

Q

NEWS

QEGS
BLACKBURN

No. 41 Lent 2013

Foreword

I am pleased to be able to introduce this term's Q-news which, as always, contains a useful snapshot of the many activities that took place here at Queen Elizabeth's in the Michaelmas Term.

It is a term I shall never forget as, in addition to the usual busy round of events, achievements and interesting new acquaintances, it was inevitably characterised for me, my deputies and the Bursar by a huge amount of additional work as we put together what in the end looks to be a really strong bid to become a Free School with effect from September 2014.

The relief when the final document, running to about 130 pages, went off to the Department for Education on 3rd January was immense. Now it is a question of waiting to be called for interview – a strange but interesting process and, now it is over, I can say that it was useful to find ourselves sharply focusing on what we do and why and what we wish to achieve in the future. It would be foolish to imply we do not do those things anyway, but to do so with the additional energy and discipline that the application called for was definitely productive and stimulating.

I am delighted to record here that we were able to welcome no fewer than thirty-seven new pupils to the school this January.

This work going on in the background did not affect the running of the school though, so I am glad to say we were able to continue supporting the sporting, cultural and other achievements of our pupils which, as usual, were many and varied as you will be able to read in the pages that follow. Whether it was pupils making us Blackburn with Darwen junior swimming champions for the twenty-fourth year in succession, or hearing of the tremendous victory of our modern languages

debaters who defeated other top-notch local schools, including Manchester Grammar and King's, Chester; or our footballers beating Bolton, or our netballers conquering Westholme despite the fact they have many more girls than us, we continue to punch well above our weight in all sorts of areas.

If that all sounds a little pugnacious, it is not meant to be: there were achievements that were every bit as impressive on the stage (Hamlet was absolutely outstanding, and the Junior School production was also exceptionally good). In the Cathedral on the last day of term, we conducted an act of worship that was of remarkable quality, thanks to excellent readers and wonderful singing from the Choir. The Michaelmas Concert revealed some extraordinarily gifted musicians, whether soloists, in groups or in the Choir, all of which made quite clear that the cultural heart of the school is in very good shape.

On the academic side, we have just heard that Sam Exton has been offered a place to study Chemistry at Corpus Christi College Oxford. An excellent achievement.

Let me take this opportunity to wish all of the School community, including Old Blackburnians, a very happy New Year and I hope I shall meet many of you in the weeks and months to come.

**Simon Corns,
Headmaster**



A Fitting End

The Music department has been busy bringing the festive spirit to shoppers around the North West, having been performing in Liverpool One, Boundary Mill and Blackburn Market.

For the first time in recent history the traditional school end of Michaelmas Term Carol Service, held in Blackburn Cathedral, took place on the last day of term. The congregation of pupils parents and staff played their part in the service of lessons and carols, singing with gusto and listening intently to the readings, and the carols performed by the choir.

It was, indeed, a fitting way to end the term and for many signaled the start of the festive break.

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Senior Football Tour Summer 2012

Base camp for the Senior Football Tour this summer was the National Sports Institute in Papenda, which is around 8 km from Arnhem, Netherland.



The Hotel had superb facilities and the squad was able to train on the adjacent pitch to Vitesse Arnhem, who play in the Dutch First Division.

It proved to be a steep learning curve but the management team were pleased with the players on a successful and enjoyable start to the season.

Football

Muhammed Azam has been offered a professional contract with Burnley Football Club.

Since he joined the school in 2008 he has played in the school team as a versatile striker and central midfielder player, but in recent years has improved his performance resulting in Burnley FC making this offer.



1st Team coach Mr Mike Hindle commented, **“We are very pleased with the way Muhammed has progressed and he thoroughly deserves this contract. He is a talented footballer who demonstrates a real appetite for the game and we wish him every success in the future.”**

Prize Giving

Using the Olympic theme as a starting point, the Headmaster’s address to parents and pupils at the annual Prize Giving award ceremony pointed out that the qualities of determination, ambition, self-discipline and the ability to drive oneself further, are the ones that ultimately make a difference, as they had done for the Olympians.

