



FOUNDED IN 1893
QUEEN MARY'S
HIGH SCHOOL



EASTER 2019 NEWSLETTER

As ever this has been a very busy term, not least because our Year 11 and Year 13 students have been busily preparing for their all-important summer examinations. Our staff have put in place a range of opportunities for students to receive additional support, however, what cannot be forgotten is that it is up to the individual to get down to the work that needs to be done and nobody can do this for them.

Aside from our regular work in school a number of activities have taken place, many of which are detailed in this newsletter. One that has taken much of my time recently is our primary outreach programme arising from our successful bid for funding for a new building to accommodate the additional 150 students who will join Queen Mary's High School over the coming five years. Staff both here and at Queen Mary's Grammar School have put on a range of activities for some 150 Year 5 children with the aim of encouraging them to take the test for a place with us. I am particularly grateful for the innovation and enthusiasm of our staff whose creativity 'knows no bounds' given that we even had a visit from King Henry VIII himself! Our particular focus has been to promote social mobility for children local to our schools who might not have even considered a grammar school as an option. The next step is to put on familiarisation sessions for children who will take the test in September this year and to enable them to experience what doing the test will be like. I am also very grateful for the hard work of Mr Langton, Headmaster at Queen Mary's Grammar School, on this project and it is good that we are increasingly working together more closely on a range of things, not least of which is our sixth form provision.



You may also have noticed that we are having a greater focus on attendance as we seek to improve our already impressive figures. Whilst the work covered during an absence can be copied up the learning experience leading to it can never be replayed and is lost forever. Please do take note of the information we have sent out to you recently and ensure that your child is in school every day if she is well enough to be here.

As I write this message our musicians are busily rehearsing for the spring concert this evening at the Forest Arts Centre. At the end of a long term I relish the opportunity to witness the range of talents that our students have on display. Recently I enjoyed the moderation performance of Year 12 drama students and reflected on how good it is that the creative aspects of our curriculum have continued to flourish despite various pressures to focus in on the core curriculum.

A big thanks to all of our staff who have been so committed in ensuring that our students can achieve of their very best and who also provide such a rich and varied extra-curricular programme. We all deserve a restful and refreshing break in the coming two weeks and I wish everyone associated with our school a peaceful and joyful time with family and friends.

Best wishes

Aileen Britton



RS CONFERENCE

On the 26th of March Queen Mary's High School hosted an R.S conference with guest lecture speaker Dr Peter Vardy coming in to talk to us. Dr Peter Vardy is a bestselling author of 15 books and a compelling lecturer who has advised governments, the IBO and UNHRC on matters relating to Religious Studies and Philosophy. He is an acknowledged expert in the field, appearing on the BBC, ABC radio and writing in the press.

We were joined by other schools including,

- 1) The George Eliot School - 46 students and 4 teachers
- 2) Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School - 15 students and 1 teacher
- 3) High Clare School - 22 students and 2 teachers
- 4) Wash wood Heath Academy - 14 students and 2 teachers
- 5) The Dixie Grammar School - 21 students and 3 teachers
- 6) Kings Heath Boys' School - 10 students and 2 teachers.....

and Dr Vardy gave us a talk about the existence of God which included the design and cosmological argument, miracles and assessing the strength and weaknesses of these argument, Green tax and the environment which talked about our changing environment and how land, air and sea pollution affects animal habitats and brings about global warming and climate change, we discussed the different environmental views for and against protecting the environment, another subject we talked about was Germline editing and how it could affect the future of genetics as we know it and finally we discussed medical ethics more specifically the issues of euthanasia and abortion.

In between these topics we also viewed two exam technique videos from Mrs Charlotte Vardy getting new practice questions and learning to implement the new 'TRADEC' technique. which consists of coming up with a Thesis, supporting this with reasons, giving arguments for and against, evaluating these arguments and then coming to a justified conclusion.

At the end of the conference a heated debate was held on the topic of genetic editing, if it was ethical, whether it was beneficial to our society or would become a danger in the future as our genes are not something fully understood and if it were to enter the gene pool would become irreversible. Overall the day was immensely informative and enjoyable and when asked many students said they found the conference very valuable towards their R.S revision.

Vanessa Mark and Sara Varachhia

ANTI-BULLYING AMBASSADORS

Over the past couple of months, we have gathered a group of willing students ranging from year 7 to 12 to become QMHS' official Anti-bullying Ambassadors. It all started when we attended a day of training to gather skills to help us. We learnt everything from what forms bullying comes in, what bullying looks like and how we as a school can stop it, in our own unique way.

