



# The Elizabethan

AUTUMN 2016



A STAGE, WHERE EVERY MAN MUST PLAY HIS PART: QE took on a significant role in this year's Shakespeare Schools' Festival, including this performance of *The Merchant of Venice* and a one-off event at the West End Wyndham's Theatre.

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

The celebrations surrounding this summer's outstanding public examination results ensured a very positive start indeed to the new academic year. Our A-level results were the best ever recorded here, with 98.8% of the 518 examinations taken awarded grades A\*-B. The benchmark A\*-B figure has now exceeded 98% in four of the past five years, which represents, by any standards, a truly remarkable feat of consistent academic performance at the very highest level.

The strength of those outcomes was recognised recently by the influential *Sunday Times Parent Power* guide, which ranked QE as the best boys' state secondary school. For A-level results alone, QE was rated the best state school in the country, while

comparison with the parallel independent schools' guide revealed that we were beaten only by St Paul's Girls' School and are thus the top boys' school of any stamp, fee-paying or maintained.

This term has seen the successful launch of our School Development Plan, which covers the period 2016–2020. One of the four priorities identified is *Benefiting from involvement*, which includes pupils engaging in our 'rich and diverse programme of extra-curricular activities', thus giving them 'opportunities to develop their existing talents, widen their interests and stretch their capabilities'.

In the second half of this term the wealth of extra-curricular opportunities in the performing arts has been especially conspicuous. You can read in this newsletter of an impressive array of concerts, and it would not be Christmas without the contributions of our musicians to the festivities. Our young singers performed on the national stage when they were invited to take part in the *BBC Children in Need* broadcast (pictured overleaf).

There was external recognition, too, for our actors through the Shakespeare Schools' Festival. First came the successful



performance of an abridged version of *The Merchant of Venice* at a festival performance night at the Arts Depot, North Finchley. Then there was *The Trial of Hamlet*, a unique festival fundraising event at the West End Wyndham's Theatre. Year 12 boys Nicholas Pirabaharan and Keenan Dieobi were selected for the roles of Hamlet and Claudius and performed scenes of the play as flashbacks, while celebrity comedians Lee Mack, Meera Syal, Hardeep Singh Kohli and Hugh Dennis, as well as leading actors Tom Conti and John Heffernan and some of Britain's most senior lawyers, all improvised the Prince of Denmark's trial.

QE's own TV celebrity, Robert ('Judge') Rinder (OE 1989-1994), enlivened our weekends with his appearances on the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* throughout most of this term.

Looking beyond just the performing arts, this term has also brought opportunities in the literary sphere. Notably these included the visit of Robert Muchamore, the most borrowed author in The Queen's Library, which drew more than 400 boys. Sixth-Formers studying *Hamlet* at A-level had their understanding deepened through the visit of Shakespeare expert Ben Crystal, an actor, author and producer. A Year 8 team are doing very well in the international children's literature competition, the Kids' Lit Quiz, taking first place in the North West London heat for the second consecutive year, with a winning margin over University College School of just half a point. And a number of talented Year 11 pupils worked with girls from the North London Collegiate School in a series of academic symposia shadowing the TS Eliot Prize for Poetry.

Three of our Year 13 A-level Art students, Nabil Haque, Tochi Onuora and Scott Tan,

have won much-coveted places on a Royal Academy of Arts programme – attRAct – which offers a range of assistance as they work towards their future careers. Two of Nabil's recent paintings are shown above: they are inspired by his interest in dystopian architectural structures and influenced by *The Wanderer above the*

### “wealth of opportunities in the arts”

*Sea of Fog*, a 19th-century painting by the German Romantic artist, Caspar David Friedrich.

Such success across the broad spectrum of the arts at QE is certainly not accidental. It bears testimony to the importance we attach to these disciplines, as indeed does our current heavy investment in converting the Heard Building so that it will soon provide a new base for our English department. I am pleased to report that work on this next phase of our Estates Strategy is on schedule, and I reiterate my appreciation for the charitable donations from our parents and supporters that have made it possible. A notable example of giving in 2016 has been the generous legacy from Arthur Perks (OE 1935–40), a lifelong supporter of the School, who died earlier this year at the age of 91.