The Headmaster took the opportunity to give a summary of the academic progress of the pupils but also pointed out the differences that make independent education so valuable. Referring to the recent Olympic Games, where 7% of all medals were awarded to former independent school pupils, he said, **“What do I mean by ethos? I mean, and I received an angry letter from a union representative last time I dared suggest this blindingly obvious point, teachers understanding that education is a lot more than going into lessons and marking and hoping for good results. Teaching is, to use an old-fashioned concept, a vocation: it involves going the extra mile, giving extra attention to individuals, giving up Saturday mornings for team games, and coaching sessions during the week; it means taking pupils on trips, both in this country and where possible abroad; it means instilling a sense of purpose and good discipline, by providing excellent role models.”**

He continued, **“No successful sportsman ever achieved anything by doing what everyone else does; if you want to distinguish yourself you have to do more. It is the lonely individual who is cycling in the snow; running in the soaking rain, jumping in floodlights when everyone else has gone home, who has a chance of making the grade. There is no guarantee even for them but they are the ones who might go on to do something special; the others won’t. Surely this is true in all walks of life, not just in sport. Those qualities of determination, ambition,**

and inspiration by outstanding role models, self-discipline and the ability to drive oneself further are the ones that ultimately make a difference. They just happen to be the same qualities that are espoused without question by teachers, pupils and parents at this school and other independent schools. That is why, as OECD research has shown, they are the most successful schools in the world.”

Lord Adonis when he was working on the academies programme wondered if the DNA of independent education could be captured and spread to other schools. Whether this happens through academies, free schools, or any other sort of school, freed from bureaucracy and allowed to explore alternative ways of doing things, then it certainly has my blessing. How could it not? This is, of course, what independence is all about.



Mr Simon Cole presents a prize to William Fielding

The Guest Speaker Mr Simon Cole reminisced about his time at QEGS and how the support that the school gave to the creative arts had helped him in later life, in his career in media. He also commented on how important the care for the individual that the school showed was something that he tried to continue in his life.



European Day

As an island nation we are sometimes accused of being insular and reluctant to see beyond our own shores. Many might regard themselves as English first, then British and then European. Whatever the order, there is no doubt that having a good understanding of Europe and European traditions is very important in, thanks to modern technology, our ever shrinking world.

With that in mind the Modern Languages Department held a European Day to give Year 8 pupils a taste of what Europe is all about. The day started with a continental breakfast, which certainly went down well, followed by a talk on the make-up of the European Union and how it came into being. It was then time for a European Team quiz before heading outdoors to try handball and boules. The day culminated with a ‘Design a European T-shirt’ competition which saw pupils bringing their ideas together to make an eye-catching design.

Head of Modern Languages Mr Andy Rose commented, **“The idea behind the day is to help the pupils understand that Europe has a large part to play in our lives and the more we can understand about it, the more we can appreciate it for what it is.”**

Designer Opens New Art Department



INTERNATIONAL fashion designer **Wayne Hemingway** returned to his **East Lancashire** roots and formally opened the new school **Art department**.

The arthouse, the latest addition to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, was opened by the Red or Dead label co-founder and former pupil at a special ceremony. The studio classrooms, which are located in West Park Road, also include a digital studio on the ground floor as well as a light and airy flexible space for exhibitions and teaching on the first floor.

Pupils had the opportunity to talk about their work with Wayne, who opened the studios with a speech about the need for more support in the creative arts. To mark the occasion, he also set the pupils a challenge to choose something that was important about life in their home town and to try and improve it.

Headmaster Simon Corns said that Wayne's message was inspiring to the current generation and reminded them of the variety of doors that could open with good creative arts qualifications. He said: **"We take art seriously at Queen Elizabeth's as the investment in this vibrant department shows."**

Wayne set up Red or Dead with his wife Gerardine in 1983 and his first collection was inspired by Russian peasant clothing.

Previous students from QEGS have gone on to further their art studies at major institutions including The Glasgow School of Art, Goldsmiths College and the Slade School of Art. To support those wishing to focus on Art, the school has also launched new scholarships for students entering at age 11 and 16.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cricket

It has been a hectic time for Alex Davies since he left the Sixth Form. After returning from the U19 Cricket World Cup in Australia he has been playing for Lancashire and has been rewarded for his efforts with the offer of a full time contract. This makes Alex the sixth pupil from QEGS to join the professional ranks, following in the footsteps of Guy Shuttleworth (Lancs), Michael Brown (Surrey), David Brown (Glos), Kevin Hayes (Lancs), and Duncan Catterall (Worcester).



