



# The Elizabethan

AUTUMN 2017



SEASONAL SOUNDS: QE's musicians launched the School's festive activities with the Christmas Concert in Shearly Hall. Turn to p7 for more on the term's musical highlights.

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

In considering their own futures, boys can derive considerable benefit by learning from alumni who have already travelled along the pathways that they plan to take or would like to explore. As we look forward to the start of a new calendar year, this seems an appropriate juncture at which to focus on enhancing future prospects.

With this in mind, one of the areas we are currently working on is QE Connect. Still in its early stages, this initiative will bring new coherence to our work to establish even closer connections between the School and our old boys. QE Connect will formalise ways of matching the boys in the School to alumni who can give them access to a broad network that will help them in pursuing their academic and professional aspirations.

The range of assistance already afforded our pupils by Old Elizabethans is striking. They provide mock interviews and are a source of work experience for our older boys. An increasing number visit the School to talk to boys about university and careers. This term, for example, has seen visits from OEs following very different paths. Drew Williams (2005–2012)

is forging a successful career with multinational professional services firm EY, after, somewhat unusually for a QE boy, opting not to go to university. US-based entrepreneur Sachin Duggal (1994–2001) shared with QE pupils his experience of founding and leading three multi-million dollar technology businesses. And Robert Rinder (1989–1994), a distinguished international barrister quite apart from his TV role as Judge Rinder, spoke with Year 10 boys about the law. We currently have recent leavers studying at Ivy League universities in the US who are very active in our alumni network and happy to help Year 12 boys with their applications. In addition, old boys increasingly play an important role at significant events in the School calendar, whether that is the Elizabethan Union Dinner Debate, the formal Year 12 luncheon, or, this term, the Careers Convention.





**SOUND OF AMERICA:** The Tigertones from Princeton brought their impressive close harmonies to QE.

Through such events, senior boys can access the wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts that exists among our burgeoning network of old boys. The common thread of those alumni who have engaged with the School in the way I have described is that they wish to give something back and support current pupils. As a meritocracy, inevitably quite a high proportion of our pupils are the first to go to university in their immediate families; the first to aim for the most competitive professions. Their family backgrounds may not, therefore, give them access to the wider network that is so often indispensable to career success. Our alumni can be the gateway to that network – but only if boys are intentional about engaging with them.

Learning how to network effectively is an essential skill for all those with ambitious aspirations towards success in their professional lives. It is essential that our pupils cultivate the requisite skills, which are certainly among the “positive personal qualities and attitudes” valued by society that are mentioned in our Development Plan. It is especially important to develop the confidence to initiate conversations, particularly with people one does not know. This applies even – or perhaps especially – to the pupil who considers himself not naturally a confident person.

The Tigertones, Princeton’s all-male *capella* group, proved to be fantastic role models in this regard when they visited us as part of their London tour: they were supremely confident, yet with conversation that was always appropriate to the situation. That is, in part, why we bring in such visitors. Boys should seek out opportunities to practise the art of conversation, learning to ask appropriate questions and to listen effectively so that they can take their cue from the responses. My advice to parents is that they should encourage their sons to

seize such chances without hesitation. Confidence is, after all, one-third of our mission statement as a School.

Another route to developing confidence and the ability to converse well with adults is through taking on positions of responsibility within the School. These exist in all years, culminating in the appointment of our Senior Officials in Year 12. I thank our outgoing School Captain Oliver Robinson for his service and congratulate Aashish Khimasia and his team of Senior Vice-Captains and Vice-Captains on their appointment for 2018.

Part of the key to conversation is naturally the ability to use language well. The work of our poet-in-residence, Anthony Anaxagorou (OE 1994–1999), reflects our emphasis on the development of good oracy, as does the example set by George ‘the Poet’ Mpanga (OE 2002–2009) and the many opportunities for debating and discussion that we provide, from national and international debating competitions to the academic symposia held with leading girls’ schools. The importance of the latter in cultivating free-thinking scholarship is explored elsewhere in this newsletter.

