

Queen Elizabeth's School

# The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

SUMMER 2022



**ALL THE BEST!** QE's inaugural Valediction ceremony took place this term. Turn to p3 for more.

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

**As we draw to the end of the Summer Term, it is emphatically good to be able to report to you that, after all the disruption caused by Covid-19, Queen Elizabeth's School has had a normal, uninterrupted year.**

Our GCSE and A-level candidates have once again been sitting public examinations: I look forward to seeing them receive their results next month. And the major events in our Summer Term calendar have all run in full, without Covid-related restrictions, just

as they last did in 2019. Thus, we were able to invite parents to this week's Junior Awards, allowing them to have the joy of seeing their sons pick up their prizes and then take afternoon tea with teachers and other guests afterwards. I was pleased that we could return to hosting a guest speaker: Old Elizabethan Hemang Hirani (2008–2015) has done very well to forge a career in investment banking in the few, short years since he graduated with a First in Geography and Economics from the LSE. Earlier this month, our Open Day was also back to its usual busy self! Our stalwart team of pupils and staff worked together very

successfully to handle the logistics of welcoming several thousand prospective Elizabethans and parents through our doors for sessions throughout the day.

Perhaps most of all, since it is such an eagerly anticipated highlight of the QE year, it was wonderful to hold the 2022 Founder's Day as a live and in-person event. I was encouraged to see our Year 7 boys at the morning's thanksgiving service in the parish church and then to have the opportunity to greet so many parents, friends and guests, at the Friends of Queen Elizabeth's Fete in the afternoon. Our traditions were honoured





through the lunchtime Roll Call and formal reading of the School Chronicle, and through OE cricketers taking on the School in the afternoon's Stanley Busby Memorial Match on Third Field. During the day, there were more alumni present than I can ever remember in the past. One addition to the usual programme was the special memorial for former

Headmaster Eamonn Harris (1984–1999).

This was one of the very first events that we had to call off when the pandemic hit us in 2020.

It was, therefore, particularly satisfying that we could finally mark the passing, and celebrate the life, of this hugely significant figure in QE's modern history.

While tradition and history are hugely important to us – especially as we look forward to the School's 450th anniversary next year – I would add that 2021–2022 has not *only* been a return to normal: we have, in important respects, had a stronger year even than we enjoyed before the pandemic. That is thanks to a great deal of hard work by so many in the School community: we stayed on course even through the worst periods of the pandemic. It was certainly different, and while there were limitations on what we could do, we not only maintained our focus on delivering the best possible education for our boys, but we were even able to build strongly and better for the future. That strength was recognised firstly through our winning of the Sunday Times Parent Power *State School of the Year* title for 2022. More recently, it has been underlined by the 'outstanding' grades we secured from Ofsted across all areas

following an inspection this term. While we were quietly confident, it has been a long time – 14 years – since our last inspection, so it was very gratifying to receive the inspectors' ringing endorsement of everyone's work. The report recognised that one important factor in QE's success is that we are determined not to rest on our laurels,

*“Stronger than before”*

but that our improvement priorities, as set out in our current plan, Building on Distinction, are “ambitious” and that “Leaders and governors are determined to improve the school's work, [engaging] staff, pupils and parents in evaluating the school's current provision and in making plans for the future.” My colleagues and I are constantly looking to improve and refine every aspect of what we do, whether in teaching, in rigorous monitoring of boys' performance, in providing effective pastoral care attuned to the challenges facing pupils in the 2020s, in bringing forward superlative extra-curricular opportunities, or in delivering estates strategies aimed at creating the best possible educational environment.

It was tremendously exciting to celebrate the opening of The Friends' Recital Hall & Music Rooms with our three-day festival in May, with all that the new facilities promise for the future of extra-curricular Music here. Yet already we are looking to our next major project, the creation of the Robert Dudley Studio for theatre and the spoken word, for



which fundraising has now begun. One innovation that was especially well received this term was the Valediction ceremony for our leavers, which was open to all Year 13 parents and was combined with a prize-giving. We see Valediction as an opportunity to say a fond farewell to these young men after seven successful years at the School, but as a chance, too, to welcome them to the ranks of the Old Elizabethans.

This is the time of year when we must also sadly bid farewell to a number of colleagues. We thank everyone and wish them well, but particularly Mike Feven and Colin Price. Mike, from the Senior Leadership Team, is relocating 'home' to Bristol after two stints at QE. He is being replaced by Mr James Kane, joining us in an Assistant Head role from a similarly senior position at the London Academy of Excellence, Stratford. Colin is our longest-serving teacher, and we

noted his retirement from the Second Master role in the summer 2019 edition of this newsletter: now he brings to a close 36 years of stellar, brilliant Mathematics teaching. Happily, he will remain involved with the School on a voluntary basis, not least in his continuing roles on the Governing Body and on the Board of The Friends'.