Swimming

QEGS hosted the 100th Blackburn with Darwen annual gala again this year. To commemorate the special occasion, Irene Ingham and Anne Haworth, (Old Blackburnian) parents and teachers who have contributed much to school swimming over the years, presented the trophies. Paralympics Team GB Swimming Director, John Atkinson (current parent) was also in attendance to see the QEGS team perform. **QEGS won the Champion School title for the 24th Year in succession and are winners of the 'Yerburgh Cup'. A terrific team achievement!**

Netball

Our U16 netball team were recently crowned champions of the Blackburn with Darwen schools netball league, after remaining unbeaten in all of their matches.



Coach Miss Sam McCreadie was suitably impressed, **"This has been the culmination of a great term of netball. The girls have gelled really well as team and that has shown in their performances."**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Enrichment programme

The Imperial War Museum North was the destination for our Gifted and Talented pupils as part of their enrichment programme recently.



The group, which includes pupils from Year 8 to Year 10, spent the day looking mainly at WWI and WWII exhibitions, and poignantly, holocaust victim possessions.



Languages

QEGS competed in the 6th Annual Northern Schools Modern Foreign Language Debating Competition at Cheadle Hulme. Jonathan Khan and William Huddleston emerged the winners of the Spanish debating category, a tough challenge for all competitors.



Service of Remembrance

The pupils gathered in the Main Hall for the Traditional Service of Remembrance and were joined by war veteran Mr Donald Barnes, a 92-year-old Old Blackburnian who was a RAF wireless operator during WWII. The Head Boy, Sam Westwood, then led the school to the War Memorial in Big School where he laid a wreath. The school then filed past in silence, remembering the former pupils who died for their country.

On Topper the world



Thirteen-year old sailor James Grummett has been selected for the Topper National Junior Squad.

The National Junior Squad is the pinnacle of the coaching structure for sailors aged under 16, and aims to **“develop sailors of the appropriate age and ability to win medals for RYA Team GBR at major international regattas at Youth and Olympic level.”**

James started the summer with a weekend National Regatta at the Weymouth Olympic venue where he finished a creditable 78th (out of 217) in a strong fleet in which he is still one of the younger sailors. The following weekend he competed in the NW Area Championships, held over 2 days at Bassenthwaite Sailing Club in the Lake District. After some very close racing James finished as overall winner, and is currently the Topper NW Area Champion.

The following weekend marked the start of the Topper National Championships, which were held in Pwllheli. James qualified for the Gold fleet (the top fleet) in difficult conditions, and finished the week in 89th place (out of 268). Although he was disappointed not to have finished higher, he was sailing in a fleet including adult and youth (U19) sailors as well as juniors (U16), and he was the 4th placed U14.

After a break to watch the Olympics and gain some coaching in his new youth-class boat (a 29er), James headed to Workum in the Netherlands for the Topper World Championships. James again qualified for the Gold fleet and at the end of the week's racing finished 40th overall and 1st U14.

On returning home he spent a few days helping to coach beginners at his home club, before competing in the final selection event for the Topper National Junior Squad. **The weekend went well and James finished 25th (out of 171), including one race win and one second.**

Rowing

Having experienced the recent deluge of rain in the Blackburn area that seems to have lasted for weeks, the opportunity to develop rowing skills is one not to be missed!

Our Sixth Formers have enjoyed the chance to practise their technique in a charity rowing event on their indoor rowers, under the watchful eye of trans-Atlantic rower Helen Leigh, who is currently working at the school.

The students completed a relay row to raise awareness about human trafficking, and funds for ECPAT UK (End Child

Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) which campaigns against the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the UK.

Head of Sixth Form Mr John Morgan said, **“This is just one of many charitable events that we will be holding throughout the year. The students were inspired to do this one after hearing a talk by Helen about her exploits, and the charity she did it for.”**

If you would like to know more about ECPAT UK log on to www.ecpat.org.uk

James Beattie



There was a pleasant surprise for Dr Mark Butler, when he turned up at the Harrison Playing Fields at Lammack for an afternoon games session. A Sky Sports camera crew were packing away their equipment after filming OB footballer James Beattie, who had just been training with Accrington Stanley.

The 34-year old, former Southampton, Everton and Sheffield United striker, who has five full England caps to his name, has agreed an initial deal as player/coach. James has played over 400 games in the Premier League and Football League and scored over 120 goals and will be reunited with his former Blackburn Rovers colleague Leam Richardson at the Crown Ground.

The Accrington squad have been using the Queen Elizabeth's facilities for some time now, so it was just like old times for James, training on the school pitches where he honed his sporting excellence, under the watchful eye of Dr Butler.

The pair met up for a chat in the PE office where not only did they talk football, James was interested to know if any of his swimming records still stood at the QEGS pool! They do, and the pupils will certainly have added incentive to break them now.