I am pleased to be able to say that we have just secured planning permission to create new facilities for Music within the existing Mayes Building. These will include rehearsal and performance spaces and will also retain an atrium to accommodate boys during breaks in the School day. Whilst the Friends of Queen Elizabeth’s are not in a position to proceed immediately, this next stage of our Estates Strategy is fully worked up and we look forward to developing this as our next big project



in due course. In the meantime, we continue to make use of donations for smaller projects bringing immediate benefits for current pupils.

As this term draws to a close, I remember with considerable satisfaction the fact that it opened with the School basking in the enjoyment of our dazzling summer results: nearly 42% of A-levels taken were at A\*, while our GCSE performance was our best ever, with 71% of examinations awarded A\* or its equivalent. Since then, we have had further independent corroboration of our success in meeting academic challenges. First came the announcement that QE had been named in eighth place out of 2,500 secondary schools (independent and state-funded) for performance and take-up of the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Next were official league tables showing that for the second year, QE again topped the list of all boys’ grammar schools for achievement against the Government’s Progress 8 measure, which charts the improvements made by children across eight key subjects between the end of primary school and GCSE. Most recently, we have been named as the country’s leading boys’ state school – and in

second place overall – in the influential *Sunday Times Parent Power* survey. Our festive programme got off to an excellent start with the Christmas Concert in the Shearly Hall. An innovation this year was a drinks reception for alumni in Tudor Hall – the School’s historic home – before the traditional Service of Nine Lessons & Carols in the parish church.

My best wishes to all QE families for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Neil Enright**



## QE’s “happy few” relish battle scene

The School’s leading actors impressed with their powerful performance of *Henry V* in the world’s largest youth drama festival.

A 23-strong cast, headed by Year 13’s Nicholas Pirabakaran in the title rôle, gave an abridged version of the famous history play at the ArtsDepot in North Finchley for the 2017 Shakespeare Schools Festival. Among the backstage support were 2016 leavers Miles Huglin, Shiras Patel and Alex Wingrave.

Elaine White, who runs QE’s drama provision, said the ensemble had, as ever, coalesced well, with the senior actors supporting the new Year 10 boys effectively. “It can be difficult delivering Shakespearean language for the first time, but our boys learn quickly and always end that journey with a thorough understanding of their part. By the performance day, the final piece was well defined, with some solid performances.

“The battle scene became one of their favourite scenes as it embodied powerful physicality and raw energy – quite daunting, especially when rehearsing in a small space!

Ms White added: “The SSF Venue Director, Jordana Golbourn, praised their careful choreography and the power of

their performance, congratulating Year 13 pupil Mark Thomas as student Director.”

Earlier this term, festival experts helped cast and crew with their preparation in a workshop.

## Thespian honours



Seven senior boys this term became the first-ever recipients of QE drama colours. The pupils received the honour in recognition both of their commitment and accomplishment in drama, and of their support for younger actors and crew. The seven are: Eddy Burchett (not pictured), Keenan Dieobi, Nicholas Pirabakaran and Mark Thomas in Year 13; Rahil Shah, Year 12, and Sathujan Manmatharajah and Maanav Patel, Year 11.

## Stateside study

Sixteen Year 12 boys are involved in QE’s bespoke US university application programme, as the trend for leavers to head overseas for their higher education accelerates.

Head of Year 12 Michael Feven superintends the programme, assisted by the interns who come to the School every autumn from the University of Connecticut – in 2017, Jake Mule and Chris Lewicki. In recent years, a growing number of Elizabethans have undertaken graduate or postgraduate study at Ivy League institutions and other leading American universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The programme began with a US universities information evening. Several boys then attended the US-UK Fulbright Commission’s 40th annual USA College Day. This term’s main activities comprised Wednesday afternoon workshops with the two interns, which covered the admissions process and life in a US university more generally. 2017 leaver Ché Applewhaite, currently at Harvard, returns to the School in January to relate his experiences and offer advice. Some boys plan to apply to the Sutton Trust US Summer School.

## From Ancient Greece to film

The Lower School battled it out in a University Challenge-style inter-House quiz. Dubbed QIQE, it began with a pool stage, with Year 7 boy Vignesh Rajiv’s knowledge of Ancient Greece helping Pearce through to the final against Staplyton. They met in front of all their peers in a Lower School assembly, duelling over topics from anatomy and famous inventors to food and film music. Victory went to Staplyton on 115 points, with Year 10 pupil Aaryan Sheth contributing an outstanding performance.



