



WELL DONE! Addressing prize-winners at Senior Awards, the Headmaster said: "You have not just coped with the circumstances caused by the pandemic, but have continued to thrive." Turn to p3 for more details.

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

I reported in the Christmas edition of *The Elizabethan* that the Autumn Term had felt "much more normal"; as I now look back on the past three months, that is certainly not a phrase which I would employ to characterise this Spring Term. From the very start, we faced rapidly changing circumstances, firstly gearing up to run a testing programme in early January, and then having to put it on hold at the eleventh hour as the country abruptly entered a further lockdown and we reverted to remote learning for all the boys.

Once again, both staff and pupils have demonstrated very commendable adaptability, even in the face of often-worrying news about the national and international situation, and, for some, closer to home, too. We have stuck together as a community, and there has been a resilient determination among my colleagues to ensure that boys at Queen Elizabeth's School continue to receive an excellent education in the difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves. Thanks to an extraordinary amount of work and a great deal of flexibility, our teachers and support staff have now developed very considerable expertise in using

MS Teams and the resources and tools available through eQE, such that they are able to deliver an online school which is the envy of many, and which replicates as closely as possible the normal, rich QE classroom experience.

The whole Elizabethan community was seen at its very best recently, when everyone contributed to making sure that we had a wonderful reopening on 11th March. The in-school testing programme was an unprecedented logistical challenge which, of course, had to be carried out in strictly controlled conditions to ensure it was Covid-safe: I heartily commend the



commitment of our volunteers and staff who ran it so cheerfully and efficiently, and I give my thanks to QE parents and boys who played their part by signing up in great numbers for the tests. The centrespread of this *Elizabethan* includes some remarkable statistics which reflect the extraordinary efforts on the part of so many to secure this term's success, both in terms of the testing programme and more widely.

As the pages of this newsletter also demonstrate, we have maintained an extra-curricular programme, adapting activities as necessary so that we can continue with as many of them as possible. The 2021 QE University Convention, held over the final week-and-a-half of term, is a fine example of the way in which we have 'flexed' to ensure that important events in the School calendar are retained in order that pupils do not miss out on opportunities. It has also reflected one of the really characteristic aspects of the lockdown, namely the enthusiastic engagement of our alumni in supporting current pupils, aided by our QE Connect platform and the new technology we are using as a School.

Another major event that was run in adapted form was this week's Senior Awards. I reiterate the congratulations

I offered at the dual ceremonies to all our prize-winners from Years 10–13.

One very bright spot that came in the darkest days of the shutdown was the announcement that our boys had secured 39 offers of places from Oxford and Cambridge. That is a very remarkable total, second only to last year's highest-ever tally of 40 places offered. Yet in one sense, it is also an encouraging indication of 'business as usual' – a sign that, pandemic or no pandemic, we will continue to nurture our very able students, fostering in them a love of learning, high-level thinking and deep intellectual curiosity, and preparing them to thrive at the world's best universities and in their careers.

Our new School Development Plan launched at the start of the term will play a considerable part in helping us achieve that. To amplify further our current distinction as a School, we recognise in

the plan that we must ensure that the mix of attributes and skills we develop in our boys remains relevant in a world, which, as the last 12 months have demonstrated, is fast-changing and sometimes unpredictable. I am pleased that the plan was so well-received, and

I look forward to working with colleagues to implement it over the next four years.

Through all the turmoil of recent months, work on the Music School building project has continued unabated, and we remain on schedule to open this exciting new facility in the autumn of this year.

As we look forward to the Summer Term, we have a carefully worked-out plan in place for our GCSE, AS and A2 cohorts. Boys in Years 11, 12 and 13 have a lot of work to do in terms of the final summative assessments that they will be taking in the early weeks of the term. All the best to them as they embark on their last push with their revision and preparation! Year 12 will then quickly be moving on to A-level preparation for their final examinations in the summer of 2022. We also have a programme for Year 11 – a bridge between GCSE studies and the Sixth Form – so that they can use their time productively.

While certain aspects inevitably remain uncertain, we hope that the next term will see a period of stability as the country progressively emerges from this crisis.

In the meantime, my warm wishes go to you all.

Neil Enright
Headmaster

*“the whole
Elizabethan
community
at its best”*

*“commendable
adaptability”*



Pride of place

Construction of the Music School is progressing well, with a topping-out ceremony taking place at the end of term.

The frame is up, the first floor installed, the staircase in, the roof advancing, and the recital hall internal walls taking shape.