Travel



As usual, school holidays have provided a time for experiences abroad for many of our pupils. The Art department travelled to Rome to study the architecture, art and pasta! Meanwhile, the Modern Foreign Languages department enjoyed the many and varied delights of Paris during half term, encouraging the pupils to practice their French whenever possible.

The winner of the 2012 Frank Singleton Travel scholarship, Lucy Midgley, entertained current Sixth Form students with tales of her travels in Ecuador this summer. Lucy's scholarship enabled her to visit a country which appealed to her on many levels. For a country that is relatively small Ecuador has many UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is rich in biological diversity and Lucy wanted to work with street children. As she told the QEGS students, **"these children have not had the lives that we have had and don't enjoy the luxuries we take for granted."** After an intensive refresher course in Spanish in the capital city of Quito, Lucy moved to live with a local family where her linguistic skills were put to the test. In her free time she was able to travel about the country including a butterfly farm, a volcano and abseiling down a 40' waterfall.



The Frank Singleton Travel scholarship was established by Old Blackburnian, Howard Singleton in memory of his father Frank. Although Howard now lives in Indonesia he keeps up to date with school news and takes a keen interest in the scholarship.

NEWS IN BRIEF

National Poetry Day

To mark this special day, the English Department ran a "Match the Poem to the Teacher" competition. Much fun was had by all as pupils pondered over the titles and tried very hard to match the poet title to the teacher. The Library also gave away free bookmarks and offered live poetry web casts at lunchtime. Uzhair Ahmed won the competition to match the poem to the teacher. **Well done Uzhair!**

Teatime treat

The Teatime Concerts are certainly beginning to make their mark on the school calendar and the latest was another fine display of young talent.



Harvest

The thunderstorm taking place outside the Main Hall did not, in any way, disrupt the smooth flow of proceedings on stage for the Infant and Junior Harvest celebration. Outside were far from harvest weather conditions but inside the audience was provided with a mellifluous mixture of music, drama and readings, as many and varied as the donated goods on display. The pupils certainly explained the meaning behind Harvest and those of similar festivals of other religions. They provided us with a proverbial ray of uplifting sunshine on an otherwise dull day and a better understanding of the Harvest festival.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Puzzle Day

Our annual Puzzle Day, organised by the Maths department, proved to be very popular once again. It certainly frustrated pupils and parents for quite some time, but it shows that problem solving, in whatever format, can be fun.

Fun Fire Time

Our local Fire-fighters have visited the Junior and Infant departments to let the children know what they do and what the children need to do in the event of a fire. It is always a popular visit when, after the serious bit, you get to try out the equipment!



Michaelmas Concert

The variety of the music at the Michaelmas Concert held in the Main Hall recently was a tribute to the ability of the performers as was the combination of ensembles, ranging from solos, trios, quartets, quintets, choir and Jazz band. A



star performance of the evening was that of Lower Sixth form pupil, Joe Westwood, who played classical guitar with expression and nuance beyond his years.

A thoroughly enjoyable evening, which could only have happened thanks to a lot of hard work by both the pupils and staff.

Hamlet



The front of the programme was simple, a bold heading, Hamlet, followed by "something is rotten in the state of Denmark". Well, there was certainly nothing rotten about this production of Hamlet.

Even before the play began you were transported into the environment of a high security complex, by having to pass through the security control under the gaze of the unsmiling and threatening guards before being allowed to proceed into a modern Elsinore Castle. Your sense of unease was heightened by the eerie and unsettling music composed by Sixth Form students, Alex Wallbank and Joel Graves. The grainy, ghost-like images projected on to a large screen on stage all added up to an unsettling atmosphere.

The adaptation, by the former Head of Classics Mr David Westworth, provided us with an interesting combination of Shakespearean dialogue spoken by actors in modern garb. Hamlet is the story of a young man who goes through a myriad of emotions as he agonises through complex morals and ethics that have been thrust upon him. It is a difficult part to play and many professional actors have struggled

with the complexities of the role. Lower Sixth Form student Joe Westwood performed the role as if it was something that he had been studying for a number of years, rather than weeks.

He had the confidence of a seasoned thespian as he spoke the Shakespearean verse as if it was his own natural way of speaking, yet he constantly stayed in character and provided the audience with a performance of which even Old Blackburnian and RSC actor Jonathan Slinger would have been proud.

