

Queen Elizabeth's School

The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

AUTUMN 2021



THE 12 PIANOS OF CHRISTMAS! Listen to this celebration of delivery of the Music School project with this special arrangement of *The 12 Days of Christmas* by Raphael Herberg, of Year 13. Turn to p3 for more.

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

Amid the continuing difficult circumstances of the pandemic, it has been heartening to receive independent corroboration of Queen Elizabeth's School's success from two respected sources.

At the start of this month, we learned that QE had been named the *Sunday Times Schools Guide's State Secondary School of the Year* for 2022. A highly prestigious accolade, it recognises overall achievement across every aspect of school life, including academic standards, extra-curricular activities and pastoral care. The degree of

achievement that is recognised by the bestowal of the title is not reached overnight: winning this award bespeaks long-term consistency of approach at the highest level. It truly is testament to a great team effort over many years. I therefore trust that all in the Elizabethan community will share the sense of pride I feel at this notable success – pupils, families, staff, alumni and, in fact, anyone who helps us accomplish our vision of producing confident, able and responsible young men.

Earlier in the term, *The Spectator* magazine published research which revealed that QE secured the second-highest number of Oxbridge places of

any 11–18 state school in England and Wales, beaten only by Brampton Manor Academy in East Ham, whose Sixth Form is twice the size of ours.

Such welcome news owes very much to the tireless labour put in by our staff ever since the coronavirus first struck to maintain high levels of academic, extra-curricular and pastoral provision. While there were no public examinations this year, the fact that we have steadfastly maintained academic rigour, not least in applying the Government's Teacher Assessed Grade process, means that we can regard QE's 2021 A-level and GCSE results with great confidence – and what results they were!



SHAKESPEARE ANCIENT & MODERN: In QE's first live theatre visit since before the pandemic, Year 11 headed to London's Globe Theatre, where they saw a radical take on *Romeo and Juliet*, with the focus squarely on mental health.



Despite the disruption of two lockdowns, our senior pupils truly excelled themselves, the Year 13 leavers gaining outstanding A-level results that secured sought-after places on highly regarded courses at top universities. Thirty-nine A-level candidates confirmed their Oxford and Cambridge offers; 26 won places to read Medicine. For the 16th consecutive year, the proportion of A*-B grades awarded to QE pupils exceeded 95%, while more than a third of the cohort had straight A* grades.

I can say without hesitation that these sixth-formers received their due reward for consistently high-quality work over many months.

The exemplary pattern set in Year 13's results was repeated the following week in the GCSE results: here, too, pupils maintained QE's long record of outstanding success, with more than 19 out of every 20 GCSEs receiving grades 9-7 (equivalent to the previous A* and A) and 85% awarded 9-8 (A*). The results demonstrate the breadth that a QE education delivers: every Year 11 boy achieved the English Baccalaureate (awarded for level 5 or above in GCSEs in English, Mathematics, Science, a humanity and language), while there were also strong results in the Higher Project Qualification taken by 157 of the 184 boys in the year group.

While we therefore have much to celebrate, we are determined not to rest on our laurels. We are already making good progress against the priorities

established in our School plan, *Building on Distinction*. And I am pleased to say that the latest major project in our estates strategy, namely the construction of the new Music School, is complete, save for the 'snagging'. Covid-permitting, we hope to hold a two-day opening festival in early February, by which time many boys will have had experience of using it.

“Maintaining academic rigour”

The heart of the new facility is the state-of-the-art recital hall, where pride of place goes to our Yamaha CF6 grand piano, a magnificent instrument paid for by our Foundation Trustees. The other seven new pianos acquired for the Music School were all purchased largely as a result of generous parental giving through the Friends of Queen Elizabeth's, with donations coming via the Pianoathon and Virtual Founder's Day. We have named the hall The 'Friends' Recital Hall' and the Music department's other rooms The 'Friends' Music Rooms' in recognition of the vital support that FQE has given, not only recently in enabling us to equip the new building to the highest standards, but throughout the past quarter of a century. Indeed, in the 1990s, the original Friends' Music Rooms were among the very first facilities completed with FQE support. It is worth noting that, in addition to the new pianos in the Music School, we have been able to refurbish and move across four pianos from those original rooms, which is testament to our longstanding policy of 'buying quality' at the School.