The arts, then, are no mere 'add-on' to School life, and I reject any notion that an academic focus in education must necessarily be at the expense of the arts. By introducing nuance, empathy and experimentation, the arts help bright young minds move beyond learning as the mere acquisition of information and encourage them to develop their own intellectual curiosity in subjects across the curriculum.

The preoccupation of successive Governments with young people being given the skills demanded by employers



is perhaps understandable, but at QE we are aiming to give boys an education which is both broader and deeper than that. Commentators have cited the exclusion of Art and Design from the English Baccalaureate subjects as evidence of its diminishing significance in the eyes of politicians. And yet, as Nabil's work shows, Art can help us think about and understand the world visually, breaking free from the restrictions which using only words and numbers to express oneself sometimes impose.

We should guard against false dichotomies between knowledge and creativity. The teacher's role is neither merely to pass on facts on the one hand, nor on the other to inculcate a banal creativity that operates

### “developing intellectual curiosity”

only on the arid plains of 'child-centred learning'. Teachers should be passing on the wisdom of generations, the best that culture and the arts have to offer, and encouraging children to internalise it so that, out of that rich seedbed, true creativity and worthwhile academic endeavour will be able to spring up and eventually flourish.

May I wish all QE families and friends a Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

**Neil Enright**



### Marvellous Music and 'amazing talent'

Music continues to provide an essential accompaniment to the rhythms of School life at QE.

The first concert of the year, the Senior Chamber Concert, showcased 28 pupils, with a repertoire from Beethoven's *Für Elise* to Indian film composer Ilayarajah's *Poongathu Thirumbuma*.

After participation in the *BBC Children in Need* choir at Elstree Studios, next came the Ode to Music Concert: “this is an opportunity,” said Director of Music Cheryl Horne “to celebrate the glorious history of Music alongside the amazing talent of our musicians”. Highlights included the first appearance of QE's newest ensemble, The B Minors (Junior Barbershop) and excerpts

from *Carmina Burana*: “With over 200 students on stage, this was certainly a rousing finale!”

All years were involved in the Christmas Concert, while the Service of Nine Lessons & Carols rang out 2016 in harmonious style.



### Geographers named among Britain's best

QE pupils Rishi Shah and Vincent Chung have both won awards after being named as Highly Commended in the prestigious national Young Geographer of the Year competition.

Rishi, of Year 10, was selected by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in the Key Stage 4 category of the competition, and Sixth-Former Vincent in the A-level category. For each category, only three Highly Commended awards were given across the whole country.

They were presented with their awards at the RGS and are pictured here with RGS Head of Education and Learning Steve Brace. For the 2016 competition, pupils were challenged to investigate *How is Britain changing?*

### Topping Top of the Bench – again!

QE triumphed convincingly in the regional heat of a highly regarded national Chemistry competition, beating other top London schools for the third consecutive year.

The School has now been victorious in the Top of the Bench heat five times in the past seven years. The team's total of 81 points put them ahead of University College School in second place on 72 points and Westminster School in third on 67. The team now go on to the UK final of the Royal Society of Chemistry competition at Loughborough University in April.

The competition is open to pupils aged 14–16 who are studying Chemistry. QE's team comprised: Year 9 boys Bhargab Ghoshal and George Popa; Bhiramah Rammanohar, of Year 10, and Tharunkumar Muthu Gurunath, who is in Year 11.

The boys were prepared for the heat by Chemistry teacher Elizabeth Kuo.



### Meeting Henry VIII at Hampton Court

All of Year 8 visited Hampton Court Palace on a trip that brought History lessons to life. The visit featured many aspects of History, from fashion and food to the role of kings and queens in the time of the Tudors and Stewarts, and the architectural history of the Palace itself. History teacher Matt Dunston said the trip was arranged to complement pupils' study of Tudor England, with particular attention to the Reformation.

# A world of experience: QE's international trips

The School offers a wide range of overseas trips; they fulfil an important rôle, giving boys new experiences and reinforcing classroom learning.

Trips are available for pupils of all ages. For example, Year 9 boys recently went to Paris on a trip that complemented their Key Stage 3 Science and gave insights into new GCSE Science requirements. It featured visits to Europe's biggest Science museum, Le Bourget Air & Space Museum and Disneyland Paris.

The Headmaster says: "Travelling to a foreign country is always enriching, particularly when the aims of the trip are tied to the curriculum. For foreign language-learners, there is no substitute for going on an exchange and immersing oneself in family life and in the language and culture of that country.