I really could not have wished for more from this academic year. We can look forward to the future with considerable optimism.

My best wishes for the holidays,

**Neil Enright** *Headmaster*



*See you again!*  
*Inaugural leavers' valediction*

*QE's first Valediction proved a popular innovation with the Year 13 leavers.*

*The entire cohort gathered in the Shearly Hall, along with parents, teachers and guests, to celebrate with a mix of fun and formality. This new rite of passage marking their completion of seven years of QE education and induction into the ranks of the alumni also incorporated a prize-giving for Year 13 award-winners. It was accompanied by an eclectic repertoire from QE musicians that ranged from Purcell to Coldplay.*

*The Headmaster told the leavers he hoped they would return in the future to pass on their experiences to younger pupils. Guest of Honour Robert ('Judge') Rinder (OE 1989–1994) reflected on how his time at QE had contributed to his career, while Year 13's Siddhant Kansal, the 2021 School Captain, gave the vote of thanks.*

## ‘Outstanding’ in all areas

Fourteen years after the last full Ofsted inspection, the inspectors returned to QE and reached the same verdict on the School: outstanding!

QE was given the highest possible 'outstanding' ranking in all five main Ofsted categories: the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; leadership and management, and Sixth Form provision.

The report's summary began with these words: “Pupils flourish at Queen Elizabeth's School. They love to learn.”

It also adopted the language of the School's own mission: “Leaders strive to develop pupils into confident, able and responsible young people.”

No areas for improvement were listed in the inspection report, which represents the sixth consecutive time that the School has been adjudged outstanding.



## Matter of life and death

The School Play delivered a gripping exploration of prejudice, as the cast mastered American accents to offer up heated, tense debate. The classic *12 Angry Men* centres on a jury deliberating the fate of a young man accused of murdering his abusive father.

Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement) Crispin Bonham-Carter said: “Staged ‘in the round’, it drew the audience into the taut atmosphere, with the boys giving some exceptional portrayals of embittered middle age.”

## *Five to the fore at feast and fest*

*Year 10's Hadi Al-Esia, Kovid Gothi, Saim Khan and Shreyaas Sandeep scored a perfect 121 out of 121, winning every round of the regional Maths Feast competition. And Year 12's Shankar Vallinayagam was a speaker at the Maths Fest lectures at the Royal Institution, after his video submission for the Maths Slam was picked as one of the winning entries.*



# For the music-makers!

This term's opening festival for The Friends' Recital Hall and Music Rooms marked both the conclusion of a highly successful five-year project and the beginning of new, expanded opportunities in music-making for the boys.

The three-day festival gave QE's leading instrumentalists and vocalists the opportunity to learn from, and play alongside, acclaimed professional musicians.

It was also a showcase for the facilities themselves: several small-scale performances took place in the Music rooms, while the gala concert on the last night took full advantage of the recital hall's rich acoustics and the superb sound of its centrepiece Yamaha CF6 grand piano.

The Headmaster explained to concert guests that, with extra-curricular music at the School flourishing, the new building will enable the Music department to offer musicians at every level state-of-the-art facilities in which they can fully develop their talents and enjoy music-making both as individuals and in QE's many thriving ensembles.

First conceived in early 2017, plans for the two-storey block received the go-ahead in 2019 after the School's application for a £1.2m grant and £1m loan from the Department for Education was successful. In addition to the hall, Music rooms and departmental offices, the building includes the

useful additional space provided by the Mayes Atrium, with its café.

It was completed with extensive financial support from the Friends of Queen Elizabeth's (FQE) and through fundraising by the boys, including last summer's inter-House Pianoathon. The Yamaha grand piano was purchased by the School's Foundation Trustees.

Since those joyous three days two-and-a-half months ago, the Music department has been further settling in, while the new building is already proving its worth, both as an additional assembly space – it was the setting for the Founder's Day Memorial Service for former Headmaster Eamonn Harris (1984–1999) – and for external music events.



## *Showcasing Music at QE: the festival programme*

**BREAKTIME MUSIC**  
from the Indian Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Junior Strings and the 160-strong School Choir;

winning international pianist Béla Hartmann for the School's élite musicians;

**LUNCHTIME PERFORMANCES**  
by Junior Jazz, the Jazz Band, Junior Winds and Senior Winds, the Orchestra and Senior Strings;

An **EVENING CONCERT** performance by Harry the Piano, with pre-concert and interval music provided by the Junior String Quartet, Sax Ensemble and Trumpet Ensemble.