The quality of all the pianos, of the new building and, indeed, of our musicians reflects our determination to be a centre of excellence for music, which is of a piece with the broad educational experience that we offer our pupils.

It has been most encouraging to see parents coming along to events such as our Christmas Concert, Carol Service, FQE quiz, School Play and to rugby matches, including the memorable evening at Saracens' StoneX stadium. It was also good to return to in-person briefing evenings this term. Boys and staff take great heart from parents' attendance – their presence really enhances such occasions.

Finally, may I emphasise the importance of our continuing to stick together on Covid-related issues. Over many months, parents, pupils and staff have rallied round to play their part in combatting the pandemic. Uptake at our two-day vaccination drive this term was noticeably high. We should celebrate

the fact that we have reached the final week of term without major disruption. Yet as the sudden rise of the Omicron variant in the UK has shown, there is no room for complacency. I hope that the uptake of testing at QE will continue to match, or even exceed, the record of recent months.

My very best wishes for a happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Neil Enright *Headmaster*

Winning the title

QE was this month named *State Secondary School of the Year* for 2022 in the highly respected *Sunday Times Schools Guide*.

The award reflects overall excellence and is distinct from the *Parent Power* academic rankings published simultaneously. QE not only won it, but also topped the rankings for the seventh time in nine years. The table was based on A-level and GCSE results from the 2017-2019 pre-pandemic years.

Alastair McCall, editor of *Parent Power*, said: “Queen Elizabeth's is making the top spot in our annual rankings its own

and our award this year recognises that sustained excellence. However, this is no academic hothouse. Boys leave the school confident young men capable of taking their place in the world, nurtured by a school with outstanding facilities and exceptional teaching.”

QE has won the title twice before, in 2001 and 2007 – a rare, and possibly unique, feat.

Oxbridge? We're good to go!

New research published by **The Spectator** highlights QE's success with Oxbridge places. QE won the second-highest number of any state secondary school in 2020.

The table's leading school, Brampton Manor Academy, and four state sixth-form colleges also listed above QE, all have significantly higher pupil numbers than QE. Furthermore, the research revealed QE's very high Oxbridge conversion rate: of 91 applicants, 44% gained places.

