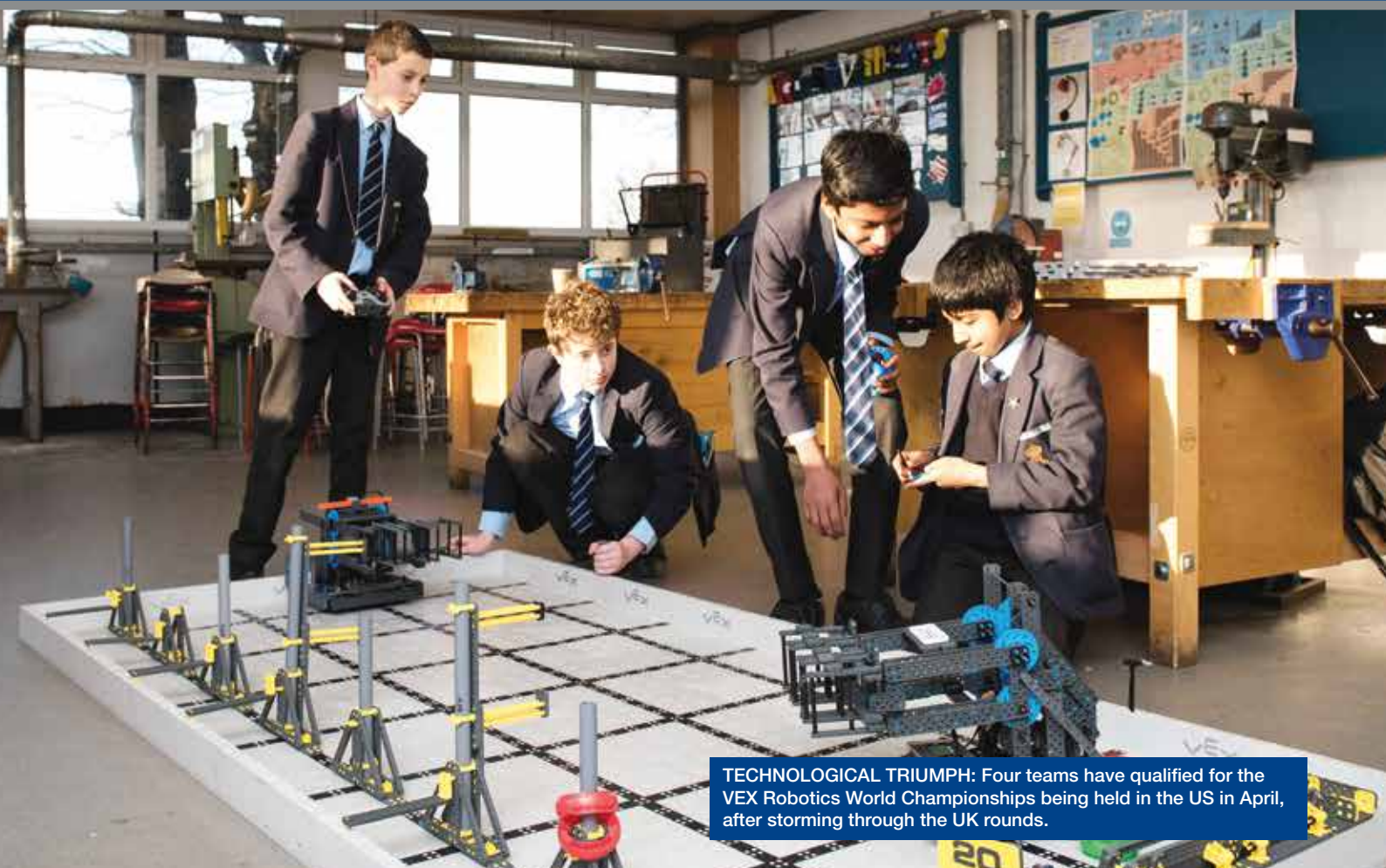




The Elizabethan

SPRING 2018



TECHNOLOGICAL TRIUMPH: Four teams have qualified for the VEX Robotics World Championships being held in the US in April, after storming through the UK rounds.

From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

Saturday, 24th March, was significant for Queen Elizabeth's School for two reasons. First, it marked the 445th anniversary of the founding of the School in 1573. And second, it was the date of our annual Elizabethan Union Dinner Debate, a formal occasion now in its 53rd year that brings together the School's present with its past through the involvement of current Year 12 pupils alongside Old Elizabethans. The continuity provided by the annual running of such events not only celebrates the School's rich heritage, but also points to its future, as the Sixth Form debaters of today become the alumni of tomorrow and they, in turn, interact with their successors at the School.