**AFTERNOON TALKS**  
to GCSE and A-level Music students, and selected other pupils, by three Old Elizabethans and professional musicians: Rhys Bowden (1996–2003), an operatic tenor who teaches singing at QE; composer Richard Collins (2005–2012), and violinist Simon Purdy (2009–2016), who teaches the instrument;

**FESTIVAL CONCERT**  
Ensembles picked to take part were the Jazz Band, Chamber Choir, Junior Violin Trio and Year 13 Flute Trio, while there were also viola, cello and saxophone solos and a piano duet. Repertoire performed ranged from Beethoven and Ravel to lesser-known composers such as Jules Demersseman. Pianist Tadashi Imai, resident accompanist at the Royal Academy of Music and a piano teacher at QE, played in the first half while Béla Hartmann brought the concert, and festival, to a stirring conclusion.

**MASTERCLASSES**  
From pianist and improviser extraordinaire, Harry the Piano, (for the Pianoathon winners and for members of Junior Jazz and the Jazz Band), and award-





# Strengthening partnerships, supporting communities

As the 1573 Charter makes clear, QE has always been part of the local community, dedicated to the ‘education, bringing up and instruction of Boys and Youth’ in the ‘Town of Barnet or near the same’.

QE’s well-established academic partnerships include one with The Henrietta Barnett School, while new links with Queen Elizabeth’s Girls’ School are growing. These connections offer boys the opportunity to socialise and study with girls, thus better preparing them for university and careers.

Among this term’s partnership activities were the following.

**DEBATING:** Nisha Mayer, Head of Academic Enrichment, said: “The Year 8s enjoyed an animated morning at HBS. They debated in mixed teams in breakout rooms before assembling for a grand final.” Year 10 boys went to a preparatory workshop, with the girls visiting QE for the debates.

**QE TOGETHER:** The focus of this initiative led by QE and QEGS sixth-formers is on community action. A concert took place at Barnet’s Abbey Ravenscroft Park Nursing Home. Next is The Big Litter Pick.

**PRIMARY CHALLENGE:** QE gave Year 5 girls and boys a three-day taste of secondary school. New this year were two humanities challenges: firstly, designing a castle; secondly, devising and promoting a sustainable product. In the ever-popular forensic science workshop, youngsters work out who murdered the Headmaster! And the Maths and English Challenge was a mix of puzzles and poetry, with Foulds School achieving a near-clean sweep of prizes.

**RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS:** Fifty Year 12s took part in an Entrepreneurship Festival at QE run by the university-based LSE Generate, which supports young people in building socially responsible businesses. The boys brainstormed the skills and qualities needed, and took part in practical exercises.

**HIGH BARNET CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL:** QE played an important role. Not only was the new Friends’ Recital Hall the venue for three of the five events, but one of these was a charity concert given by the School’s own musicians to support victims of the war in Ukraine.



## Founder’s Day 2022: good to be back!

The first in-person Founder’s Day since before the pandemic brought the Elizabethan community together for tradition, celebration and fun.

With takings at the Friends of Queen Elizabeth’s fete boosted by online donations and an inter-House Music competition, Founder’s Day smashed its £20,000 target, with the final total well over £32,000. Alongside the traditional elements – the fete,

thanksgiving service, Roll Call and Reading of the School Chronicle – there was a special memorial event for former Headmaster Eamonn Harris (1984–1999). The afternoon saw a School XI triumph over the Old Elizabethans in the Stanley Busby Memorial Cricket Match.

## Trio’s Oxford success

Shreyas Mone, of Year 10, Zhuoer Chen, of Year 9, and Sarang Nair, of Year 7, enjoyed a day at Christ Church, Oxford, after being named among just ten finalists nationwide in the college’s Geography video competition. The day featured screenings of the videos, a prize-giving ceremony, a tour of the college and a workshop, as well as talks from current students and staff.



## Judged the winners

A QE defence team won their heat of the Magistrates’ Court Mock Trial Competition. After first beating fellow QE Year 9s (their original opponents withdrew), they took on another school and again secured a ‘not guilty’ verdict from the legal professionals judging the competition.

## Won in translation

QE linguists were among the winners in a national literary translation contest run from The Queen’s College, Oxford. Jonas Dawit, of Year 7, took second prize nationally in his age group for his translation of surrealist poet Robert Desnos’ French poem, *Le Crapaud* (*The Toad*). Year 11’s Arjun Patel was the Greater London winner for German.