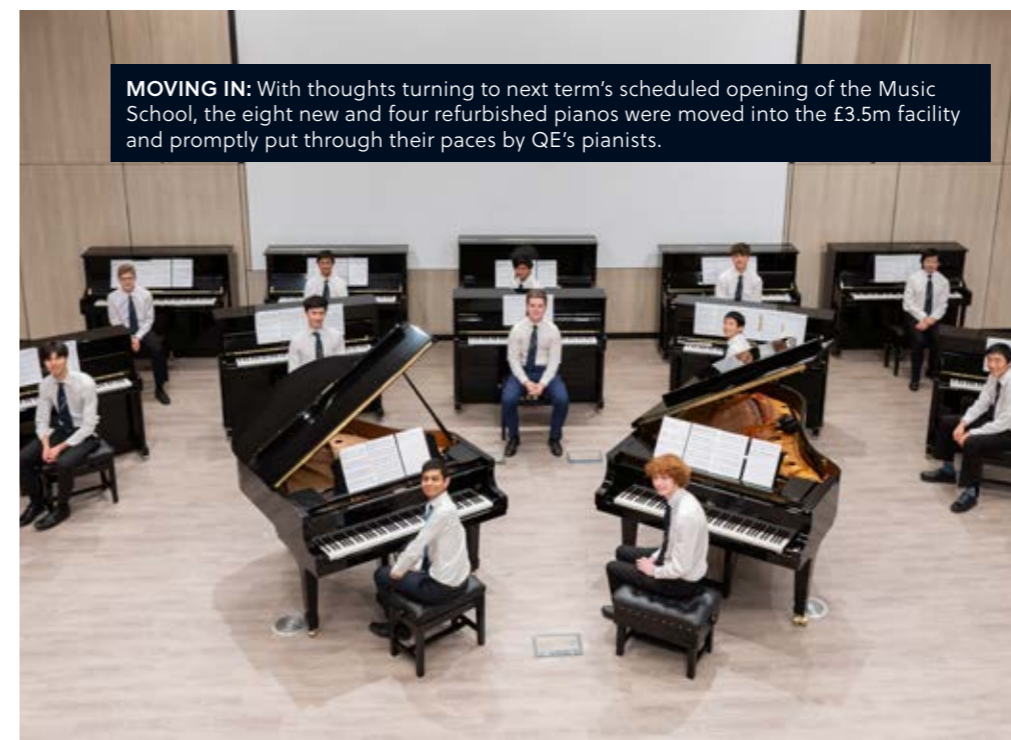


The season to be jolly!

QE's musicians relished performing in the Christmas Concert – their first major concert since December 2019. The event in the Shearly Hall featured 13 ensembles and scores of instrumentalists and singers.

A mostly seasonal programme combined the modern (the Jazz Band's rendition of Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas is You*) with Christmases past (the School

Choir's *Masters in this Hall*, arranged by Gustav Holst), easy listening (Junior Jazz playing *Have a Holly Jolly Christmas*) with more challenging fare (*Allegro con fuoco* from Amy Beach's *Symphony in E Minor*, performed by the Orchestra). The School Choir and Orchestra brought the evening to a traditional conclusion with *Once in Royal David's City* and *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*.



MOVING IN: With thoughts turning to next term's scheduled opening of the Music School, the eight new and four refurbished pianos were moved into the £3.5m facility and promptly put through their paces by QE's pianists.



No time to waste: pupils take a lead as environmental concerns move centre-stage

With the world's eyes focused on the COP26 summit last month, attention at QE has also been firmly fixed on the environment this term.

Pupils have taken part in a string of events – including the Glasgow summit itself – while environmental concerns are increasingly moving to the fore at QE.

Not only is there a new Green Council, but the 2022 team of School Officials includes for the first time two Senior Vice-Captains with specific responsibility for the environment as the School works to fulfil the commitments in its development plan, *Building on Distinction*, to “exercise good environmental stewardship” and to “instil a sense of responsibility for the environment in the boys”.

Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement) Crispin Bonham-Carter said that boys throughout the School are proving to be highly engaged as environmental issues and potential solutions are explored through QE's enrichment programme

and through normal lessons as well.

Toma Gelsinov, Rahul Doshi and Amogh Bhartia, the Year 12 Green Council representatives (known as Eco Ambassadors), performed so strongly at an inter-schools conference hosted by St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith that Toma and Rahul were both invited to take part in COP26 to represent the UK Schools Sustainability Network (UKSSN).

Toma duly headed off to Scotland, while Rahul was part of a home-based remote team. Toma spoke at a UK Government-backed five-member youth discussion panel about the role that schools can play in combatting climate change. “Ever since I was young, I have realised

how privileged we are in the UK: with the vast amount of resources we have available, if we cannot tackle climate change, who can?” he said.

“In my School, we are working to set up an allotment where students can take part

in organic composting and gardening,” Toma said. Such initiatives allow pupils to see at first-hand what impact they can have in terms of mitigating climate change, he added.

“If we cannot tackle climate change, who can?”

He seized the opportunity to meet Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi in Glasgow, chatting through with him UKSSN's work and the challenges faced.

Back in Barnet, the School Captain Siddhant Kansal and the two Senior

Vice-Captains, Sultan Khokhar and Paul Ofordu, all of Year 13, worked with Extra-Curricular Enrichment Tutor Stephanie Tomlinson, who is leading the School's Eco-Network, to run the School's own mock COP26 summit. All boys from Years 7–10 took part, wrestling with the complexities of competing priorities around the world as they battled to solve the climate crisis. Each form group represented a country, producing a short video and putting forward a delegate in the debates.

