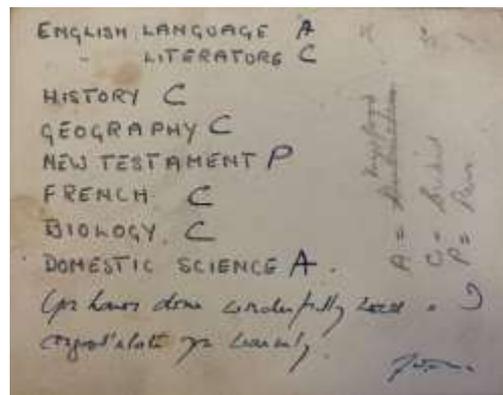




Message from Dr Bruton

As I approach what will be my last Christmas as Head Teacher of Queen Mary's High School I have been reflecting on the proud history of our school and looking through some of the archive material that is stored in my office. In my end of term assembly message to students I referred to the Jubilee Thanksgiving Service which was held on June 9th 1944 in Walsall Parish Church. This service celebrated fifty years of Queen Mary's High School providing education for girls, provision which had certainly been ground breaking at the time. The service booklet had been donated to the school by an old girl who had also included a report card pictured here:



How methods of reporting and the curriculum have changed over the years!

There was also a copy of the speech delivered by Sir George Schuster MP on the occasion of the school's Speech Day on 24th March 1944. His words are certainly pertinent for us today but are particularly poignant given that they were written during the 2nd World War:

'We think a great deal nowadays about the rights of all to certain securities and happiness, and we also believe in this country in freedom for the individual. That is what we are fighting for. But freedom is impossible and there can be no real happiness for anybody unless each is prepared to play his part as a member of our community....How can you do that?...The first essential is to be good at your job – whatever that may be. The second is to take an interest in your fellows. And the third is to take an interest in the society in which you live and take the trouble to find out how it is run. Above all you must be inspired by a spirit of good fellowship – love of your fellow human beings.'

Recent assemblies in school have encapsulated the sentiment behind Sir George's words in focussing on being kind to one another. This is surely demonstrated through taking an interest in others and making an effort to get along well with those around us.

Returning to the Jubilee Service, I wanted to share with you a prayer 'for all women of this land' which formed a part of the service and which, I hope, will focus our thoughts over the coming year:

'Help all the women of this land; give us a deeper realisation of our sisterhood, that we may be enabled to bear one another's burdens, to share our gladness and our gifts with others, and to make our full contribution as women of the whole family of God. Help us to stand for whatsoever things are true, reverent, just, pure, lovely and gracious; for the righting of wrongs, the defence of the weak, and for the love that never faileth.'

Many thanks to all in our school community for your ongoing support. I wish everyone a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Best wishes

DR ALISON BRUTON
Head Teacher

CAREERS CORNER

Careers interviews for year 11 and 12 took place this term. All students received personal guidance from our independent careers advisor where they discussed next steps and options available to them, whether that be sixth form, apprenticeships or university.

Students who are still unsure about their next steps can log into their Unifrog account and explore the extensive subjects and careers libraries. The opportunities section provides information on universities and apprenticeships. Students can find out more information on careers through the school careers portal <https://bit.ly/qmhs-careers>

Year 9 will have their careers interviews in January where they will be able to discuss their ideas and intentions. They will be made aware of what other options are available to them. Students should prepare for their interviews by making use of the resources already mentioned.

Students in year 12 should complete some meaningful work experience before they start year 13 and record this on Unifrog. Due to ongoing uncertainty around COVID, virtual work experience placements are still acceptable this year. Information on how to find and apply for work experience can be found on the student portal. Students must only apply for work experience that does not interrupt any of their studies. Year 12 students will be given more information on this shortly.

Parents and carers can view our careers programme and other information by visiting the parent portal from the school website or going directly to <https://bit.ly/qmhs-parents-careers>

Mr W Vaughan (Careers Leader)

Mental Health Ambassadors

I am pleased to share with you that we now have a team of 22 sixth form mental health ambassadors. They have received training via the Mental Health Foundation Peer Education Project (PEP). They will be running projects to keep mental health awareness and education high on the agenda at QMHS. They will also be delivering sessions to Year 7 in the new year in order to equip them with any future mental health challenges they may encounter.



South Staffordshire Netball Champions

On the 21st November 2021, the U19's Netball team competed at the South Staffordshire County Schools Tournament, held at George Salter Academy.

After a hard couple of years with Covid-19, it was great to see the team back on court and the disruption to our training did not show as our girls played high quality netball, showing determination and great teamwork against some tough opponents.

