

Queen Elizabeth's School

# The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

SUMMER 2019



**GO-AHEAD!** The School's success in securing Government funding means work will start on its new £3.5m Music School this summer. See p2 for more details.

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

**As the academic year closes, I look back on a term that has brought fresh renown to Queen Elizabeth's School.**

In April, I received a letter from Schools Minister Nick Gibb congratulating QE on being in the top 1 per cent of state schools in two separate areas. One was Progress 8 – a Government measure which tracks academic progress between the end of primary school and GCSEs – for which we ranked higher than any other selective school and in the top 15 of all schools nationwide. Our score of 1.22 means

that QE boys achieve more than a whole GCSE grade higher in each subject than their primary school attainment would have suggested. The other area was for the proportion of pupils – in our case, 100 per cent – entering the English Baccalaureate (not a qualification, but a combination of core GCSE subjects recommended by the Department for Education).

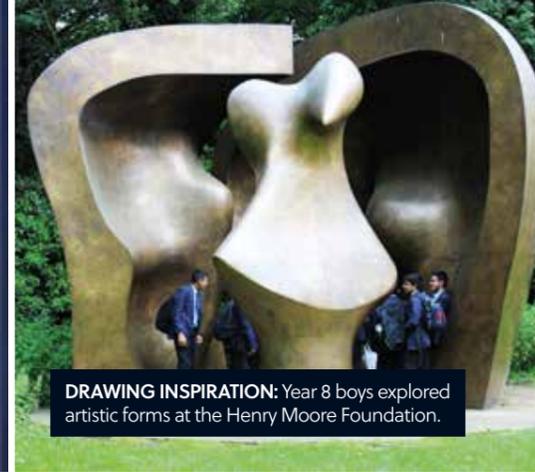
Confirmation that these high standards continue through the Sixth Form came later with the publication of Government analysis revealing that, over a three-year period, QE sent more pupils to Russell Group universities than any other school.

A very significant contribution to this achievement is made by alumni. I was delighted to welcome some 60 of last year's leavers back to contribute their first-hand knowledge of university life to the Year 12 Universities Convention. Our new University Mock Interview Evening being organised for October will further expand our University admissions Support Programme (or USP).

Old Elizabethans turned out in numbers for Founder's Day, alongside current boys, their families and many other guests. My thanks go to the many parent volunteers and especially to the stalwarts of the



**LORD OF THE FLIES:** For this year's School Play, actors from Years 7-12 brought to the stage William Golding's dark tale of the descent of a group of stranded schoolboys into murderous brutality.



**DRAWING INSPIRATION:** Year 8 boys explored artistic forms at the Henry Moore Foundation.



## Hitting the trans fat campaign trail

Twelve Year 8 boys fighting to eliminate harmful trans fats from takeaway food were invited to present their campaign in Whitehall.

After meeting them, Richard Sangster, Head of the Government's Obesity Policy Unit, told the boys: "That was the best presentation I've heard in a long time."

Friends of Queen Elizabeth's organising committee, whose months of planning ensured the fête was such a successful event. I was pleased to welcome Tommy Peto (OE 2003–2010) as our guest speaker at the thanksgiving

### *“foundation for continuing excellence”*

service at the start of the day. Tommy has recently begun a new role in management and strategy consulting after enjoying a

stellar academic career at Oxford. In his speech, Tommy urged the boys in the congregation to discover what they enjoy and then to be both creative and hard-working in pursuing it as a career.

The performing arts here are most important in this regard, since they give boys avenues in which to express themselves and develop their talents and interests. Besides that, they are good for the participants' general wellbeing and are useful in terms of developing transferable skills such as self-confidence, teamwork and presentation.

Music is flourishing at QE, so I was delighted this term to announce the immediate go-ahead for our £3.5m-plus Music School project, following our success in securing a £1.4m Government grant and £700,000 loan. This is the next major phase of our long-term Estates Strategy. As participation in Music here continues to grow – at the last count, we had more than 20 different ensembles, with over 160 boys singing in the Choir – this state-of-the-art facility will be vital in relieving pressure on existing performance and rehearsal spaces,

as well as providing a foundation for continuing artistic excellence. It will feature a new performance venue and several teaching and rehearsal rooms. In addition, the two-storey building will provide

additional assembly space to accommodate our lecture programme, together with a covered atrium for break times. Its durable, high-quality architecture will complement the attractive design of earlier projects, such as the Shearly Hall and Martin Swimming Pool.