Music staff have been making plans for equipping the building. Director of Music Ruth Partington led a research process to make one key choice – which grand piano should grace the recital hall. Piano teacher and accompanist Tadashi Imai played two instruments brought in on loan. After a week's testing, the Music Department unanimously picked the Yamaha CF6. "By clicking on the link, parents can hear for themselves how this magnificent new instrument sounds," said Miss Partington. The School's Foundation Trustees have agreed to

pay for the piano, valued at just under £75,000. Thanking them, she added: "There are further associated costs for pianos and other equipment, so we seek to raise another £30,000 through giving to QE's new Piano Fund."

- **Performances continued throughout lockdown, with recordings progressively uploaded to the [QEBarnet Music YouTube channel](#). They included: a live Year 10 Zoom concert; performances of compositions by GCSE and AS-level Music students, and last week's Grade 8 and Diploma Performance Festival, featuring QE musicians of all ages.**

Best of the best

Boys from Years 10–13 gathered in the School Hall to receive more than 140 prizes at Senior Awards. This year it was held for boys and staff only and as separate celebrations, first for Years 10 & 11 and then for Years 12 & 13.

In addition to year group subject prizes, there were named awards for overall contribution and for specific areas – The Queen's College, Oxford, Extended Project Awards, for example.

All year groups had awards for debating & public speaking and chess while in the Sixth Form, 12 prizes were given this year for commitment & service and nine for leadership & involvement.



Onward and upward: higher education success

QE's near-record-breaking total of 39 Oxbridge offers (too many to fit on one MS Teams screenshot!) feature a wide range of subjects and come from colleges both ancient and modern.

More broadly, UCAS figures reveal that, as of 1st March, 165 (97%) Year 13 boys had received at least one offer, with 54% having at least three. The highest numbers were from UCL, Nottingham and Warwick.

On track: the term in numbers

Figures demonstrate how QE overcame adversity during the Spring Term lockdown

While the second national schools shutdown presented enormous challenges to staff and families alike, key statistics reveal that Queen Elizabeth's School has not been deflected from its purpose, continuing to provide a full programme of education throughout the term.

Using eQE, MS Teams and other technological solutions, teachers delivered the normal timetable of lessons to all year groups.

Pastoral tutors met online with the boys, monitoring their welfare and maintaining the Personal Development Time programme.

The pupils themselves stayed on track: online attendance figures have remained high throughout the term and are in line with pre-Covid levels.

And when the time came, parents and other members of the School community rallied round to ensure a smooth return to the site, with volunteers working

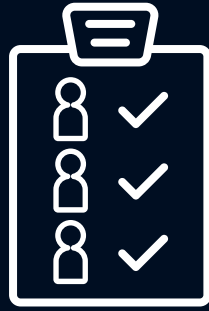
tirelessly to carry out the in-school testing programme, and families then conducting tests at home.

The Headmaster said: "These figures provide a snapshot of how life has carried on at QE during a remarkable term. Behind them lies a great deal of hard work and commitment from so many throughout our community who have been determined that nothing should derail the School as we work to deliver the best possible education for our boys."



97.6%

ATTENDANCE
(UP TO 26TH MARCH 2021)



10.9k

ONLINE
LESSONS



970

HOURS OF PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT TIME
CONDUCTED ONLINE



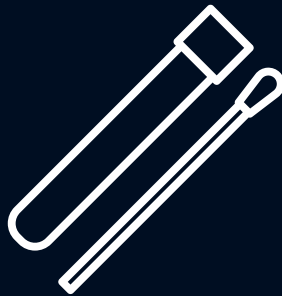
20

NEW PEER
MENTORS ADDED
TO THE TEAM



4k

IN-SCHOOL
COVID TESTS
ADMINISTERED



13.8k

HOME TESTS
DELIVERED IN
4,166 BOXES



6.2k

ONLINE
PARENTS' EVENING
APPOINTMENTS



97%

2021 UNIVERSITY
APPLICANTS RECEIVING
OFFERS (AS OF 1ST MARCH)



1.1k

MEMBERS OF
THE QE CONNECT
ALUMNI NETWORK



596

QE CONNECT
INTERACTIONS
(TO DATE IN 2021)



End of the 'grammar era' for Queen Elizabeth's School

Democratic decision, says headmaster

TO-DAY marks the end of an era. And the new term in September, 1971 will mark the beginning of a new one," said Cr. Percy Woodruff, chairman of the governors of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet, at the school's annual speech day last week.