# Free-thinking scholarship

Queen Elizabeth's School seeks to ensure its pupils gain a thorough mastery of their subjects, while at the same time inculcating an inquisitive attitude that explores and questions received wisdom, *the Headmaster writes*.

A consistent record of superlative performance at A-level and GCSE in recent years has cemented our School's reputation on the national stage, yet it is important that parents and boys understand that an education at QE should be about much more than the passing of examinations.

Our boys benefit from superb teaching by dedicated and skilled staff who are expert in their respective fields. The educational process is certainly intended to give all our pupils a deep knowledge of their subjects which extends beyond the confines of any examination-driven syllabus. This, however, is not enough. Our published objectives state that we work to encourage independence of thought. My colleagues and I purposely and systematically set out to instil in the boys not only a thorough and detailed understanding, but to combine that with a penetrating intellectual curiosity, an attitude of thoughtful questioning of all that they are taught. We call this combination 'free-thinking scholarship'.

As they progress through the School, we hope boys will learn to question everything they are told, exploring their thoughts, pushing against intellectual boundaries and testing their hypotheses on their teachers, on their classmates and, yes, even on their parents. There is, of course, a right way of doing this: we expect boys at all times to be respectful and loyal, honouring both the learning process and their interlocutors, especially those who are older and more experienced. They should show confidence, but temper it with due humility. At times, it may mean that they dissent

from the views of those around them. We hope parents will co-operate with us in this, encouraging a scholarly, interrogative attitude among their sons.

For our part, through our extensive academic enrichment programme, we provide innumerable avenues for encouraging the development of free-thinking scholarship. Take as an example this term's afternoon with sixth-formers from the North London Collegiate School – one of our regular academic symposia with respected local girls' schools. This put our senior pupils on their mettle as

they engaged in intellectual debate with the girls. Such symposia are facilitated by teachers asking questions designed to open up topics expansively.

*“an attitude of thoughtful questioning”*

Our long-standing commitment to the more formal practice of debating is maintained because we recognise in this activity a robust and educative means of intellectual engagement: there is nothing like a public challenge to a cherished but ill-thought-out theory to help you hone your arguments better! To do well, participants must cultivate speaking, thinking on their feet and listening: a trinity of skills that will serve them well. A team of senior boys this term reached the national finals of the Bar Mock Trial Competition, which involves mock criminal trials in a



crown court in front of real judges – an interesting example of a specialised form of debating.

The talks delivered by high-calibre speakers in our thriving lecture programmes frequently expose our pupils to arguments they may not previously have considered. The visit by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's Sara Medi Jones in our junior lecture programme was a good example. I am pleased to say that, having listened attentively to her interesting, information-packed address, boys responded with a number of well-framed questions challenging some of her arguments.

There are, of course, solitary as well as social aspects to our aspiration. Genuine scholarship is always the fruit of independent learning through careful, methodical study, and of taking the time to reflect on the knowledge one is acquiring. To this end, we promote essay competitions. The Extended Project Qualification in Year 12 gives boys an opportunity to follow their own academic inclinations as they prepare a disquisition on a topic of their choice. In similar fashion, one sixth-former, Joseph Runchman, compiled a report in his own time on *Commemorating the Battle of Barnet*. Presented to acclaim from VIP

guests at Barnet Museum, it set out how Barnet could learn from Leicester's tourism bosses who capitalised on the discovery of Richard III's body in the city.

The School's substantial investments in The Queen's Library, together with our efforts to integrate the Library into the School's academic life, are encouraging boys to become critical readers, while nurturing their research abilities, their problem-solving capacity and their skill in synthesising ideas. By marshalling such practical skills, boys are able to build not only their knowledge of a subject, but their ability to apply that knowledge in order to come up with new insights and new solutions.

Our curriculum is academically challenging, broad and balanced. Through it, through excellent teaching and through our rich vein of extra-curricular academic activities, we seek to cultivate a life-long love of learning and to give boys an appreciation and understanding of the liberal arts. Far from QE being a mere 'exam factory', our whole approach is predicated on nurturing free-thinking scholarship. Learning is not simply a means, but rather an end in itself; our examination results are the outcome of an education here, not its sole purpose.