“The boys really embraced putting themselves in the shoes of their given nation, teasing out the tensions between economic development and sustainability, and nations' relative contributions toward present and

historic warming,” said Miss Tomlinson. “Delegates effectively made the case for working together, heeding pleas from the likes of the Marshall Islands for concerted action before they were submerged by sea level rises. Overall, facts and figures were commanded well and it was great to see boys from Year 7 holding their own against those in Year 10.”

QE's younger boys learned about the environmental challenge of the global loss of biodiversity in a lecture assembly. Lesley Malpas, Founder and Chief Executive of not-for-profit organisation, Operation Future Hope, explained that Britain has suffered some of the world's worst biodiversity loss. But she also highlighted case studies of successful examples of rewilding.

After the lecture, members of the Green Council took her on a tour of the site to consider what further steps the School might consider to support nature.

Mr Bonham-Carter said: “Lesley explained to the party that in many cases, supporting nature better would be about doing less – allowing hedges to grow out a little, for example. There seemed to be lots of scope for small initiatives that would allow students to get actively involved in the School's stewardship of its grounds. Generally, the site is already supporting nature quite well, she explained, so we are starting this project from a good place.”

Since the visit, a preliminary meeting has taken place to consider what specific steps might be taken in line with the commitments in *Building on Distinction*.





Worth the wait: the 2021 School Play

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time was finally unleashed on a live audience this term, having been twice postponed because of Covid.

The Year 9 cast worked hard to capture the full emotional range of the play, which was based on Mark Haddon's award-winning novel of the same name. From the perspective of a boy with autism, it tells a darkly comic and ultimately inspiring story that deals with themes of family breakdown and the mystery of who killed Wellington,

the eponymous dog. The cast performed the play to their year group peers in the morning and repeated it after school to an audience comprising parents, staff and visitors. Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement) Crispin Bonham-Carter paid tribute to the work of QE's resident Theatre Director, Gavin Molloy.

Dealing with the difficult issues



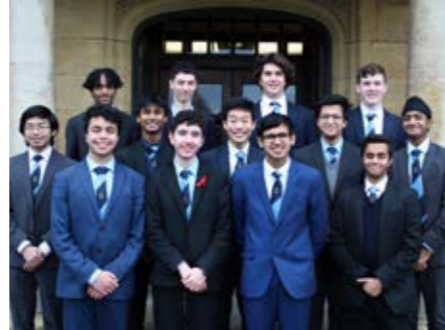
The School organised a series of events this term to help both boys and staff navigate difficult social issues.

The Headmaster, Neil Enright, said: "We aim to maintain a positive and nurturing environment in which boys can develop and flourish. All young people today face challenging issues online and offline and it is essential that we equip our pupils

to deal with those pressures."

The activities included:

- An Active Bystander Training Company workshop for all in Years 9–11 on racism, bullying and sexual harassment, with a focus on use of the four Ds – Direct action, Delay, Distraction or Delegation – to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff training from specialist trainers Bold Voices on the December pastoral training day (pictured) to support the Personal Development Time curriculum. The training gave staff strategies for teaching related to gender inequality, sexual harassment



Taking the helm

The 2022 School Captain, Theo Mama-Kahn, will head QE's largest-ever prefect team, reflecting the expanded size of the Sixth Form.

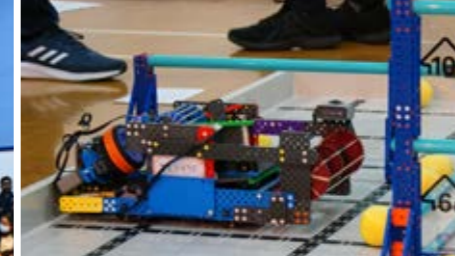
Theo and his two Senior Vice-Captains, Ansh Jassra and Antony Yassa, will lead a 120-strong Year 12 team that includes Vice-Captains, House Captains, Deputy House Captains and Prefects.

Headmaster Neil Enright said: "My congratulations go to the incoming School Captain and to all the new School Officials. Theo is an excellent candidate: he contributes fully to School life, especially as a musician; he is gifted academically, and he is known for his kindness and willingness to help others."



and violence, and for developing positive attitudes in all pupils.