Plea to keep status of grammar school

THE governors of Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet, have delivered a body blow to Plan C by telling Barnet Borough Council that if the plan or any similar scheme is implemented they want their school to be excluded and to continue as a grammar school. The resolution of the governing body, who include a number of non-

members and council-appointed governors, was passed by a large majority.

TRAGEDY TO CHANGE CHARACTER OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S

Education chairman says no 'question of abandoning'

Will Mrs. Thatcher throw a spanner in the Plan C works?

Barnet Borough Council reaffirmed last month their decision for comprehensive schools—including the senior high schools—in September next year or changed by the Secretary of State for Education, Mrs. Thatcher, who is M.P. for Finchley.

It was Mrs. Thatcher herself in a letter to the council that was in the forefront of the fight against the plan. She said that the Government, not the local authority, requires the approval of the Secretary of State for Education. Before any steps are taken, she said, the school must be visited by a team of inspectors. She also said that the school must be open to all children in the area. The council, however, has already decided to submit its proposals to the Secretary of State.



To boldly go

Year 8 pupil Keon Robert's design for a solar-powered bulldozer for the harshest terrains won the heavy machinery category of the Polar Cloud CAT Inc. Design Challenge. Its wire-mesh-and-rubber caterpillar tracks drew inspiration from Moon rovers.

From the archives: How QE became a comprehensive

Fifty years ago last month, it was future Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the then-Secretary of State for Education, who signed the arrangements for Queen Elizabeth's to become a comprehensive school. With her imprimatur, QE entered a new era in September

to grammars. Plan C, the one that was ultimately adopted, was a blueprint for full 'comprehensivisation'.

Yet, there was arguably nothing inevitable about QE becoming a comprehensive. When the Conservatives won a surprise General Election

adopted by the borough. But, as the example of The Henrietta Barnett School, which remained selective, demonstrated, where governors and heads of grammars were united in resistance, the process of becoming comprehensive could be delayed or avoided entirely. At QE, a large majority of governors and many staff were against the plan – and retired former Headmaster E H Jenkins was outspoken, telling a local reporter it would be a "grave mistake". But the man whose views counted most, Timothy Edwards, Headmaster of the time, was emphatically in favour, telling the same newspaper: "I have never made a secret of my belief that comprehensive education should or would come eventually." The council's plan for QE's expansion and transformation was swiftly implemented.

- For more on Plan C and QE's comprehensivisation, look out for former headmaster Dr John Marincowitz's forthcoming history of the School from its founding in 1573 to the present. Details on how to pre-order the book will be circulated soon.



1971, admitting its first comprehensive intake of 180 pupils in six forms, double the previous number.

Another 23 years were to pass before academic selection returned under Headmaster Eamonn Harris in 1994.

It had taken three reorganisation plans and six years for Barnet to go fully comprehensive. The first two were rejected, with Plan B, proposing a hybrid system retaining some selection, thrown out by Labour Secretary of State Tony Crosland, famed for his hostility

victory in 1970, it was Mrs Thatcher, MP for Finchley, who had issued a directive – Circular 10/70 – leaving local education authorities new room for manoeuvre. While not ending a national process that was well under way, it envisaged comprehensives coexisting with grammar schools.

Barnet accordingly put Plan C out to consultation, asking teachers, governing bodies and parents for their views. The results were clear: of the 28,000 respondents, more than 80% approved Plan C. The overall scheme was duly



Mental health in a pandemic

During Children's Mental Health Week, football agent Max Hassell (OE 2002–2009) reflected on his diagnosed ADHD, anxiety and depression in a talk to senior pupils: "You can...still have a very happy and fulfilled life: it does not have to hold you back."

Entering the lists

Sixth-form linguists did battle in a French debating competition named after mediaeval tournaments where entrants would duel in verse. With only a week's notice, Year 13's Anshul Sajip and Zeke Essex, and Year 12's Awad Shah and Vineeth Rajan volunteered for QE's debut in the **Joutes Oraitoires**. Although not among the winners, they acquitted themselves well, reports Head of Languages Nora Schlatte. QE now plans to compete annually.

University Convention goes virtual

With 19 sessions featuring well over 50 Old Elizabethans over seven School days in the last two weeks of term, this year's virtual QE University Convention was a major logistical and technical feat.

The alumni spoke on 14 subjects in the first four days, from Architecture to Computer Science, Law to Medicine & Dentistry, and from Geography to Languages. The final three days covered topics such as the year spent in industry during Engineering degrees and the variety of university choices available, including 'Campus vs City', Oxbridge, international and London.