The roles of Gertrude (Anna Watson) and Claudius (Sam Westwood) are difficult parts to play. As an adult you may have experienced, or been near to, strong emotional situations. The fact that such young people can perform these roles with conviction is sign of remarkable talent.

Director Mr Simon Heald can be justifiably proud of the young actors who all played their parts with conviction. The high standard of the production is even more impressive when you realise that it was produced by two of the actors, Adam van Cleef and Sam Westwood; talent indeed.

NEWS FOR FORMER PUPILS

Annual Dinner Another Great Success

It is not often that Old Blackburnians can be reduced to silence at the Annual Dinner but when the chief guest, His Honour Judge Peter Murphy, talked about his work at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague representing various accused charged with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, you could have heard a pin drop.

The toast to the school was made by David Prest whose recollections of life at QEGS and in his professional career heading up Whistledown Productions, a major independent radio production company, raised many smiles.



The Headmaster explained the rationale behind the Free School application. Many guests said afterwards that they were pleased to have the opportunity to find out more about the process and were totally in support of the action.

Big School was full with guests aged from 17 to 92. For some it was their first experience of this annual event and for others a regular fixture in the diary. The provisional date for 2013 is Saturday December 14.

Geoff's 1950s Cricket Cap Returns To Blackburn... From South Africa



After a journey of almost 9,000 miles, Geoff Robinson's cricket cap has made its way into the school archives.

Last term Geoff returned to school from his home in Port Elizabeth for a visit with his family. Walking down familiar corridors and seeing again rooms and buildings humming with memories inspired Geoff to add to the archive store with cricketing and football photographs and that treasured cricket cap, here shown with the honorary archivist John Read.

Oxbridge Dinner June 7th 2013



This special event is open to all former pupils, staff and guests. It is not restricted to those living in Cambridge or those who studied at Oxford or Cambridge. If you would like to find out more, or to reserve a place for this year's dinner at Queens' College, Cambridge, contact the Foundation Office on **01254 686308**.

Former Pupils Football Match Raises £180

The annual Old Boys' football match took place on a wet and soggy Saturday just before Christmas. Despite the appalling conditions more than eighty people turned up and five teams took part. The event which was co-ordinated by Roger Whiteside was held in memory of David Fairbrother, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2011. It raised £180 for the Royal Marine Benevolent Trust Fund.

MBE for David

Congratulations to David Spearing who has been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List for his services to British business and to the British community in Abu Dhabi. David (47-54) went to Abu Dhabi in 1968, initially to manage a consultancy firm in the construction industry. He set up his own practice in 1973.

Peter's Second Novel Now Published

HH Judge Peter Murphy's second novel, *A Higher Duty*, was published as an e-book on 21 December, and was selected for Amazon.co.uk's 12 Days of Kindle Promo. On January 2nd, it was number one in the 'political' category.

It will be available in paperback from February 21st, and can be pre-ordered. Peter's first novel *Removal*, first published as an e-book, is now available in hardback.

"A compromised president, his murdered mistress, enemies foreign and domestic, a rogue shadow agent lusting for power: in Peter Murphy's *Removal* impeachment is the least of America's problems." Amazon review.



**Alumni
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Have you had a look yet?
QEGS Blackburn Alumni

Calling all Old Blackburnians in the US – are you around New York in April?

The Foundation Director Joanna Lavelle is travelling to America on holiday this spring and would like to meet with OBs living in and around the New York area. Anyone interested should email Joanna so she can fix up a gathering for drinks or a meal.
jlavelle@qegsblackburn.com

Derek Holt

The former Head of Junior School, Derek Holt, died peacefully in hospital on 20 December at the age of 84, after a short illness. Derek was appointed as the first Master in Charge of the Junior School in January 1957. During his 30 years with the school Derek encouraged the growth of music, school outings and Junior School productions. He encouraged extra-curricular clubs, in particular the Stamp Club and at the same time he

Gordon Shaw

We have been advised of the death of Old Blackburnian Gordon Crawford Shaw who was at school from 1946-1950, in Raleigh House. From school Gordon went to Sheffield University. Our thoughts and sympathy go to Gordon's widow Marguerite and his friends and family. We are indebted to Gordon's brother Michael for the obituary on the school website.

maintained academic rigour. He had an astonishing memory for the boys who had passed through Horncliffe and retained an interest in their future careers for many years following their departure from school. At his funeral service a moving tribute, written by his son Martin and daughter Christine was read out. Our sympathies go to Martin, Christine and to Derek's widow Jean, to whom he was married for sixty years.