- An online visit this week by Soma Sara, Founder of the Everyone's Invited platform. In her talks, Soma addresses the attitudes, thoughts and behaviours that create 'rape culture'. Girls from The Henrietta Barnett School took part.
- Virtual talks on the broad theme of respectful relationships offered to Years 7 & 8 and to Years 12 & 13, by the RAP Foundation charity. There was also a webinar for parents of Years 7 & 8 boys to help them understand the pressures facing boys as they go through adulthood.



They came, we conquered

QE hosted the UK's largest robotics tournament since the 2020 VEX Nationals, with home teams doing the School proud against strong opposition. Thirty-two junior teams came for the North London Regional tournament.

Of QE's six participating teams, three had already acquitted themselves well in VEX IQ this season, said Head of Technology Michael Noonan. "For the remaining three teams, this represented their maiden voyage into competitive robotics, and, with such a strong field, was a thrilling prospect for all."

While the Year 8 and 9 teams all performed well, the stars of the day were the experienced Year 9 roboteers of the

Gearsquad team, whose score of 109 in the Skills Challenge is both the highest in the UK to date this season and is in the world top 50. They duly took the Excellence Award: "Gearsquad's incredible design notebook and their presentations, as well as their top ranking in Skills and Teamwork all made them impossible to ignore for this, the most coveted prize and the last to be awarded on the day," said Mr Noonan.



Doing the rounds!

Quizzes are proving a popular way to socialise, compete and raise money. Seven teams turned out for the FQE Quiz, with the honours going to a Year 7 parents' team. In the inter-House QIQE quiz, Harrison's came out narrowly on top. Year 13's Vishruth Dhamodharan and Varun Vijay Kumar organised quizzes to raise money for Guy's Trust – named after Guy Joseph (OE 1997–2002), who died in a 2011 accident. A Year 9 squad (team SIUUUUUUUUUU!) beat 11 other Year 9 and 10 teams, while for Year 7 and 8, Dino Nuggies, of Year 8, emerged victorious.



No limits: Celebrating Black History Month

From the Year 9 Shakespeare Film Club discussing issues raised in *Othello* to Philosophy lessons focusing on Black philosophers, QE marked Black History Month in truly diverse fashion.

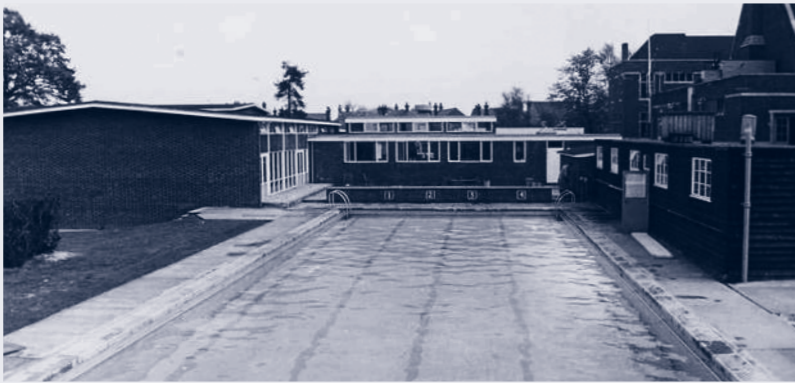
Highlights included a Sixth Form virtual assembly by Roni Savage (pictured) – engineering geologist; founder of Jomas Associations, a multi-million construction industry; consultancy; multiple award-winner...and mum to Year 13's Jayden Savage.

Headmaster Neil Enright said: "We sought to provide lots of different opportunities, with an array of innovative ideas both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. I am especially grateful to Mrs Savage – a true pioneer in her industry. She inspired sixth-formers with her injunction to 'stand up, stand out, stand tall' and her insistence that 'there are no limits to what you can achieve' with hard work and talent."