Demolition of the Mayes Building to clear the site takes place this summer. Detailed planning, groundwork investigation and the tender process will then take place, with a view to starting construction work next Summer Term. We expect to occupy the new building in September 2021. Although the DfE funding accelerated

the start date, this project would not have been possible without the financial input of FQE. Our parental support, financial and otherwise, is a unique aspect of QE life and is transforming the experience of the boys. The Friends' continued support will be necessary to complete the building and to fit it out and equip it to the highest standards. Other work on-site has included the creation of an airy atrium linking both sides of the Fern Building, as well as structural work in the Art department and Science corridor.

### *“parental support a unique aspect of QE life”*

One person who has been at the heart of planning for long-term strategic development is Colin Price, our longest-serving member of staff and Second Master since 2001, who is retiring from the Senior Leadership Team. It has been my great pleasure to work alongside him for 17 of his 33 years, especially over the last eight since my appointment to the headship; I have benefited significantly from his counsel as the sole deputy head. Happily, Colin will still teach Mathematics, so many more boys will benefit from his experience. He will continue to serve as a governor and as a Trustee of the Friends.

There is a new senior team structure for September. Three long-serving Assistant Heads, Emi Aghdiran, Anne Macdonald and David Ryan, are promoted to Deputy Head. We will have three new Assistant Heads; Michael Feven and Sarah Westcott are familiar and well-established figures here, while we welcome Crispin Bonham-

Carter, joining us from Alexandra Park School. The new team will be engaging with the School community as we formulate the next School

Development Plan for 2020–2024. Parents will have the opportunity to meet them at our autumn briefings.

I wish all our families an enjoyable summer and look forward to celebrating with those boys who are awaiting public examination results in August: good luck!

**Neil Enright, Headmaster**

## Swinging success

With stalls and attractions to suit all ages and tastes – and a jazz band to make sure everything went with a swing – the Founder's Day fête provided fun for the whole Elizabethan community.

Following the more formal elements of Founder's Day – the thanksgiving service at Chipping Barnet Parish Church and the reading of the roll and School Chronicle in front of the Main Building – the fête was a chance to relax and celebrate 446 years of history near the end of another successful school year.

Pupils, parents, staff and many other visitors came along to the Stapylton

Field for the fête, which is the biggest fund-raising event in the Friends of Queen Elizabeth's calendar. The weather held, leaving the crowds free to enjoy sights from dance displays to staff in the stocks, and to sample the international cuisine provided by volunteers.

The fête raised £21,000 in cash donations on the day, as well as a further £3,500 contributed through a JustGiving page.

## Mathematical muscle

The School's pupils have excelled in national Mathematics competitions in recent months, building on the achievements of previous years. Following strong performances in the Intermediate Maths Challenge, 30 boys from Years 9-11 qualified for the Intermediate Olympiad, while in the Junior Challenge, 202 boys won gold certificates – a large increase on previous years.

## Island of adventure

Whether shivering near the summit of Mount Etna, holding their noses in sulphurous mud baths, surveying the spectacular Greek-built amphitheatre at Taormina, or sampling the pizzas they had made for themselves at the Café Sikelia, Lower School geographers found plenty to stimulate the senses on a Geography tour of Sicily. Forty-one boys from Years 7, 8 & 9 went on the five-day trip.



# Get with the programming! The rise of robotics at QE

When Queen Elizabeth's School's new robotics suite opens next term, its trophy cabinet will immediately be bursting at the seams.

It is less than three years since the launch of the School's VEX Robotics Club for Years 8 and 9, yet in that brief period, QE teams have amassed no fewer than 81 awards, with 11 trophy banners awarded at national and international level.