The tournament kicked off with us drawing against Wolverhampton Grammar, however this did not discourage us and we continued to win the remainder of our matches, even beating our long-time rivals, Streetly Academy. This resulted in a tie for first place with Wolverhampton Grammar. However, the U19's managed to secure the win after having the highest goal average, making us South Staffordshire's U19 County champions and hence qualifiers for the Regional tournament.

For many of the players in the team this will be their third time qualifying for Regionals, after qualifying as runners-up at U14's and winners at U16's, this is a great achievement. The Regional competition will be held at Phoenix Collegiate, at the end of January, where we will come face to face with the best teams in the West Midlands.

I hope you can join me in wishing the team good luck and success in their upcoming tournament.

Neave, U19 Netball Captain

Attendance

Congratulations to the 225 students who have achieved 100% attendance this term. This is an outstanding achievement and certificates have been awarded to these students.

Congratulations also to 7Br who were the form group with the highest overall attendance percentage with 98.8%. They have been awarded a certificate and box of chocolates to share

MedSoc had a guest seminar from Dr Mo, who talked to students about life as a GP.

We had a seminar from the co-founder of i-Medics Dr Mo this was especially helpful and compelling as Dr Mo commits himself to aiding aspiring medical students from all over the UK to get a medical school offer. The webinar was done very well, Dr Mo was generous with his time and answered multiple questions at the end. A lot of us gained insight we've rarely considered about becoming a general practitioner. MedSoc has supported me in my early stages of applying to medicine. When it comes to the things I should be doing now, as a year 12 student, the MedSoc team have made sure to provide many useful tips which I will use over the next 12 months to build my application. The year 13s have done a phenomenal job so far!

Jess Malhi Y12

After another successful year of events with the Diana Award ambassadors we looked to plan our Anti-bullying week.

This year, Princess Diana was the focus, with our year 11 ambassadors presenting a very insightful assembly on the history of Princess Diana and her inspirational and impactful moments/actions. Many other activities and games were sent through to forms throughout the week focusing on Princess Diana and her impact - these consisted of quizzes made by our year 9 ambassadors and monopoly games created by our year 12 ambassadors - which not only continued to focus and educate on Princess Diana and bullying but also brought many of those within forms closer together and created more a friendly atmosphere given everyone was able to get involved within these activities.

During anti bullying week there were also drop in sessions with an ambassador present at break time to be accessed to talk if anyone wanted any guidance or support, this is also something that is going to be introduced as a mentoring programme that is going to happen consistently throughout the year allowing the ambassadors to be more visible throughout the school day.

There was also the introduction of kindness by post which was launched by Abbie Andrews in Year 13 this incorporated everyone writing an anonymous kind message which was posted in our kindness postbox which will be shared out randomly, ensuring that everyone is left with a kind message - spreading kindness and positivity and once again developing a more friendly atmosphere throughout the school.

On the last day of anti-bullying week we had a successful bright clothing non uniform and samosa sale to which we managed to raise £367 for Black Country's Women Aid and £101.20 for Diana Award/ our art project.

Once again another extraordinary anti-bullying week -and as a team we are now all planning ahead to prepare exciting projects for the future.

As our focus has been Princess Diana I feel it is important we end with a quote from her that we follow.

'Everyone needs to be valued. Everyone has the potential to give something back.'

Have a great Christmas

The Anti-bullying ambassadors



Anti-bullying week



Drama Department 2021

It has been a great term for our Drama department, a particular highlight has been that we have been able to work with our KS3 performers and KS5 directors on a live Junior show performance, something that we could only do digitally last year. Most of our newsletter has been written by two of our wonderful A-Level students Poppy and Amelia and we thank them for their work on this.

Junior show written by Poppy Kimitris and Amelia Freeman

For Christmas 2021, KS3 returned to the stage for our annual junior show performance at QM. The students were assigned fairy tales and worked within small groups to create captivating performances, each adding their own unique spin on the classics and guiding the audience through the stories of *Bluebeard*, *Snow White*, *Ashputtel*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Rumpelstiltskin*. The cast worked closely with a team of sixth form directors to develop their pieces, incorporating elements of physical theatre, puppetry and ensemble work to bring these fairy tales to life. The challenge of generating new material to enhance the original script certainly pushed both the cast members and directors to work extremely hard throughout the rehearsal process, but of course every group approached the challenge head on, resulting in several fantastic performances which kept the audience thoroughly entertained and successfully showcased the talent of QM students. Whilst Covid-19 has once again prevented a performance to a live audience for the time being, the cast could still enjoy performing to their KS3 peers, providing an element of excitement for both the performers and the audience whilst ending the term with a bit of fun. We look forward to hopefully welcoming a live audience in February 2022.