### Global triumph

Year 8’s Parth Aggarwal’s AI-driven app for reducing food waste put him among ten worldwide winners in Microsoft’s Imagine Junior Cup. Parth was the only UK winner and, with the competition open to 13–18 year-olds, was much younger than many of the thousands of entrants. “Lots of the food we buy we never eat,” he said. “Food waste plagues the world.”

## Clearly the best

Year 10’s Zaki Mustafa was the national winner in the 14–15 age group in the Young Financial Journalist competition run by the London Institute of Banking & Finance and the Financial Times. After reading his article, Judge Claer Barrett said Zaki was the “clear winner” in his category.





From the archives: Postcards and their clues to QE’s history

With the summer break upon us and foreign holidays finally back on the agenda for many, this look at QE Collections focuses on postcards. In the past 15 years, these have gone into steep decline as people have switched to keeping in touch on social media, but for many years the writing of postcards was a ritual part of any family holiday.

The first UK postcards were created in 1870 and, with the cost of postage half that of a letter, rapidly became a cheap, popular form of communication. However, picture postcards were not introduced until 1894, and even then their appeal was

limited by the fact that any message had to be squeezed in beside the image, the other side being solely for the address.

That changed after 1902, with the introduction of the divided reverse – address on the right, message on the left. Sales took off, and picture postcards became immensely popular in the period up to the First World War.

In those days, almost anything could be the subject of a postcard image, not just holiday resorts and tourist spots.

Take, for instance, this postcard above showing the Wood Street premises that were the School’s home from its earliest days until it moved to Queens Road in 1932. Everything shown here – the building to the left, attractive gateposts, railings and trees – has long since gone, except for Tudor Hall, which is now part of Barnet and Southgate College.

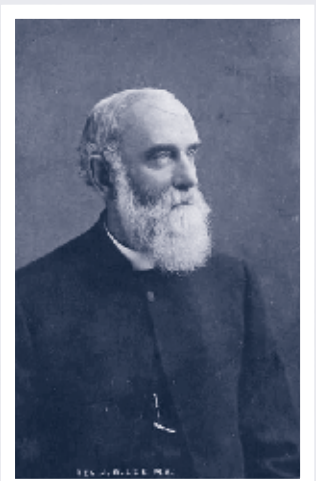
The card was written and posted on 24th April 1909 by an A M Shearsmith who, unusually, placed the stamp on the picture side. Shearsmith wrote it to a French friend: M. Revé Ferry, Employé des Postes, Havre-Port, France. But the message reveals nothing about who he or she was, nor about any connection he may have had to the School. The postcard was donated to the School at some point by Paul J Roethenbaugh (OE 1945–1952).

Blank cards with no messages on the reverse are often harder to date. The one of the Rev John Bond Lee may well also be from the Edwardian era, since Lee was Headmaster from 1875 to 1906 and the photo



shows him as an old man.

But what about the two other depictions of Tudor Hall? The style of uniform sported by the boy in front of the door certainly seems to place it pre-First World War. And while the postcard with the drawing of the building has this legend printed on the address side, ‘Queen Elizabeth’s School, Barnet, circa 1700’, that gives no clue as to the date the postcard was produced. Even more



of a mystery is the one showing the sports team – ‘1890’ is handwritten on the back (which probably makes the subjects soccer players, since rugby did not start at QE until 1913), but for the reasons given above, that is very unlikely to have been when the card was printed.

There are many other postcards in QE Collections. Indeed, it seems that collecting postcards (deltiology) was once a popular hobby amongst QE boys. In the March 1956 copy of *The Elizabethan*, a description of one of the School’s regular hobbies exhibitions states: “Undoubtedly the most interesting rooms were those containing miscellaneous exhibits... to say nothing of the usual collections of postcards.”

Curator of QE Collections **Jenni Blackford** would love to hear from any alumni with postcards they sent home during School trips.

Wish you were here!

QE organises enriching visits throughout the year, ranging from short trips within easy striking distance of Barnet to major events in other countries and even continents. Here is a selection from this term.



**GONE CAMPING!** Twenty-four cadets headed to Exercise Cockney Fire, the CCF’s camp in Folkestone. Six Year 11 cadets with ambitions in engineering joined a separate Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers camp at Ashford.



**INSIDER INSIGHTS:** Native Berliner Corinna Illingworth, QE’s Library Services Assistant, gave her perspective to Year 11 and 12 boys on a three-day Languages trip. They impressed their teachers by opting to have guided tours in German, rather than English.