"In our globalised world, being open-minded and coming to understand that people in other countries often live very differently and have different outlooks from ourselves is important, not least because many of our boys will work abroad at some point in their careers."



## Revealing Russia's rich history

QE Sixth-Formers saw both the relics of communism and the architectural splendour of an imperial past on a History trip to Russia.

The 27 pupils, who study Russia from the Communist takeover in 1917 to the 1953 death of Stalin, first saw the body of Lenin – who died in 1924 – in his mausoleum. They visited the Kremlin, noting the tour guides' admiration for President Putin, and Moscow's ornate Metro.

The famous night train then took them to St Petersburg. There they saw the magnificence of Tsarist Russia's huge palaces – including an entire room made of amber. "Walking through the Winter Palace 99 years to the day from the October Revolution was particularly cool," said pupil Conor Mellon.

The group savoured beetroot, Stroganoff and savoury pancakes. Sixth-Former Adrian Burbie said: "We threw ourselves head-first into Russian culture – and the Soviet hat I bought more than made up for the cold!"



## Sri Lanka: a fortnight to remember

This summer's sports tour gave 39 senior boys memories to last a lifetime.

Director of Sport Jonathan Hart reported victories by the rugby teams, but the cricketers had a tougher time. The high point was a rugby A team win over prestigious Trinity College, while the cricketers gained invaluable experience of facing accomplished spin bowling from "gracious and hospitable" hosts.

Prior to the tour, Sabesan Thayaparan and his Year 12 classmates worked to provide gifts for the Bosco Orphanage, home to children whose lives were devastated by the 2004 tsunami. The tourists presented these; they then played sport with the children and painted their refectory.

They saw Sri Lanka in all its beauty: watching elephants bathing at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage was among many memorable episodes.



## Crystal, culture and cars

Twenty-five Sixth-Formers laughed, learned and shivered together on an Economics trip to the Czech Republic.

After a lecture at the Museum of Communism came a chilly tour of Prague, followed by a walk across the famous Charles Bridge and a cruise on the River Vltava. Other highlights included visits to the historic Pilsner Urquell brewery and the ultra-modern Skoda car plant.

At the Bohemia Crystal Glassworks, Economics teacher Sonia Strnad said pupils observed "labour-intensive production methods, with working conditions for staff very different to those of the brewery and Skoda."

The final night's festivities were a highlight for Shiran Gnanaraj, of Year 12: "Teachers and students danced along to the traditional music – I haven't laughed that hard in ages!"



## From the archives: Lest we forget – the OE remembered at another school

An enquiry from a former pupil of an independent school in Yorkshire has uncovered the story of an Old Elizabethan who died during World War II, aged just 22.

Richard George was researching the stories behind the war casualties from Pocklington School in East Yorkshire when he came across a reference to Peter Dennis Mackie who, in 1935, left Pocklington 'for another school'. The name of this school was not given, but Mr George knew that the Mackie family had moved to Barnet. He therefore contacted Queen Elizabeth's School.

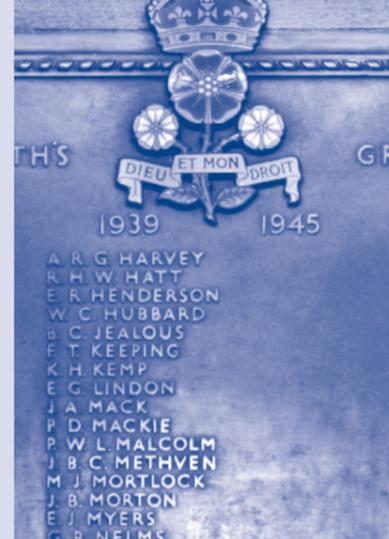
Flying Officer Peter Dennis Mackie (22), R.A.F., son of Captain A. G. Mackie, of H. D. Mackie, Ltd., York Place, Leeds, has been killed on active service. He was educated at Pocklington Grammar School and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Barnet, Herts. He leaves a widow and a three-week-old son.