Since then we have had multiple meetings, and gathered some ideas for events around school. We have successfully created an official notice board with our pictures on it, so we can be easily recognised if you ever need us (we also all wear badges). We also held year assemblies to let everyone know of our presence. Our aim is to try and spread awareness around school about all forms of bullying, from physical to online, and do our bit to eradicate its existence.

Y13 Enrichment Lecture (Tyler Shores)

The session provided a critical look at social media and considered how the content that we read and watch online shapes how we think, feel, and act. He touched on a variety of topics to look at how online platforms influence our communication, information and what we might be able to do about it.

Tyler is a current PhD researcher at the University of Cambridge, and a part-time lecturer, specialising in online culture, social media, and digital distractions. More information about him and his research and teaching can be found on his website at www.tylershores.com.



LRC Events

Author Katherine Webber visits QM

American author Katherine Webber visited QMHS to promote her latest book *Only Love Can Break Your Heart*. Students from years 8 & 9 attended the event along with visiting pupils from local schools.

Katherine talked about her journey to author life, from studying Chinese literature in Hong Kong and living in California and Hawaii, to finally getting that all important book deal. She also talked about how being brave helped her write, and how she persisted with her dream even after receiving mountains of rejection letters.

Students met the author and were able to have books personally signed and dedicated. There was also a chance for our 6th form

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World Book Day

Students took part in a variety of book themed events to celebrate this year's World Book Day. Our annual Book and Film quiz saw teams from all years take part, Year 7 dressed up as book characters and students completed the mystery clues to solve our 'Murder in the Library'.

PRIMARY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

We have welcomed around 150 Year 5 children into our school this term from primary schools across the Walsall area as part of our work on improving social mobility. We aim to encourage more able children and their parents to consider a Grammar School education, and to get a flavour of what learning and life is like at Queen Mary's.

We have run four workshops in collaboration with Queen Mary's Grammar School, and all have been fantastically well attended by the children. They have arrived eager and excited to take part in a range of opportunities, our STEM session was building a bridge engineered out of spaghetti and newspaper, with the winning team managing to hold 1.2kg in weight on their bridge. The children learnt to read, speak and write in Mandarin Chinese, and met with Henry VIII in his court to present him with sonnets they had written themselves in authentic Tudor style.



MFL Trip to Seville, Spain

During our trip to Seville we visited many aspects of Seville's culture. We visited a flamenco show that gave us all an insight into how important this dance is to Spanish people. We learnt about the main roots of the dance and where they originated from. The dances were very passionate and presented a clear storyline which was an important part of the dance. The dresses were also very colourful and vibrant. We also visited a bull ring, this was very exciting as we got to see the stadium in person. We also learnt about the history of the bullfights in Seville and the significance of this well-known festival, though still difficult to comprehend the danger.



Spain was a lot more different to England than we had actually imagined, the weather included too. Walking our way around the town of Seville each day of our stay allowed us to view different aspects of the area: the people that lived there, their means of transport and even the buildings. Everything was much more colourful than what we know to be Walsall. Looking out of the window in our hotel room, we could see a range of colours. Some buildings were yellow, others white and a few even bright orange. When we made our way through the narrow streets to get to our daily Spanish lessons, we spotted the same people cleaning the outside of their cafés at least twice in the same day. Seville seemed a much friendlier place than it does here. That, being said, goes for pretty much the whole of Spain as well. From what we saw, it appeared people were more likely to approach a stranger by their proximity and the way they act around others. The people of Seville gave the impression that they spend more time doing things outside as countless bikes passed us when we were walking on the other half of the pavement.

Overall, Spain was an opportunity to explore cultures, sights and learn. One main thing was the Spanish people do not speak as quickly as those in our Spanish speaking. Going into a town like Seville, yes it's vibrant and picturesque but, you wouldn't understand the history behind it. A few weeks after our trip and learning about such festivals like La Tomatina and Las Castellers, Seville's own festival took place completely transforming its streets. Women in red costumes and men in top hats and lights dancing through the crowd, La Feria de Abril was the pinnacle of our experience in Spain.

Our Spanish lessons took place every day, a fifteen-minute walk around random streets in Seville will always remain superior to Birmingham. We learnt about festivals, Spanish history, cuisine and it was taught in such a way it was fun to participate and easy to understand...for the most part. Despite the fact, Spain is a polar opposite of Birmingham, a piece of Seville always remains with us and when Birmingham is tipping it down with rain, reminiscing will be one of our favourite pastimes.