# From the archives: 100 years a hero

School and military representatives joined civic dignitaries to commemorate an Old Elizabethan who lost his life heroically on the Western Front 100 years ago this month – and in so doing won the Victoria Cross.

A commemorative paving stone in New Southgate was dedicated to the memory of Allastair McReady-Diarmid – one of a series being unveiled nationwide on similar centenaries. Among QE representatives attending were Headmaster Neil Enright and one of his predecessors, Eamonn

Harris (1984–1999), Head of History Helen MacGregor, the Combined Cadet Force with three CCF staff members (Mev Armon, Charlie-Maud Munro and Richard Scally) and Old Elizabethans Martyn Bradish (1962–1969), Ken Cooper (1942–1950) and Alan Solomon (1951–1957). Military representatives included Lance Sergeant Johnson Beharry, awarded the VC for saving members of his unit in Iraq in 2004.

Born Arthur Malcolm Drew in 1888 in Grove Road, New Southgate, Captain McReady-Diarmid’s family later lived in

Barnet and he attended Queen Elizabeth’s School. He joined the army at the start of the First World War in 1914 and a year later married 27-year-old Hilda. He changed his name by deed poll to Allastair Malcolm Cluny McReady-Diarmid, apparently because there were so many other Drews in his regiment.

The official Account of the Deed records: “On the 30th November/1st December 1917 at the Moeuvres Sector, France, when the enemy penetrated into our position, and the situation was extremely critical, Captain McReady-Diarmid led his company through a heavy barrage and immediately engaged the enemy and drove them back at least 300 yards, causing numerous casualties and taking 27 prisoners. The



following day the enemy again attacked and drove back another company which had lost all its officers. The captain called for volunteers, and leading the attack, again drove them back. It was entirely due to his marvellous throwing of bombs that the ground was regained, but he was eventually killed by a bomb.”

Captain McReady-Diarmid’s VC was presented to his widow in 1918 by George V. In 1927, his daughter, Alison, wore it when the Prince of Wales opened the White Rock Pavilion in Hastings. He was also honoured during this year’s Act of Remembrance at the School in November.



## Familiar faces: alumni turn out in force for term’s events

Old Elizabethans visited in considerable numbers during the autumn, as the alumni network continues to grow. On consecutive nights, more than 100 old boys came along to two key Autumn Term events.

First, OEs were strongly represented among the 46 volunteers of the School who gave Year 11 boys and their parents the benefit of their professional experience at the Careers Convention. As well as conversations at dozens of stalls, there were eight 20-minute talks on topics ranging from *Dentistry* and *Life in the City to Study Abroad*.

Then an even greater number came to the 122nd annual dinner of The Old Elizabethans Association. Guest speaker Robert ‘Judge’ Rinder brought both celebrity glamour and the insights of an experienced international barrister. Rob reflected on what he has taken from the School, while thanking QE for the ‘gift’ it gave him. He especially thanked his Headmaster Eamonn Harris, who attended, together with Mr Enright’s immediate predecessor, John Marinowitz. With strong attendance – including many ten-year leavers (those who started their final year in 2007) – excellent food and memorable speeches,

the dinner was by common consent among the best in recent memory, according to the Headmaster.

Alongside such formal occasions, Old Elizabethans have provided help with mock interviews and other expert support to current boys. The term was punctuated by visits from OE speakers including Sachin Duggal (1994–2001), a San Francisco-based artificial intelligence expert who has already founded and led three multi-million dollar businesses and studied at Imperial College London, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Stanford in California. School friends Johan Byran and Johnny Ho (both OE 1997–2004) told an epic and inspiring story of physical endeavour in a lecture to senior assembly. Johan is an Enfield GP who suffers from rheumatoid arthritis. Despite this painful condition, he took part in the Marathon des Sables – an ‘ultra-marathon’ across the Sahara Desert – filmed by video-maker Johnny for a documentary to be called *Grit*.