In 2017, two teams won places at the VEX IQ international finals in Kentucky at the first attempt. The School returned to the US the following year, where QE became the first-ever UK school to take a world title, winning the coveted Excellence Award for overall performance, after seeing off 400 teams from 40 countries.

This year, having virtually swept the board at the national finals in Telford, a record four junior teams set off for Kentucky, together with a newly formed senior team. Not only did they pick up a string of awards between them, but the Technogear team became the first-ever UK team to reach the Teamwork Challenge finals,

held in Louisville's 20,000-capacity Freedom Hall. Asked how he felt as everyone waited for the final results to come in, Technogear driver Yash Shah, of Year 9, said: "This is the best day of my life! I don't care if we win or not; this experience alone has been incredible."

The Headmaster said: "Michael Noonan and his colleagues have, in a very short space of time, established QE as an international force in the exciting field of robotics education. We have been happy to invest in supporting them, since robotics offers boys a way of exploring several STEM\* disciplines at once, teaching them skills that many will find useful in their careers, such as programming. The VEX Robotics competitions help develop teamwork and leadership abilities. And, perhaps best of all, robotics is fun!"

\*STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics



*Michael Noonan*  
Head of Technology

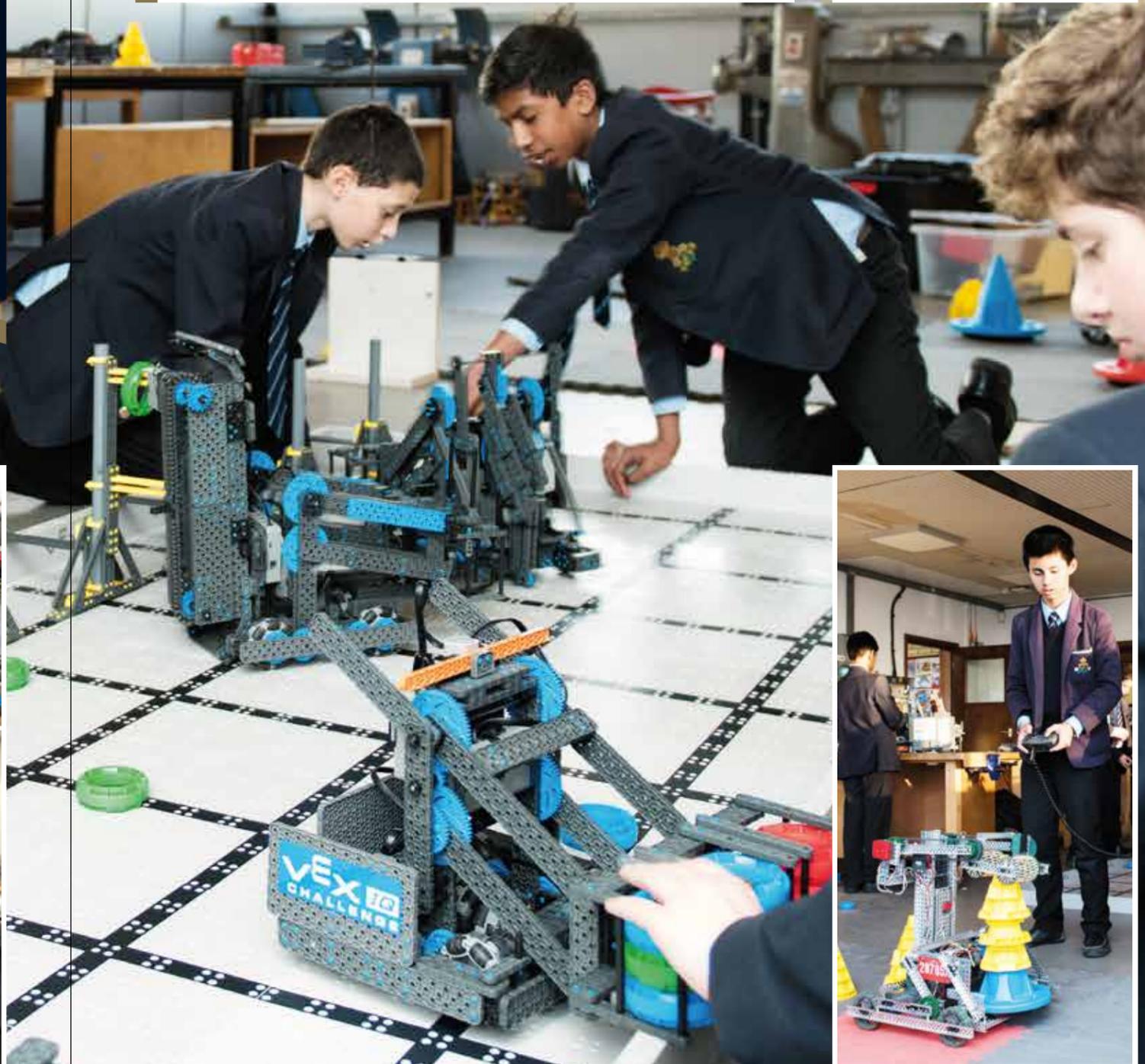
Mr Noonan came to QE in December 2013, having graduated from Limerick earlier that year, and was promoted to Head of Technology in 2017. His own specialisms include Computer-Aided Manufacture/Rapid Prototyping (using 3D routers, laser-cutters and 3D printers). His efforts in spearheading the School's robotics endeavours gained recognition at this year's national VEX Robotics finals in Telford when he won the Teacher of the Year Award.