SNOW PATROL 2019



This year over a 100 students and staff from QMHS and QMGS took the 27 hour epic journey to the Canadian Rockies. Here all were treated to amazing snow conditions and beautiful weather. Temperatures ranged from -10°C to -30°C which made it an even harder challenge than normal. The vast variety of terrain meant that with the excellent team of instructors that were assigned to our groups our student progressed better than ever. Many groups enjoyed their first taste of a north American back diamond run, other

runs. All of the students did themselves proud.

The Snow Patrol were able to take in plenty of shopping in the local village of Jasper and Banff on the way home. Coupled with th

a local ice hockey game. The highlight for many was our evening in the Maligne Canyon. Here the students explored the national park and were able to do some ice walking with their cleats firmly attached to their boots. A great experience for all.



The lift station says it all

SNOW PATROL 2019



Some are easily pleased... 7-Eleven is a must!

If you missed this year's trip then you will be one year older when you get the next chance to go! So why not get a place on the 2020 trip to the slope side accommodation of Hotel Esse 2000 on the slopes of Pila in the Italian valley of Aosta. The Trip runs from Saturday 15th February 2020 to Sunday 23rd February. We are offering Skiing or Snowboarding instruction, 30 hours, on a full board basis, hot lunches, for a fantastic price of £1100.

Letters are in S13 or see Mr Hinks for the Snow Patrol 2020 classroom code. You can see what our trips are like too by looking back over the last 10 years of our blog. This is a tradition that spans over 20 years here at Queen Mary's High School. (Blog = <http://snowsportsqm.blogspot.com/>)

A mini ice cave!



Season 2019 is now well under way. We have our current year 9 all involved with their expedition training while working on their sections before they go out on their training and practice expeditions in June. The year 11 students have been preparing for their practice expedition in the Berwyn's this Easter and our 54 strong silver award students mainly from year 10 are organising themselves to go out and complete their camp craft and navigation training in the Berwyn's this Easter. This training will allow the students to complete their silver award at the start of year 11 and hopefully as they turn 16 commence the gold award which can be completed in our 6th form by the time the students leave year 13.



Gold Award Presentation - Buckingham Palace (Year 13)

Bronze Award Presentation evening

Just over 12 months ago when our current year 10 commenced their Bronze DofE Award we met with parents and set the girls and parents a challenge of getting the 72 participants to complete the award in the 12 month period. We would then gather for an evening to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the group. Well we have now had our first BAP evening and I pleased to say the evening was very enjoyable. It was great to see most of the 60 successful competitors at the event.

The evening comprised of welcome food and drinks with a slide show of pictures from previous expeditions and training. This was followed by a presentation given by one of our gold teams about DofE and their aim of their recent expedition.

This was a great insight for the students because over 50 of our year 10 girls are going onto the Silver Award. The gold team were able to give a firsthand point of view of DofE at the higher levels. They also did a lovely presentation about the geology of the Yorkshire Dales. As a group we then approved the teams Gold expedition section in real time in eDofE.



If you are in year 8 then we will launch the bronze award with you in the summer term. DofE is an adventure and can be life changing. The more you put into it the more you will get out.

Follow the journey of QMHS DofE on our blog at <https://qmdofe.blogspot.com/> or follow us on twitter @QHMSDofE

Year 13 Enrichment Crafternoon Around the World

On Friday 8th February a group of year 13s organised an event for a Hawthorns Care home to visit the school to take part in an event which had been planned and organised by the students. The Year 13s involved were very engaged from the beginning of the planning process and wanted to make sure that there were activities taking place for the residents to take part in rather than just watching a performance. The students discussed the idea about travel and bringing different activities from around the world into Richardson Hall. The event was a resounding success for both the residents of Hawthorns care homes but also the girls that took part who found the experience really humbling to learn from the residents one of which attended school here over 60 years ago. The residents were extremely grateful and look forward to future projects with the school.



LAMDA

During the Christmas term the students were given the chance to take part in the LAMDA enrichment scheme which is an externally assessed Drama exam. Two groups were entered into the exam; one group choosing to devise a performance based on Madelaine McCans disappearance, whilst the other group performed an adaptation of a scripted piece called 'DNA' by Dennis Kelly. This all culminated on Saturday 15th and Monday 17th December, on which the students performed their pieces in front of an examiner at Millennium Point in Birmingham. Despite their nerves, all students taking part found a great sense of achievement and a deep pride in the work they had created.

