HYBRID, from Year 12, were also crowned EDR Tournament Champions. In the final, HYBRID stacked a tower with just one more block than the opposition, thus winning by the tightest of margins.

Congratulating all the teams, Head of Technology Michael Noonan said: “At the outset of the season, HYBRID set their sights on this prize and worked to a consistently excellent standard to achieve it.”

The School also hosted its first-ever VEX EDR competition this term, attracting entries from 20 schools.

Good prospects

Carefully planned programme helps boys chart the career path best for them

Careers education may not grab the headlines for QE in the way that A-level results and university places do, but research shows that families greatly appreciate the work done to prepare boys for their futures.

The parental survey commissioned from RSAAcademics revealed that careers advice was rated 'good' or 'very good' by 90% of QE parents who responded. QE compared very favourably when benchmarked against 13 top independent schools – and careers advice was one of six areas exceeding the benchmark by the biggest margins.

From the day a boy enters Year 7, he joins a community for life. So, although most Elizabethans go into higher education on leaving, careers education remains important because it is predicated on helping them realise a fulfilling professional life after university.

It starts early. Guest lecturers are chosen to enable younger boys to begin considering possible careers: for example, the BBC's Mishal Husain this term outlined the pull of journalism to Years 7-9. Our Careers 4 U event for Year 9 in February combined the fun of

speed-dating style guidance with the serious aim of encouraging open-mindedness about the future. Professions represented included medical physics, architecture, the police, scientific research, consultancy, logistics, interior design, advertising and accountancy.

The Year 11 Careers Convention is a major fixture in our calendar, giving boys and parents opportunities to ask questions of representatives from a huge range of professions – including some they may not even have thought of.

“a fulfilling professional life”

In the Sixth Form, pupils access detailed

support, underpinned by the Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance. Unifrog, which holds the world's biggest database of post-16 and post-18 opportunities, has been integrated into the eQE portal, allowing pupils to research careers and university and course information using up-to-

date labour market data. Innovative pathways, such as those combining paid vocational training and higher education, are not neglected: when Degree Apprenticeships featured at the Young Professionals Industry Event on the South Bank, QE sixth-formers snapped up their allotted places. This year, a record five Year 12 Technology students won Arkwright Engineering Scholarships, gaining financial support and a mentor for career development.

Many Old Elizabethans contribute to the autumn Careers Convention, while this term has seen: Google

“innovative pathways”

manager **Nikolai Donko** (OE 2000–2007) passionately promote 'tech' careers to the Upper School; McKinsey Business Analyst **Kiran Modi** (2007–2014) address aspiring economists, and **Jordan Wan** (2004–2011) give Year 9 insights into his work as an NHS Clinical Scientist Trainee. Alumni provide work experience placements, internships and interview practice, too, creating a virtuous circle: today's boys go on to become successful professionals, who will in turn help the QE pupils of tomorrow.





From the archives: QE's eminent Victorian

Although the Reverend John Bond Lee was the last clergyman to be appointed Headmaster of Queen Elizabeth's School, in many ways his tenure represented not the end of an era, but the start of a new one. Against a late-Victorian backdrop of increasing focus on public education, Lee played a significant part in shaping the School of today.

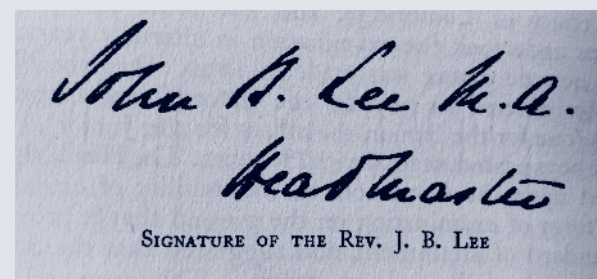
Described in Cecil Tripp's 1935 history of the School as "tall [and with] an imposing appearance, with dark hair and beard, piercing grey eyes, and an intellectual and aristocratic face", Lee, appointed in 1875, was an avowed follower of Thomas Arnold, clergyman-headmaster of Rugby School and influential educational reformer. Yet unlike Arnold, QE's man mostly relied on the force of example and suggestion to influence the boys, not on sermons.

Born in Devon and educated at Exeter College, Oxford, he joined QE aged 34 in the middle of a project to renovate and expand the School's site on Wood Street, but fell seriously ill shortly

before the reopening date. Fortunately, he recovered, and set to work with a will.

In 1875, just 48 pupils were enrolled; one year later, it was over 100. Since QE did not have a playing field, one of his first tasks was to acquire one. After leasing one

establishing a School library, and publishing *The Elizabethan* magazine, with its first issue in 1876. He introduced both a prefects system and, in 1904, Houses – four in his day. QE's first female Governor, Florence Wimbush, was appointed in November 1887, while the Old Elizabethans'



field for six years, it was lost to construction work. Lee managed to secure the tenancy of an adjoining field, but again, developers were looming. Chairman of Governors Chetwynd Stapylton swooped in and purchased the land, then letting it (on liberal terms) for the School's use. The Stapylton Field was born!