Within our history, we have a long record of excellence. We continue our regular celebrations of commitment and achievement in School, such as our recent Senior Awards Ceremony. The excellence achieved at QE is, in its many forms, in part a result of the high standards and aspirations maintained by the School, the parents and the boys themselves. But, of course, there can be a

tension between striving for excellence and falling into the trap of perfectionism.

In the academic realm, perfectionism is that self-imposed pressure always to perform completely faultlessly, where receiving 9/10 goes from being a source of pride and satisfaction, albeit with



RUGBY: Good play in testing conditions characterised the 42nd QE Sevens, while QE's U13s won five of six matches at the Berkhamsted Sevens.



WISE WORDS: Senior pupils help younger boys through the Peer Mentoring Scheme.

the recognition that there is scope for further improvement, to a cause of disappointment, anxiety or even despair. For their own wellbeing, it is most important that boys retain a sense of perspective and that they are supported at School and at home to ensure this. This perspective is part of resilience, which is one of the key attributes we seek to nurture in our pupils.

Naturally, we want boys to do their best and to achieve as highly as possible, but this means being 'realistically ambitious', as the wording of *Enhancing future prospects* – one of the priorities set out in our 2016–2020 School Development Plan – has it. We are fully cognisant of the importance of boys navigating this tension successfully and, in fact, the School does a very great deal to help. For instance, we attach considerable importance to our bespoke tutorials – one-to-one sessions between staff tutors and boys – as part of our commitment to ensuring the Personal Development Time curriculum is carefully tailored to our pupils' needs and careers education. Boys should listen carefully to the counsel of their teachers, which is based on their professional experience and individual knowledge of the boys in their charge. Our peer mentoring scheme provides another source of help, and I have been impressed by the quality of the advice often proffered by older boys to their younger fellow pupils.

A new development in the Sixth Form this year has been the QE-USP enrichment option, a modular course designed to allow Year 12 pupils to enhance their skills in putting together the best possible university application – which means one in which the laudable quality of academic ambition is nonetheless tempered by realism and pitched according to each boy's abilities. (The 'USP' aspect stands both for **U**niversity admissions **S**upport **P**rogramme

and for **U**nique **S**elling **P**oint.) Then there is the continuing development of QE Connect, our initiative that matches current pupils with alumni who can provide them with specific help in setting and then pursuing their university and career aspirations.

We also now very regularly invite expert speakers, many of them alumni, to speak to the boys through our lecture programmes and on other occasions. Their often-sage advice is another invaluable help in combatting perfectionism. It is striking how frequently highly accomplished speakers refer to the setbacks they have suffered, or describe situations in which a failure became serendipitous for a future success. Entrepreneurs are always talking about the importance of failing as a means of learning. And one recent Old Elizabethan speaker, Jake Green (1992–1997), explained that he was rejected by a particular law firm after university, but has since become a partner there, following experience elsewhere.

We place considerable emphasis on the characteristics – specifically the skills and habits – required for successful learning. This is likewise reflected in our School Development Plan, under the priority headed *Meeting academic challenges*, which emphasises "learning to persevere, to overcome failures and to enjoy the rewards that come from achieving ambitious academic goals". Boys should ultimately embrace situations when they are 'stuck' and have a range of strategies to employ themselves in such circumstances. This year, staff are reviewing and fine-tuning the School's own assessment strategies to provide a foundation for the development, assessment and rewarding of these skills and habits (as well as the identification of

strategies to support those students who are not effective at developing them). This review includes looking at how teachers acknowledge and reward effort and use praise effectively.

I would like to remind boys and their parents of the need to take note of such written or verbal feedback and not focus solely on the mark. Parents can support the School's efforts by urging their sons to see mistakes not as things to fixate upon, but as learning opportunities. They can also help them by encouraging them to participate in our very wide range of enrichment activities – including sports, the arts and volunteering – to ensure boys at QE are well-rounded and broadly accomplished, thus reducing the risk of their becoming narrow or obsessive.

Excellence abounds at this School. I am pleased to be able to state that this year, our sixth-formers have received 28 Oxbridge offers, including 12 from Oxford, which is now closing in on Cambridge, for which there are 16 offers. The Oxford figure is a record, certainly in recent years, and a feat that was happily timed for the visit of Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, as Guest of Honour at our 2018 Senior Awards. Other examples of excellence are detailed in the pages of this newsletter, such as our success in the Mathematics and Physics Olympiads, our robotics teams qualifying for the World Championship in the US and those who delighted audiences in this term's Music and Drama performances.

My warmest wishes go to all QE families for the Easter holidays.