In February 2019 we found out the results of the exam with one group receiving a high merit and the other receiving full marks, we have been incredibly proud of the work they have put into the exams and we are pleased that the results reflect the student's hard work. This LAMDA qualification will now be used as part of their UCAS application and adds many more skills to the students.

Well done to all those students who took part.

Miss L Houlder
Drama teacher

DRAMA DEPARTMENT

We cannot believe that Easter is upon us.....where did that time go! What a busy term the Drama department has had since Christmas. Our main focus has been getting both our A Level and GCSE performance ready for their practical examinations.

Our A Level students have been working hard on the re-telling of the story of Bluebeard; a particularly gruesome man who has a very mysterious cupboard and numerous 'missing' wives. They creatively adapted this story using one of our favourite company's Kneehigh Theatre as inspiration. The girls had seen and researched in to the company's methodologies and then bought their story to life applying their new knowledge and understanding; ridiculous songs, exciting dancing, thoughtful puppets and a slow motion boxing match made this tale a right hoot for their audience who joined them for their moderation on Monday 8th April.

After our chocolate filled holiday it is time to get straight back to it with our Year 11 practical examination happening on Wednesday 1st May. Students have been working their socks off to learn lines, create convincing characters and gripping ensemble moments in order to bring their scripts to life. We are very proud of the work they have done and wish them all the very best on their big day (although we know they will all absolutely smash it!!) It has been an absolute pleasure to fill the very big boots of Miss Timmins and work with all the girls in the Year 11 cohort this year. They are such hard workers and we wish them all the very best with all of their exams. I am really going to miss you all.

The Year 10's have been studying Blood Brother's in readiness for their upcoming mocks and will be performing sections of the script during exam week as well as sitting their mock written exam. Again the department wish them well with their mocks and look forward to Devising once the exams are over.

We are very excited to be going to see 'As You Like It' at The RSC next term. Miss Houlder is heading the trip which is taking our current Year 10's and perspective Year 9 GCSEers to Stratford in the middle of May. It is an exciting opportunity to not only go and see a great show but actually experience the incredible theatre at the RSC.

Watch this space for an exciting mini performance at the end of the summer term from the Year 7 and 8 drama club members. They have been working very hard on small extracts from 'Lord of the Flies' and will be performing these to audience members during the summer term. Well done Drama club!!

Have a fabulous and chocolate filled Easter holiday,
Stay safe and see you all soon
Mrs Rochfort and Miss Houlder: Team Drama



SCIENCE NEWS

It has been a very busy term in Science!

We started the term with our Key stage three STEM club entering the BP Ultimate Challenge. Teams of four students had to design and build a prototype that would solve an everyday problem. Not content with entering one team, we signed up three groups who worked hard with our year ten STEM ambassadors each week, to produce their entries. Our designs were to track your children in a play area (by Phoebe Samuel-Sanyanga, Shenai Sanghera and Ahania Ashlin), a self-cleaning make up brush (by Reemamol Reji, Amanpreet Shoker and Aleena Ahmed) and a key caddy for your house and car keys (by Isabella Mae Fuentebella, Abbie Fuller & Maliyka Liaqat). Though we didn't get through to the national semi-finals, we were very proud to have entered our first teams into this prestigious challenge and intend to enter again next year.

Tuesday night became our sixth former's Chemistry night when they visited the West Midlands' Chemistry Teachers Centres' lectures which were held at the University of Birmingham. Topics included The Victorian Pharmacy and Nano chemistry and were both engaging and interesting, with visiting professors from universities near and far.

In February a group of six year eight students visited Bluecoat School to compete in this years' IET Faraday challenge. The team had to design and make an integrated circuit to complete a function on the James Webb Space telescope. Reemamol Reji, Aleena Ahmed, Shehrbano Shah, Isabella Fuentebella, Abbie Fuller and Albia Ahraham represented QMHS and showed great resourcefulness and determination.

Biology A-level students entered the Royal Society of Biology Olympiad, a national competition designed to stretch the most able year twelve students. All students performed well, with Amber Duffy achieving Silver and Fiona D'Silva and Sophie Hawley attaining Highly Commended. Well done also to Harriet Mills and Millie Osbourne for taking part.

The EES project is now in full swing, where a team of Year 12 engineers (Emily Dawkins, Fiona D'Silva, Olivia Griffiths and Afifa Quadri and Anoushka Odedra) , led by Mrs Glazweska, are finalising their project on behalf of Alstom to be presented next term. The project means working with Engineers and the Alstom team to design an improved pump for Virgin trains.