From the archives:

From buns and ginger beer in the public baths to water polo in the Martin Pool – the history of swimming at QE



As a keen outdoor swimmer, when Jenni Blackford joined QE as Curator of Collections in November and started exploring the archives, she naturally dipped first into the swimming history of the School. “I was delighted to discover that this history is both rich and interesting,” she says.

In the summer 1877 edition of The Elizabethan, it was announced that the School had sole use of Barnet Swimming Bath for an hour on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. “The bath would seem to be popular with the boys, for about 60 have given in their names for bathing,” the magazine remarked. By 1908 the bathing at the High Street baths incorporated an element of competition, in the form of “aquatic sports”. This included an “obstacle race” in which “competitors

had to swim a length, eat a bun, drink a bottle of ginger-beer and then swim back”.

In 1914, Harold Fern (Governor 1921-1965) persuaded the Board of Education to include swimming in the School curriculum,

“A very welcome addition”

and the boys had regular swimming lessons at the public baths. One sign of this growing emphasis was the issuing of swimming certificates by the School – the first, designed by Mr A Collier, the Art master, and first printed on 25th July 1930, is shown here.

Mr Fern was a member of the British Olympic Association, was elected President of FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation – the sport’s international

governing body) in 1936, and was awarded a CBE in 1960 for his service to swimming. “It isn’t surprising, therefore, that it was during his time as Chairman of Governors that the School finally acquired a swimming pool of its own,” Mrs Blackford says.

In fact, as far back as 1900, a School pool had been on the wish list of amenities: the July 1900 issue of The Elizabethan states: “We still need a swimming bath and a gymnasium.” But it was another 38 years before an outdoor pool was built.

Dug where the Shearley Hall stands today, it was for many a very welcome addition. “At last swimming has become a regular feature of the life of the School. Gone are the days when we tried to keep alive our enthusiasm for the art by irregular, inconvenient, and

ill-attended visits to the baths at Finchley. We can now swim every day, and most of us seem to do so.” (The Elizabethan, July 1938).

The boys’ swimming ability improved and the pool was well used. However, it was unheated, and enthusiasm was by no means universal: Peter Illingworth (OE 1972-1980) remembers it as “terribly cold” and “a horrible old thing”!

News in 1965 that Queen Elizabeth’s Girls’ School had built an indoor pool provided the impetus for improving QE’s own swimming facilities, and a Barnet Press appeal was launched to raise £4,000. Although the original goal was to raise the funds by Founder’s Day 1969, it was not until December 1975 that the pool was reopened with a cover to provide year-round facilities. The funds had been raised entirely by parents and through fundraising events. “Particularly impressive was the 24-

hour sponsored swim by five schoolboys,” says Mrs Blackford. “Swimming in relays, they completed a total of 41.5 miles and raised £400 towards the swimming pool fund.” Pictured are the five (l-r David Wilson, John Senior, Bryan Rogers, Jonathan Hadgraft and Graham Peters), all members of the Fifth and Sixth forms, on 28th July 1967.

Just over 30 years later, in 2006, this pool was replaced by the eight-lane indoor Martin Swimming Pool, funded through extensive Friends of Queen Elizabeth’s School support and described by the then-Headmaster Dr John Marincowitz as “a truly magnificent facility for our boys”. Today, this pool is in constant use for PE lessons, and boys excel in both competitive swimming and water polo.

• Mrs Blackford is pictured after she completed a 21-mile, two-way Windermere swim in July 2021.



Different strokes, same goal

Boys from every form in Years 7–9 battled it out in a charity Swimathon.

Each form had to provide a team of four for a medley relay (back, breast, fly and free stroke) against their own year group, as the boys came together to raise money for the Noah’s Ark

Children’s Hospice. Broughton won the overall competition. There were 105 spectators in total, with Underne gaining plaudits for turning out the most supporters.



Spanning the centuries at Hampton Court Palace

Year 8 pupils learned about Tudor life on a visit to Hampton Court Palace and enjoyed the added bonus of seeing an exhibition and art installation about Indian soldiers in the First World War that coincided with their visit. The trip was QE’s first whole-year History visit since the pandemic struck.