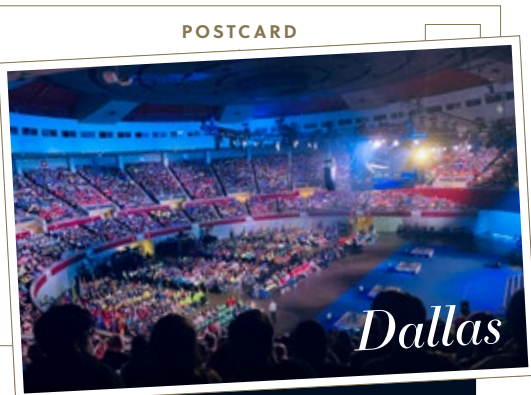
**FIELD TRIP:** Year 10 GCSE geographers spent a warm, sunny week in Porthcawl investigating coastal management strategies at Newton Beach and studying how the characteristics of the River Ogmore change with distance downstream.



**MATERIAL ADVANTAGE:** Year 10 GCSE Art students saw influential artist Dame Phyllida Barlow’s work in the gallery’s *Materials and Objects* collection. They have been using her *Bad Copies* series to develop their drawing and painting skills.



**RUGBY ON TOUR:** Expanded to include both Years 9 and 10, the 2022 Dutch tour saw 46 boys hone their skills and revel in the camaraderie. They played first at RC Eemland and then at the large Hilversum Festival, where the U14s came second.



Doing QE and Britain proud

With a total of eight teams and 48 boys travelling to Texas, QE had the joint-highest tally of teams for any school or organisation at the huge Vex Robotics World Championships in Dallas.

Year 10 VRC team Hybrid progressed well, at one point single-handedly carrying British hopes by reaching their divisional semi-finals, also securing a Judges Award in what Head of Technology Michael Noonan said was “a fantastic outcome”.

Attention switched to the four Year 9 and two Year 8 teams in the VIQC competition. Of the six, “an incredible four” qualified for the divisional finals. Although none then secured a coveted place in the ‘worlds’ finals, there were several accolades, including an Inspire Award and top-50 place in Skills for Team Gearsquad. “A trip up Dallas’s Reunion Tower with a handful of silverware and a chest-load of memories topped off a fantastic day,” said Mr Noonan.

**Abhinav Sandeep and Vyom Srivastava, of Year 8, won third place in their age group in the global Nature Recovery Robots virtual design challenge. Their Buginator robot is designed to help farmers combat swarms of pests while remaining safely inside.**





## Galactic Challenge

Fifty boys from Years 7–9 enjoyed this space industry simulation challenge at the School. Four 2017 leavers – Aadil Kara, Neelesh Ravichandran, Harikesan Baskaran and Suchira Peiris – broke off from busy careers and post-graduate studies to help out. Competing in three large 'companies' drawn from across the year groups, boys had just hours to design a space station in orbit around Mars 100 years in the future. Designs for the Galactic Challenge were assessed in three stages, with parents present for stage 3. Team Solaris Flight Systems won a nail-bitingly close competition after long trailing Astrodyne Delta.



## Picking up the pace in Enrichment Week

After working hard all year, boys enjoyed the opportunity to do something different during Enrichment Week – but no one was taking it easy!

The Houses battled hard at Sports Day – which Broughton seems to be making its own. Having won in 2019 and 2021 (2020's Sports Day was cancelled), they repeated their triumph, adding victory in the QE Mile for good measure – the first staff team defeat in some years in this relay. Staff did, however, retain their tug-of-war title.

Year 10's Enrichment Week included the performance of a French play and animation and drama workshops. The animation was based on *Dr Jekyll*

and *Mr Hyde*, which they will study next term, while for the drama, boys created tableaux from *Romeo and Juliet*, learned how to stage-fight, and used a Shakespearean insult generator to practise their Elizabethan English.

Years 7–9 raised £5,000 on sponsored walks – the money to be split between the Teach Sri Lanka charity and the School's Robert Dudley Studio project. Overcoming the heat, the 570 boys covered 10km, taking full advantage of QE's location on the edge of the city.

*On the Edge of the City* was also the theme for this year's TEDx conference. Seven boys gave talks – the videos are currently being prepared – while also enjoying a visit from Ho-Yin Ng, director at London's award-winning architecture studio, AL\_A.

## County champions!

The School's youngest cricketers covered themselves in glory by winning the Middlesex U12 County Cricket Cup and going unbeaten throughout the season. The Year 7 boys qualified for next summer's National Cricket cup, where they will compete against other county winners.

For more on this and the term's other sports stories, read our [Sports Bulletin](#).



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FOUNDED IN 1573

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