During an evening in March four brave key stage four pupils entered a Chemistry competition against other schools from as far away as Coventry and Worcester. The rounds included famous scientists, chemical formulae and calculations and were very demanding! As this was the first year we have entered, we were not sure what to expect but the team did us proud and are determined to do better next year. Huge well done to Pavan Benning, Lamisah Begum, Dhiaa Alam and Amar Chana for showing reasoning and resilience.

Last week it was the turn of key stage three pupils Kyra Priddy, Reemamol Reji, Agnes Enonchong and Shreya Alexander, to test their scientific prowess. The team visited the new laboratories at the University of Birmingham to complete two practical activities in the Salter's Chemistry Festival. The first challenge involved identifying some unknown solids and liquids using basic equipment and chemicals and the second was the iodine clock reaction (which was very tricky as they had never seen the reaction before). The day finished with a treat where students watched a Chemical Magic demonstration of weird and wonderful Chemistry.



FLORIDA TRIP

The Florida trip took place on the 14th February till 20th February and it was undeniably a trip of a lifetime. Many memories and friendships were created and it will be a trip that we will all remember and treasure. From meeting an actual astronaut to screaming our heads off at Universal Studios, this trip had it all!

It was an early start on the Thursday morning as we headed off to Manchester Airport full of excitement and anticipation, it was a long 9 hour flight, however we finally landed in Florida. Our first night was spent eating at Planet Hollywood and walking around Disney Springs. The second day was spent at Universal Studios Theme Park, the day consisted of butter beers from Harry Potter world and losing our voices from the Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit. We ended the day by having a lovely dinner at the one and only Hard Rock Cafe. Half asleep, we made our way to Nasa Space Centre on Saturday morning, the day was filled with educational as well as fun activities including meeting an astronaut and listening to the stories he had to share with us. A trip to the beach and Orlando Premium Outlets followed - playing games on the sand and shopping till we dropped! Sunday was the day we had all been waiting for, a trip to Hollywood Studios and Magical Kingdom, where our young, childhood dreams came true! Hollywood Studios kept our adrenaline pumping as we hopped off and onto rides as quick as possible to see how many we could manage to go on.

Ultimately, the highlight of my trip was sauntering into Disney's Magical Kingdom with my eyes wide and my mouth open in amazement at seeing the castle right before me. You're definitely never too young for Disney! After many pictures posing in front of the castle, we watched all our favourite Disney characters in the famous Disney parade. With a smile on all our faces, we headed back to the hotel wearing our Minnie Mouse ears.

During our last full day we rode the Everglades Airboats to see alligators! We also spent the day at the Florida Mall buying last minute presents for our family members back home. Lastly, we took part in an indoor skydiving experience, learning about the physics behind it and then actually experiencing it for ourselves. Although it was scary at first it was very enjoyable and worth it. Our very last day had arrived sooner than we thought and what better way to spend our last day than at the Universal Studios! Getting to go on all the rides we love as well as the ones we hadn't tried yet. At the end of the day we made our way to Orlando Airport taking home all the memories we had made with us.

A very big and special thank you to Miss Butlin, Mrs Smith, Mr Sepede and Mr Matley (from the boys school) for organising this trip and making it possible for us to have this incredible experience. I will definitely always remember the memories and the friends I made on this trip and I am very thankful to have been able to do that.

Halena Lad 10E



HEAD GIRL ELECTIONS

This half term has seen the whole school take part in the election of the new Head Girl and her Deputies. From a very strong field of worthy candidates, Gabby Butler was, last week elected as the Head Girl for the 2019-2020 academic year, with Katie Worrall and Afiya Hameed voted in as Deputy Head Girls.

The application process started back at the beginning of this half term, with eleven applicants being selected for interview. Six successful candidates were then invited to present to the whole school and staff, outlining the attributes they consider important for a role on the Head Girl Team and their vision for the next academic year. All six candidates were both professional and sincere in their speeches, and all showed excellent character throughout the entire experience.

I am really looking forward to working with Gabby, Katie and Afiya in the coming months; their first job will be to build a wider team of academic and non-academic prefects with whom they will work to help both the Sixth Form and the wider school flourish.



They will be supported in their new roles by our current Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl, Aimee and Heather until our Year 13 students leave us in May to embark upon their A-Level exams, and I would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to both Aimee and Heather for being such a wonderful team over the past year.