Michael Feven, Assistant Head (Pupil Development) said: "This event has allowed boys to find out about all their university options and, of course, to discover how our alumni's university experiences have been affected by Covid. All Year 12 boys were free to drop in, and the sessions proved popular, provoking

plenty of discussion afterwards." Most of the participating Old Elizabethans were those who left QE last summer. In normal years, the convention is a physical event which serves as a reunion for them after their first two terms at university. This year, however, the OE contributions were delivered remotely, beamed into classrooms at lunchtime on Zoom.

The first-year alumni were also joined by a number of OEs from earlier years to ensure broad coverage of the planned topics. The teachers facilitating the sessions recorded many of them so they could be posted on eQE and QE Connect, where they can be viewed by any boys unable to attend.



PinkNews boss's colourful career

Old Elizabethan Benjamin Cohen gave a video talk about his journey from teenage dotcom millionaire through his years as a journalist to his campaigning role as CEO of fast-expanding PinkNews, which he founded in 2005. Ben (1993–1998) spoke to QE's Student Leadership Team and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Ambassadors during LGBT+ History Month. The talk was recorded for use as an eQE resource.



Hosting robotics

The School ran two online robotics events this term. Teams from Canada, Taiwan, the US and UK, including one from QE, took part in the first, during lockdown. Then a bigger remote skills tournament saw three home teams take on five UK and three US teams. Two QE teams, Hyperdrive and Override, both of Year 10, have so far qualified for the online VEX Robotics World Championships in May.



Improvisation from a pro

Distinguished saxophonist, composer and educator Mike Hall gave a series of online masterclasses to QE's senior musicians to boost their skills in jazz improvisation.

Mr Hall, who was Head of Jazz Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music for 20 years, began with an hour-long illustrated talk featuring the work of jazz legends Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock.

The boys could then record their own improvisations – either to backing tracks he supplied or to a piece of their own choosing – before Mr Hall returned on Zoom to provide expert feedback in two further sessions.

Rapid reactions

Five Year 13 scientists came fifth out of the 42 teams in the *Cambridge Chemistry Race* – a competition run against the clock that attracts the country's leading schools.

Originally scheduled to take place at the university's Chemistry Department, the event had to go online because of the lockdown. Bhargab Ghoshal, Janujan Satchi, Arnav Sharma, James Tan and Khai Tran worked from their own homes, using the Moodle platform.



All the screen's a stage

Lockdown forced a halt to rehearsals for the Year 8 Drama Club's production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* before they had really got under way.

But, as every actor knows, the show must go on, so the boys got creative to keep up their thespian endeavours. With the help of QE's resident Theatre Director, Gavin Molloy, they put together, learned and filmed a series of monologues on Zoom.

Crispin Bonham-Carter, Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement) said: "The speeches were taken from a range of classic and modern texts by authors ranging from Charles Dickens to Michael Morpurgo.

The boys went to great lengths creating costumes, props and backdrops in their own homes." These have been watched in School during form time and are now [published for parents on EQE](#).

Rehearsals for *The Curious Incident...*, an award-winning play by Simon Stephens based on Mark Haddon's novel of the same name, have resumed. It is planned to stage it in June as the 2021 School Play.

Pandemic prognosis National champion

A QE team won the Year 11 category in the Bank of England's schools film competition with a polished three-minute production exploring the global effects of coronavirus on jobs and the economy.

Abir Mohammed, Dhruv Syam and Ansh Jassra explored who would be the winners and losers from the move to home working, while also highlighting technological advances that will make working from home more like being in the office.

Year 7 Nishchal Thatte won the 2020 U12 British Online Chess Championships run by the English Chess Federation, triumphing over seven rounds. He then took first place in QE's second online tournament, despite being pushed all the way by Joshua John, of Year 9, and Yash Mahajan (Year 11). Seventy-two boys and two teachers competed. Similar numbers took part in the School's first ever-online Blitz (time-limited) Chess Tournament, won by Daiwik Solanki (Year 8), with Yash the runner-up.



What it takes

Élite athlete Antonio Infantino outlined the ingredients of success in a virtual lecture to QE's sportsmen. Nutrition, sleep, mindset and training routines were all important, said the three-times British Indoor 200m Champion, adding "I have learned more from my failures than from the races I have won." Antonio, who has switched nationality to represent Italy, has qualified in the 4x100m for the Tokyo Olympics; his goals include reaching the finals in this and the 200m.



Queen
Elizabeth's
School

FOUNDED IN 1573

Queen Elizabeth's School

Queen's Road, Barnet,
Hertfordshire EN5 4DQ

020 8441 4646

enquiries@qebarnet.co.uk

@qebarnet1573

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qebarnet.co.uk