A little research at QE soon confirmed that Peter Mackie had indeed been a pupil: he is listed on the School's World War II war memorial in the entrance hall, and a report card penned by Headmaster Ernest Jenkins (1930-1961) was quickly unearthed. It revealed that Mr Mackie came to QE at the age of 13 in September 1935 and left in July 1938; he therefore did not join the Sixth Form. Mr Jenkins, who was not given to praising boys lightly, commented on his departure: "Pity as rather promising all-round. Work quite good & developing well after a slow start. Character, manner & appearance all promising & showed signs of being something of leader. Keen on games but not remarkable by time he left."

Mr George was able to fill in some further details of Peter Mackie's short life. He was born in Harrogate in 1921 and his father was a woollen manufacturer's agent in Headingley, Leeds, before moving to High Barnet. A boarder at the school in Yorkshire, Peter Mackie was an enthusiastic participant in plays there, while his fondness for games at QE was of a piece with his proficiency at a number of sports at Pocklington.

It is unknown what he did and where he went after leaving QE, but by the time of his death on 9th April 1944 he had married Doris Bedford, of Goodrington in Devon. The couple had a son, Alan, who was just three weeks old when Peter died.

Flying Officer (Pilot) Mackie, who was in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (serving in No. 415 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force), was killed in an accident while



attempting a mock attack on another aeroplane during training. His Fairey Albacore – a torpedo bomber known for its poor manoeuvrability – stalled and fell from the sky near Bosham, Sussex, exploding on impact.

Peter Dennis Mackie is buried in Totteridge churchyard with his mother (who died in 1936) and is commemorated on the Chipping Barnet War Memorial.



## Preparing pupils for their future

A certificate signed by the Prime Minister and the success of two special events at the School this term have all underlined the strength of QE's work to help its pupils prepare for their future lives.

Theresa May's signature marked official recognition of the contribution QE pupils make to the local community through *The Challenge*. Formally known as 'National Citizen Service powered by The Challenge', *The Challenge* brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to work on youth and community initiatives during a three-week summer programme and three autumn weekends.

Pictured top right is Year 12 boy Eddy Burchett with the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor David Longstaff, and Mayoress Gillian Griffiths. For *The Challenge's* volunteering programme, Eddy worked in a care home.

As its name suggests, the Careers Convention had a more directly vocational thrust. Open to Year 11 boys and their parents, it this year featured 35 representatives of a wide

range of professions, including 15 recent alumni. There were a number of 20-minute talks, during which experts gave an overview of careers in medicine, dentistry, investment banking and engineering research, as well as insights into working for Amazon and information on the benefits of studying abroad.

Earlier in the term, the Shearly Hall hosted an event specifically dedicated to encouraging Sixth-Formers to think internationally when making their university choices. The Global Education Fair brought in representatives from 15 universities in Australia, Canada, Finland and the USA, and from specialist colleges recruiting for business and languages courses which train graduates for jobs in the European business market. In recent years, QE boys have won places at a number of overseas universities, including Yale, Harvard and Stanford in the US.



## Singled out for success

Two Sixth-Formers have won bursaries in very different fields, giving them footholds in their chosen future careers. Maaz Shahzad secured a bursary and work placement from prestigious City law firm CMS Cameron McKenna – one of just four overall winners in a fiercely fought competition for state school pupils. Hugo Flint was awarded an Army Officer Scholarship and a place at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Both had to undergo a rigorous selection programme. Maaz was described by Cameron McKenna solicitor Sarah Hyde as "an outstanding candidate who coped impressively with a challenging assessment day". Hugo underwent a number of physical, intellectual, and leadership challenges, culminating in the Final Army Officer Selection Board.



## Professor's plastics plea

Sixth-Former Souhardh Kotakadi was one of just two audience members asked to take part in an experiment conducted during the annual Daniell Lecture to show how Chemistry can be made more sustainable. Eighteen QE Year 12 Chemists attended the event at King's College London.

The speaker, Professor Tim Welton, the world's first professor of sustainable energy, made a call for concerted global action on reducing waste. He noted the impact of the chemical industry on the environment and the amount of plastic which collects in the world's oceans.



## Big hit for hard hat

A hi-tech hard hat designed by a team of QE Sixth-Formers won acclaim at a special event at the House of Commons.

Christopher Suen, Tochi Onuora, Yazad Sukhia and Sachin Ghelani developed the Sonus-mico Helmet under the Engineering Education Scheme and were invited to the *Big Bang @ Parliament* event to present it to politicians, policy-makers and industry representatives.