GCSE update

It was a very rewarding evening on Wednesday 8th December as our 22 GCSE students performed their completed exam pieces. The pupils have been working on these devised projects for the past term and have really worked hard to stay creative and imaginative whilst juggling periods of self-isolation and incomplete group numbers. We had such an incredible evening last week and the students have done themselves so proud; a complete mixture of styles and genres including a very funny, Brechtian performance exploring hierarchy within the workplace, a wonderful characterised performance exploring family trauma and the impacts this can have on adult life, strong ensemble pieces exploring sexuality, inside the mind of a killer, Britney Spears and Lady Diana; all thought-provoking and highly engaging. We wish them all luck for their upcoming mocks.

A-level performance update written by Poppy Kimitris and Amelia Freeman

It has been an eventful year for our A-Level drama cohort, filled with lots of uncertainty but also a lot of fun as always. In the summer of 2021, we were finally able to perform our devised pieces to a live audience after its original cancellation due to the national lockdown. We devised two performances, both of which were inspired by Kneehigh Theatre Company, aiming to encapsulate their playful spirit whilst taking the audience on an emotional rollercoaster. We were tasked with re-telling a fairy tale or story from a different perspective, incorporating techniques such as puppetry, multi-rolling and audience interaction to create a light-hearted, comedic performance for everyone to enjoy.

We ended the practical component of the A-level course with our scripted performances on Monday 13th December, working hard right through to the very end! At the beginning of the scripted process we explored potential inspirational practitioners through a series of workshops, developing our knowledge of many areas of theatre, ranging from Verbatim to Naturalism and a little Expressionism too! Both scripted groups finally settled on Frantic Assembly as the practitioner to inspire our scripted pieces, having felt moved and excited by the techniques we explored in class and the Frantic performances that we had the opportunity to watch (including *Things and I Know to be True* and *Lovesong*). One scripted performance included excerpts from the play *All the Little Lights* and told the story of two girls who had 'slipped through the cracks' in a really heartbreaking and emotive way. The other performers explored scenes from the more abstract and episodic play *Chaos* and, after a careful selection of certain standalone scenes, decided to follow the story of four young teenagers, their individual struggles and their interactions with each other - portrayed in a typical Frantic style. Both pieces were able to be performed to a live audience (social distancing measures adhered to) and this was a really fun way to wrap up the practical side of the course.

LAMDA

This year we have been able to introduce extracurricular drama lessons in the form of LAMDA. **LAMDA** is a Speech and Communications Board overseen by OFQUAL that offers exams resulting in qualifications in both Speech and Drama that are recognised around the world with the later grades being weighted with UCAS points. Students are working individually in pairs or small groups on either Acting, Public Speaking or Musical Theatre. The pupils have been working really hard and we hope to take an exam in the new year. Students have recognised that their confidence is growing and they are enjoying developing their communication skills which will help them in the future. All spots have now been filled however this will be opened up to all pupils in September 2022.

So, all that is left is to wish all students and their families a very happy Christmas, we are so proud of all the work our students have done this year and we look forward to a great 2022.

Take care and enjoy the holidays,
Team Drama,
Miss Lippiatt and Miss Houlder

Year 9 Trip to the Imperial War Museum, North

Year 9 History students were fortunate enough to visit the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester in late November. There, our students were able to further enrich their understanding of 20th century conflict, with a particular focus on the First World War. They explored the artefacts and exhibits in the museum, engaged with veterans and attended a workshop centred around the Pals Battalions. This visit will certainly support our students in the classroom as they begin studying experiences of soldiers on the Western Front during the First World War.



Year 13 and Lessons from Auschwitz

Each year, students from Queen Mary's High School embark on the Lessons from Auschwitz project to further their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. Normally, our students would visit Auschwitz in person but this year a select group of Year 13 students (James Koprivica-Adams, Elizabeth Guest, Aquil Rodrigues and Priya Badhan) took part virtually. They experienced a series of workshops and lectures designed keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and were commended for their thoughtful and mature contributions. We look forward to hearing more about their experiences when they report back as part of the 'Next Steps' project.