## Robotics suite

Amid expectations that QE will field as many as ten robotics teams in the 2019-20 season, the School is creating a dedicated robotics facility in the Technology corridor, replacing an old changing room.

The suite will include: the School's first permanent field of the type used in the senior VEX EDR

Robotics competitions; two raised permanent IQ (junior) fields; a new smartboard for displaying real-time game information; six desktop computers for CAD and Design applications; a breakout space with two whiteboards, to spur creative discussions; a library of books, resources and past designs; ample storage space; wireless internet, and a trophy display area.





## From the archives: 'No one has ever served the School more faithfully'

The Mayes building, which will be demolished in the summer holidays, was named to honour Harry ('Curly') Mayes, who served the School for 60 years as porter, steward and caretaker.

Born in 1874, he was appointed in 1902 under John Bond Lee, whose headship had begun as far back as 1875. Mr Mayes was still working until a few weeks before his death on Remembrance Sunday, 1962.

His hard work and no-nonsense approach

and Mayes was frequently brought into a classroom to restore order."

In 1932, he moved with the School to its current location, where the Lodge was built for him and his wife, the School cook. Sadly, she died the following year.

In his book, *An Elizabethan Headmaster*, the often-stern E H Jenkins (1930-1961) paid warm tribute: "This fine servant, who had made his service to the School his pride and his life... was to be my great standby in any



When QE was hit in a 1941 bombing raid, the 67-year-old widower was walking up the driveway carrying a meal. He was knocked flat by the blast. "He was only annoyed at the indignity of being bowled over by a Boche [a German] and still more annoyed at the loss of a perfectly good supper," Mr Jenkins recalled.

At Mr Mayes' funeral, celebrant Rev. C W Earle, Rector of Barnet, said: "He was like the man in the parables who was given five talents and used them to make five more, earning the commendation *Thou Good and Faithful Servant*." His service, exemplifying an ethic that still resonates strongly in QE today, is commemorated on a plaque in the entrance hall.

quickly made their mark, as an obituary recalled: "The 1914-18 war brought a severe shortage of competent schoolmasters

non-academic crisis... He served the School as no one has ever more faithfully served any school."



## Embracing difference

Boys were exhorted to be kind to each other, whatever their differences, when Paralympian Amy Marren delivered a Year 7 assembly. She spoke of the self-discipline and hard work required to combine her swimming career with her training as a paralegal apprentice.



## Rainbow warriors

The new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors used a range of age-appropriate material to cover the key themes of LGBTQ during Pride Month. Josh Osman, Vithusan Kuganathan and Leo Kucera, all of Year 12, promoted better understanding during Personal Development Time sessions. They also ran a poster competition for Years 7 & 8.