The helmet warns construction workers when noise levels exceed safe levels.



## Angling for English

Oxford undergraduate Surya Bowyer returned to QE to encourage pupils to study English at A-level and university.

Surya (OE 2007-2014), who is at Keble College, spoke to the whole of Year 11 and conducted mock interviews for boys considering an English degree. English, he said, is not only a very well-regarded degree, but can lead to many interesting careers. He aims to become a barrister.

- The Ink Club, a group of writers from Years 7-10, have been meeting in The Queen's Library to share ideas for their own novels.

## Pupils excel in financial studies examinations

A record total of 41 boys have won scholarships for their results in financial studies examinations – including 12 who were named among the top 1% nationally. Catherine Winter, Financial Capability Relationship Manager for the London Institute of Banking & Finance (formerly known as *ifs*), visited the School to present the awards.

The LIBF's £500 and £750 scholarships can be used if boys choose to take one of the institute's

BSc courses after leaving school. The pupils had all chosen to study for the LIBF's Level 3 financial studies qualifications, offered as part of the Sixth Form enrichment programme. The Certificate in Financial Studies is taken in Year 12, and the follow-on Diploma in Year 13.

Congratulating the boys on their results, Head of Economics Liane Ryan said: "There is growing acceptance of these qualifications by top universities as part of their offers."



## “Fiercely determined” Tom takes bronze at Rio

Old Elizabethan Tom Aggar won a bronze medal in his rowing event in Rio this summer – the third Paralympics for the four-times world champion.

Rowing in lane 5, Tom (OE 1995–2002) secured third place in the 1,000m arms-shoulders single sculls, in what British Rowing described as a “fiercely determined performance”.

Tom is the longest-serving member of the GB para-rowing squad. He made his debut in 2007, taking gold at the World Rowing Championships. The following year, he was crowned arms-shoulders men’s single scull Paralympic champion in Beijing at the first appearance of rowing as a competitive sport at the games.

Three years of success followed, including World Championship victories in Poland, New Zealand and Slovenia. More recently he has enjoyed fresh triumphs, taking gold at the World Cup in 2014 and then silver at the 2014 and 2015 World Championships.

Tom is a Warwick University graduate. He started rowing as part of a rehabilitation programme after an accident in 2005.



## Fun, fish & chips and friendship at FQE Quiz

This year’s Friends of Queen Elizabeth’s Quiz Supper was a close-fought affair, with just three points separating the top three teams.

The winning team, on 122 points, included: Philippa Flint (mother of three past and present Elizabethans and, until recently, the Headmaster’s Personal Assistant); Margaret Gibson (who works in the School Shop and is Head of FQE Support); Lisa Revell (another mother of current and past pupils; she works in the School on data-management) and Toni Smith (QE’s Support Services Manager). Just two points behind was a table that included Languages teachers Peter Feeney, Rebecca Grundy, Gill Ross, Helen Shephard and their guests.

Fifteen teams tackled nine rounds supervised by the quizmasters FQE Secretary Diane Mason and her husband, George, together with Peter and Karen Forrester and their son, OE William.



A marathon round took place over the supper break, during which fish & chips or vegetarian curry were served.

The raffle on the evening raised nearly £400, while the total was further boosted by a fundraising Heads and tails game played while the Headmaster was tallying up the final scores.

Barrie Martin MBE, Chairman of Governors and of the FQE, presented the prizes and thanked those taking part: “These social and fundraising events organised by the Friends are tremendously important, both in creating a sense of community amongst the parent body and in raising essential funds for the improvement of the School’s site and facilities.”

## Rising star shines as Sixth Form stalwart bows out



Year 10 pupil Federico Rocco won the QE chess tournament for Years 8–11 with a perfect score, while the School performed strongly against elite teams at the Millfield International Chess Tournament, qualifying for the championship section then finishing fourth overall.

The Somerset tournament marked the swansong of Ananthanarayanan Balaji, a devoted chess enthusiast throughout his seven years at QE.

### Queen Elizabeth’s School

Queen’s Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 4DQ

Telephone: 020 8441 4646 Fax: 020 8440 7500  
enquiries@qebarnet.co.uk

[www.qebarnet.co.uk](http://www.qebarnet.co.uk)

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