Ten years on: remembering a disaster

Fulbright-Lloyd’s Fellow Makoto Takahashi (OE 2003–2010), an academic and globally recognised expert on the 2011 Fukushima meltdown in Japan, gave 13 Art & Design and Geography A-level students a special invitation to an exhibition he has curated. It is on until 23rd December at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

Making a splash

The U15 and U19 water polo teams have qualified for the next stage of the nationals championships, putting them among the top 12 schools in the country.

The Seniors progressed to the English Schools Swimming Association semi-finals after travelling to Northampton, where they won three of their four matches – those against Bedford, Warwick, and Abingdon schools. The younger boys were in home water, as QE hosted the City of London School, St Paul’s and Haberdashers’ Boys’ in the Martin Pool (pictured here). With two wins and a draw, the boys progressed as the first-placed team.

Head of Aquatics Richard Scally said: “After such disruption to fixtures last year, it was just great for the boys to be back in the pool competing and playing so well.”



PPE effort rewarded

Head of Technology Michael Noonan won a special award for co-ordinating a London-wide effort by schools’ Design & Technology departments to 3D-print face shields for the NHS when Covid-19 first swept the country last year.

The award from the Design and Technology Association was presented in a ceremony held at the Institution of Engineering and Technology in London.

Eton Fives thrives

Eton Fives is flourishing at QE, with boys winning plaudits from the sport's leaders.

Year 10's Dinuk Dissanayake and Pratham Bhavsar, of Year 11, headed to Eton College with Avinash Kumararuban (OE 2013-2020) and Abilash Sivananthan (OE 2013-2020) for the Graham Turnbull tournament – a rare example of a competitive sports event where alumni and pupils play together. Dinuk was also in action in the Eton Fives Nationals Competition for novices, again hosted by Eton, narrowly losing a semi-final with partner Rishabh Bhatt against an Ipswich School pair – acclaimed as the

game of the tournament. They were among seven Year 10 participants.

And at Harrow School, seven Year 9 boys enjoyed their very first taste of competition in the Eton Fives Association U14 Individual Competition. EFA Trustee Howard Wiseman wrote afterwards: "You never see a keener nor more dedicated bunch than the QEB boys."

Building on tradition at Oundle

A huge contingent of U14 rugby players travelled to QE's historic fixture at Oundle School in Peterborough – and returned with a special invitation for 2022. QE fielded A-E teams, and B, C and E won their games at this popular event set up by former QE Head of Games David Maughan almost 40 years ago.

Head of Rugby James Clarke said: "It's a fantastic opportunity to play one of the best independent schools, and for some to experience representing QE for the first time. Oundle were so impressed with our group's behaviour and good nature that they invited us to join their boys in a Science experiment next year, followed by lunch and the rugby."



Alumni in action

Old Elizabethans this term plunged into a diverse range of activities, while the School's new Development Office solicited the views of all alumni in an independently commissioned survey. Sixteen rugby-loving friends from the class of 1986 enjoyed a sometimes-emotional reunion that included watching the First XV at the School, while OEs were also among the spectators for the games at Saracens' stadium. Seventy-six old boys of every decade from the 1940s to the 2020s came to the 125th Old Elizabethans Association Annual Dinner, among them guest speaker Dhruv Chhatralia (OE 1996-2003) and 30 ten-year leavers (2004-2011 pupils).

DIARY DATE

The 44th Queen Elizabeth's School Rugby Sevens are scheduled for Sunday 13th March 2022, Covid-permitting. Up to 60 teams from leading schools are expected. Spectators are welcome.



Swansong at Saracens' stadium

QE's rugby players relished playing rivals Haberdashers' Boys' School at the StoneX Stadium.

Year 8 A and B teams won their curtain-raiser games convincingly, with scores of 65-0 and 45-0 respectively. Then the First XV took the field – the last time many would don the team shirts. QE led 10-0 at half-time, only for Habs to take the match 15-10. Head of Rugby James Clarke said: "It was a great game that could have gone our way on a different night. I am extremely proud of the effort, attitude and commitment the whole squad have shown this year."



Queen
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School

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