## Insecure Tudors

On their trip to Hampton Court Palace, Year 8 boys solved a conundrum – why did the chapel ceiling bear the words ‘Dieu et mon droit’ no fewer than 32 times? Referring to the divine right to rule, it is the 800-year-old motto of the British monarch and thus also of Queen Elizabeth’s School. A guide explained that, only a generation after Henry VII seized the throne, some still questioned the Tudor dynasty’s legitimacy. So Henry VIII’s liberal use of the motto was his attempt almost literally to stamp his authority on his newly acquired palace.



## Capitol conference

Sixth-formers studying Politics took the chance to question two former Congressmen – Dan Benishek, a Republican who represented Michigan, and Democrat Sam Farr, from California – during a conference held at the British Library. The day-long event on US politics also featured the latest academic discourse, with talks given by leading British university experts on topics that included an interim assessment of the Trump presidency.



## Meeting the challenge

Thirty-six of the 123 Sixth Form mathematicians taking part in the Senior UK Maths Challenge qualified for the two follow-on rounds – double last year’s total. Best-in-School winner Robert Sarkar, of Year 12, and top Year 13 entrant Andrew Shamis are among 11 elite performers who go on to the British Mathematical Olympiad. In the equivalent team event, the Senior Team Maths Challenge, QE took second place out of 28 teams in the regional heat – missing out on the next round by just four points.

## Opportunity and accomplishment in Music

The first major concert of the year brought together music and words in perfect synergy. Entitled *Portraits of Poetry*, the event gave centre-stage to the spoken word as well as to music ranging from jazz to Indian music performed mostly by Lower School pupils.

Director of Music Cheryl Horne said: “This was an opportunity for the Year 7 boys to take to the stage for the first time at QE to showcase what they have been working on in their ensembles.”

Earlier in the term, the Main Hall echoed to the sounds of the Senior Chamber Concert, where Bach and Beethoven vied with the work of lesser-known composers such as Cécile Chaminade.

Year 9 pupil Raphael Herberg (pictured) has won a place in the London Schools Symphony Orchestra. Cellist Raphael plays in School ensembles including the Camerata, Celli and the recently formed String Quartet.







## Rugby: phenomenal firsts never give up!

The First XV have enjoyed the School's most successful season for many years, with seven victories up to the start of December marking a sharp turnaround from last year's solitary win.

PE teacher James Clarke, himself an OE, said: "I believe it is down to a group of very committed players with a real desire to improve every week, play for their teammates and never give up. The other key ingredient has been competition, with the Second XV winning most of their matches, putting pressure on the First XV. We have also introduced a leadership group, similar to England Rugby, that has led to an improvement in team culture and standards, and has allowed different voices to galvanise the squad, rather than just relying on one player."

Headed by captain Keenan Dieobi, the First XV notched up "big wins" against St Albans and Bedford Modern – the first against either school since Mr Clarke's own playing days at QE in 2004-2005. "There was also a notable cup run that took us to the fourth round of the National Bowl, before eventually losing 17-10 away to Verulam School."

Multiple Man of the Match awards went to sixth-formers Shehzar Alam, Justin Lee, Filip Szymaniak and Samuel Wong, while Samuel Burgess played for the First XV despite still being in Year 11.



## QE: masters of the quiz

### Worldwide win over Westminster

A trio of QE Year 10 pupils triumphed in a Geography competition against leading independent schools. The 76 points amassed by Rishi Amin, George Popa and Anshul Sajip in the Geographical Association's Worldwide Local Quiz put them six points clear of Westminster and ahead of Haberdashers' Aske's Boys', who came third. They now progress to the next round.

### Fundraising fun

Parents, governors and staff at the FQE Quiz Supper puzzled over prickly problems including World War II anagrams. The convivial proceedings featured a raffle, which raised £300.

## Literary leaders

QE recorded a clean sweep at a literature competition: a Year 8 team took first place, with pupils from Year 7 close behind. The boys' performance in the Barnet Kids' Lit Quiz followed regular Monday lunchtime practices tackling questions on categories from sci-fi and mythology to fish.

The Year 8 team comprised: Yashaswar Kotakadi; Leo Dane-Liebesny; Ishaan Mehta and Conall Walker.



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