Other lasting innovations include: dividing the year into three terms, rather than two;

Association has its roots in Lee's time, too: the first dinner was held at Anderton's Hotel in 1886 and the association formally constituted after a discussion at the 1894 event.

Although not everything went Lee's way – the Governors thwarted his ambition to introduce Greek as a curriculum subject – when retirement in 1906 brought his long headmastership to an end, QE was a school ready for the modern era.



Programmed for success

James Tan's passion for coding has taken him to the final of the British Informatics Olympiad, the national computing competition for schools and colleges. James, of Year 12, scored 79 out of 100 in the first stage, which qualified him for the final at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Points aplenty

Year 10's Ansh Jassra scored a perfect 135/135 in the UK Mathematics Trust Intermediate Maths Challenge and is one of 23 QE boys to qualify for the Olympiad. In the elite Hans Woyda Mathematics Competition a team from Years 9–13 reached the semi-final, missing out on the final by a single point – the best QE result since 2013. And in the regional Advanced Mathematics Support Programme Maths Challenge, a Year 10 team came second overall, winning one of the four rounds.



Autism awareness

In the Spring Middle School Lecture, award-winning National Autistic Society Ambassador Robyn Steward gave insights into particular challenges she had faced, while suggesting universal lessons the boys could draw on to support each other.



Plans to protect London

QE teams won two of the four prizes at the Institution of Civil Engineers' #ICanEngineer competition. It was the first time the School had participated in this prestigious event.

The brief was to look at improving London's defences against future flooding resulting from climate change. A dual flood defence and water storage scheme designed by Arya Bhatt, Heemy Kalam, Dylan Domb and Ashwin Sridhar, of Year 10, took the main prize. Named *ProWater Defence System*, their scheme took into consideration existing infrastructure and the current multiple uses of the River Thames.

The Sustainability Prize went to another creative QE project, *The Thames Floodplain Protection Plan*. This was designed by Jashwanth Parimi, Amogh Bhartia, Utkarsh Bhamidimarri and Siddarth Jana, who proposed harnessing energy from the water to generate a renewable, alternative power source. The award-winners were presented with their prizes at a special event held at the central London offices of Jacobs.



Current design

Year 8's Tharsan Nimalan and Ashwin Sridhar, of Year 10, were among the prize-winners in the Eco-Innovators competition run by the Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles. The brief was to create a design for on-street electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

Stellar Arabella!

QE new School literary magazine, *The Arabella*, showcases pupils' writing and artistic talents. The 18-page launch issue featured prose, poetry and artworks contributed by boys from Year 7 to Year 13.

Surya Bowyer, Head of Library Services and the magazine's Editor-in-Chief, praised the boys' work: "It was a brilliant inaugural issue."



In the picture

Geography teachers helped 14 Year 12 boys acquire practical skills to match the classroom theory on a three-day field trip to Suffolk and Essex. They stayed in a 600-year-old farm building at Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre. A cottage in the grounds features in John Constable's famous painting, *The Hay Wain*.





Generating a buzz

A QE team tested the commercial appeal of their beeswax-based, eco-friendly product at a Young Enterprise Trade Fair – and turned a profit.

The team, who have named their firm The Green Bee Company, are producing re-usable wraps as an alternative to plastic kitchen film. Managing Director Mansimar Singh, of Year 12, said: "With recent youth activism against climate change, we felt this should be an issue our product should address."

In addition to utilising natural beeswax, the team sourced their materials from local producers and also made sure their packaging was 100% plastic-free. They ploughed the profit from the event at Old Spitalfields Market back into the business.



Super season!

The Year 7s went unbeaten in the season finale Broxbourne Rugby tournament at Cheshunt Rugby Club, winning four matches and drawing two. PE & Games Teacher Oliver O'Gorman said: "It rounded off a brilliant season: they have enjoyed a fantastic year of rugby."

Seeing is believing

A four-day Science trip to Paris furnished Year 9 boys with real-life examples of scientific principles in action, as well as discussion points for future lessons. The group toured the National Air and Space Museum of France and the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie.



Upside of climate change?

Both the Year 7 and Year 8 inter-house debating competitions produced compelling and persuasive arguments and were closely fought affairs. Broughton prevailed over Pearce by just two points in the Year 7 contest, while in Year 8, Stapylton beat Leicester by a single point.

The respective motions were: This house believes that climate change is the biggest danger facing the modern world and This house believes that censorship has no place in a democracy.

Each main speaker had five minutes to present his arguments. Head of English Robert Hyland, who organised the event said: "The speakers were passionate, eloquent and confident. A suggestion that climate change is helping to reduce over-population produced a particularly vigorous challenge!"



AGAINST THE CLOCK: Year 10's Yash Makwana successfully delivered a speech within his allotted three minutes on the subject of *Imagination* at the regional final of the Jack Petchey "Speak Out" Challenge! competition.



Queen
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School

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