Music Department News

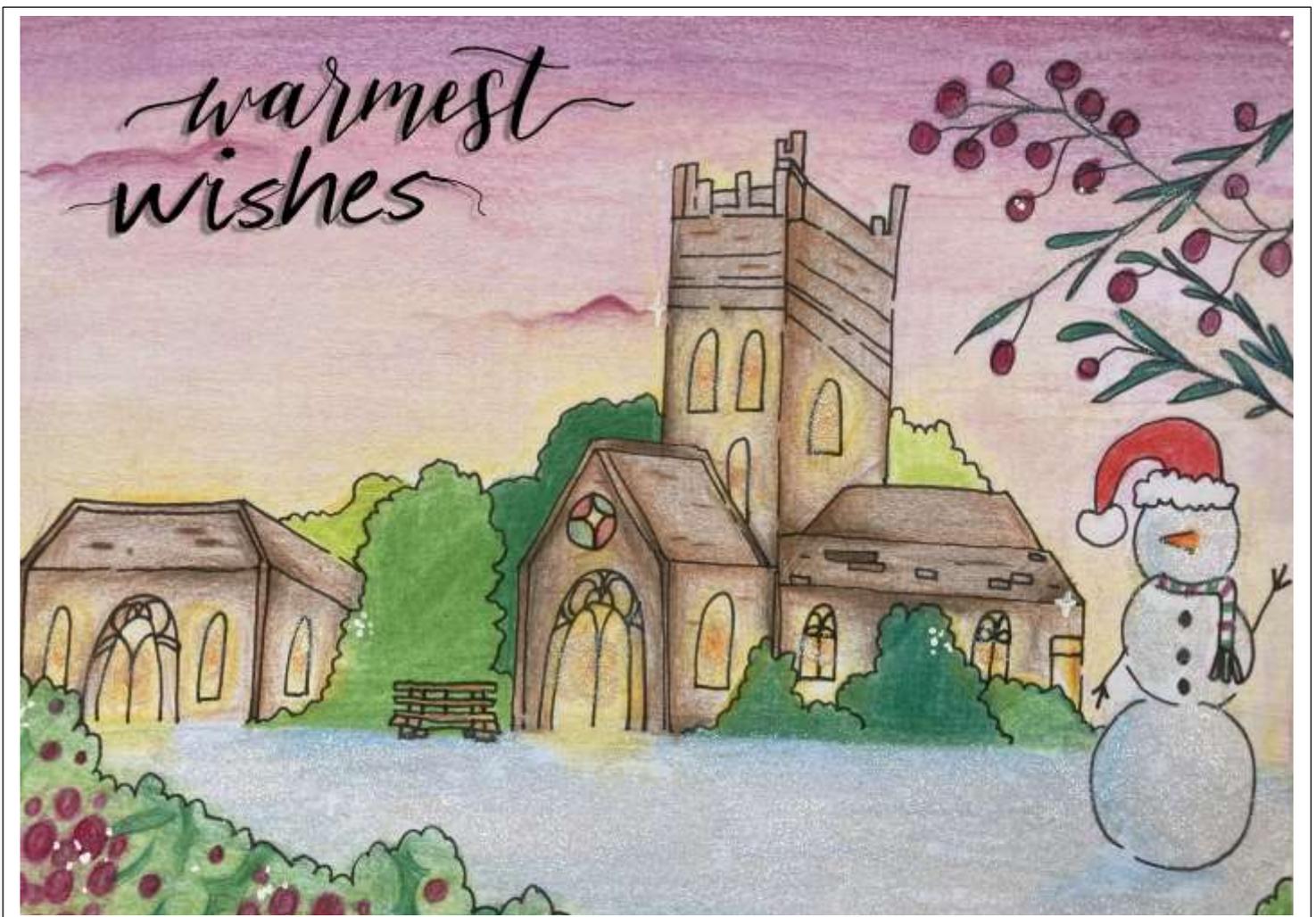


New Instrumental Lessons:

In January we will be starting music lessons for those who would like to take up the challenge of a new instrument. Please complete the application form that has been sent out to all students and return it either by email to myself during the holiday st-bishop-j@qmhs.org.uk or in person on the first day back.

It has been such a pleasure to see our students taking part in the recordings for the Christmas carol service and our virtual concert this year. Wind Band, Strings, Choir, Orchestra and Jazz band have all played a part in these recordings and have made us very proud of their achievements. Year 7 have also performed at the Christmas Fayre, so a huge well done to them too.

Merry Christmas from all of the Music Department



Christmas Card Competition

As usual this competition was very popular, with the first prize being the prestige of designing the official school Christmas card which is sent out to over a hundred people who are or have been associated with the school.

This year the winner of the competition is Aliza Latif in Year 10. Her design is eye-catching and innovative. Well done Aliza!

Happy Christmas!