## Closer to home

Year 12's Karanvir Singh Kumar was a runner-up in a national competition. His video arguing that Economics should be centred around the household won plaudits from the judges of the **What's the 8th Way to Think like a 21st Century Economist?** competition.

## Positive verdict

Judges at this year's Bar Mock Trial competition said they fully expect to see some of QE's competitors join the ranks of real-life barristers in the future.

It followed the boys' outstanding performances in the early stages of the national finals, held in Edinburgh. The competition, for 15-18-year-olds, involves competitors taking on roles to simulate a real court case. The trials were judged by well-known real-life judges, including Lord Leveson.

QE won the first round by several points and also won the second heat, but lost their third round by a single point.



## Fantastic on plastic

A poster on the pros and cons of plastics won first prize in a Royal Society of Chemistry regional competition for Year 8 pupil Maxwell Johnson. He used letters from the Periodic Table to spell out the title of his colourful and carefully researched poster.

## Benchmark

QE won third place in the national final of the prestigious Top of the Bench Chemistry competition.

The team, from Years 9-11, pitted their wits against 32 other teams at Birmingham University.

## Honours for senior chemists

Five Year 13 QE boys won gold medals in the 51st Chemistry Olympiad, with a further seven of their peers receiving silver and one bronze. Kiran Aberdeen was among only 30 of the 7,000-plus entrants nationally selected to go through to the elite competition's second round, hosted by Cambridge University.

## Star physicists shine

Two senior boys who had achieved success in elite Science competitions were fêted at a special ceremony.

The event at the Royal Institution in Central London recognised the impressive performances of Tanishq Mehta and Niam Vaishnav in British Physics Olympiad competitions.

Year 11's Tanishq was a gold award-winner in this year's British Physics Olympiad GCSE Physics Challenge. His performance placed him within the top five of some 6,000 entrants nationwide. Niam Vaishnav, of Year 13, recorded one of the highest scores nationwide in the British Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad this year. Last year he represented the UK, winning a silver medal at the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics in Beijing.



**OEs FIGHT BACK:** In the Founder's Day School vs alumni fixture, the OEs were bowled out quickly, but then went on the attack, scything through the younger batsmen. In the end, however, the School were able to surpass the OE total.



## Welcoming primary pupils

More than 80 children from local primaries enjoyed two separate events at QE as part of the School's outreach programme.

In a Forensic Science Day, budding Sherlocks used cutting-edge scientific equipment to unravel a murder mystery. To discover who had killed Headmaster Neil Enright, the Year 5 & 6 children conducted a series of experiments, including hair-sample analysis using a microscope, blood-splatter and fingerprint analysis, and chromatography.

QE's fifth annual Primary Challenge Day attracted a record-equalling 14 teams of Year 5 children to tackle spelling, poetry, number-solving and logic puzzles.

## 'Best game ever' in national cup run

Year 8's cricketers reached the quarter-finals of the Schools' National Cup, following a successful season that brought a string of victories in their regular fixtures.



The boys' strong cup run ended with an agonisingly narrow defeat. PE and Games teacher Oliver O'Gorman said: "It was the best and closest game of schoolboy cricket I, and many others who were present, have ever seen."

The team, who won the County Cup as Year 7s last year, had beaten St Bede's and Dartford Grammar School to reach

the quarter-finals. There they came up against Royal Hospital School.

The match went down to the last ball, with Royal Hospital needing one run off it. "Unfortunately for us they were successful," said Mr O'Gorman. "Our boys were understandably 'gutted' about losing in such a fashion, but they should be proud of what they have achieved."

## Triple triumphs

The U14 rugby team won three of their four matches in the Hilversum International Youth Rugby Festival in Amsterdam. The Year 9 boys started the tour with a warm-up game against local team Amstelveense RC, winning by one try. In the tournament, they played two Dutch and two British teams.

## Winning hands

With more boys playing Eton Fives at QE than ever before, standards are rising. QE competitors picked up three Plates at this year's National Schools' Championships at Shrewsbury School. In the regular season, QE proved highly competitive in its fixtures against Aldenham, Mill Hill, St Olave's and Berkhamsted.



Queen  
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