Neil Enright
Headmaster

Hard-hitting headlines

Three pre-eminent journalists visited the School this term, giving boys the chance to hone their skills in asking questions by turning the tables on some veteran interviewers.

The first was Jeremy Paxman, who made his name with his tough interviewing style on the BBC's *Newsnight*. He brought with him his trademark combination of sometimes combative frankness and well-informed opinion. Boys from all year groups seized the chance to grill him on subjects including Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn, pollsters, the 2017 general election, social media, Donald Trump and, of course, Brexit.

Liam Halligan, Economics Commentator with *The Telegraph Group*, kept his Economics Society audience of GCSE and A-level pupils enthralled with a talk that ranged from pension thefts more than a decade ago to the "necessary correction" of recent stock market falls.

And George Parker, Political Editor of the *Financial Times*, led boys on a journey through pivotal moments of recent British history from the end of the Thatcher era right through to Brexit when he visited as guest speaker at the Year 12 Formal Luncheon.



Stateside student: an OE insider's view

2017 leaver Ché Applewhaite inspired Year 12 boys interested in applying to Ivy League universities when he took a break from his first year at Harvard to visit QE.

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Boys also enjoyed a visit from entrepreneur Akshay Ruparelia (OE 2009–2016), reportedly the country's youngest self-made millionaire at 19 through the success of his online estate agency, Doorsteps.co.uk.

Economics: from Brexit to commodities trading

QE's economists had the opportunity to hear about widely differing aspects of their subject from authorities in the field at two events.

Europe expert Sam Evans led some lively debate about Brexit and cleared up a few misconceptions, too, when he visited the School to address 130 Year 11 boys studying Economics. His talk centred on the modern history of Europe and on how the European Union functions. Sam is the School Visits Officer at Europe House – the European Parliament's London Information Office.

And Year 12 boys attended an Economics conference at St Paul's School. The event

began with a simulated commodities trading game, in which QE's boys teamed up with participants from other schools. They then heard from City figures George Dennis and George Buckley. Mr Dennis, a Deutsche Bank trader, spoke about the day-to-day realities of his job and discussed the implications of economic policy, such as the end of quantitative easing. Dr Buckley, Chief Economist at Nomura, the global investment bank, presented his economic outlook for 2018 and beyond.





Music and Drama: the importance of the performing arts

The performing arts make an essential contribution to the life of Queen Elizabeth's School, helping to ensure that pupils not only realise their academic potential, but also become well-rounded and broadly accomplished.



While QE boasts an impressive array of clubs and societies, for many pupils, it is the performing arts that best epitomise what it means to be an Elizabethan beyond the classroom. In participating, boys not only derive great individual satisfaction, but enjoy a shared sense of purpose and of belonging to QE's arts community: those involved in drama frequently comment that it feels like being part of a family.

This term's production of *The 39 Steps* was a prime example. The adaptation of John Buchan's much-loved spy thriller combined fast-paced action with comedy, prompting Headmaster Neil Enright to comment: "It has been many years since I have laughed so much!"

"Elaine has been pivotal in making Drama once again a central part of the extra-curricular offer at QE; I am most grateful for her dedication and commitment over the years. She has brought great joy to QE's young actors and to audiences alike," said Mr Enright.

With a cast of almost 40 boys from Years 7–13, *The 39 Steps* marked a triumphant swansong for Elaine White, who is retiring after overseeing the revival of the annual School Play in recent years. On the final night in the Main School Hall, she was presented with flowers and with a book from QE actors past and present containing their memories of the many productions in which she has been involved.

Through the School Play and events such as the Shakespeare Schools Festival in the autumn, not only do casts have the opportunity to work on their acting, there are also plentiful opportunities for the technical crew to hone their skills, too. All involved can expand their knowledge of the chosen text. Furthermore, in the relatively demanding environment of rehearsals in the run-up to a performance, actors and crew alike will perforce develop valuable skills and attributes such as teamwork and resilience.



As is customary with the School Play, *The 39 Steps* was supported by a group of pupil composers and instrumentalists, led by Director of Music Cheryl Horne. There are also many occasions in the School calendar in which the musicians themselves take centre-stage.

The first half of term saw a typically relaxed Jazz Evening. The programme featured standards – *Is you is or is you ain't my baby?* and *Blue in Green*, a ballad from Miles Davis's influential *Kind of Blue* album – alongside pieces more commonly associated with other genres, such as Simon and Garfunkel's *Bridge over Troubled Water* and *Valerie* by The Zutons, sung solo by Year 13's Alfie Clarke. There were further vocal contributions from the junior boys in the B Minors and their older counterparts in the Barbershop group; the

ensembles playing included the Big Band, Friday Jazz, Saxophone Ensemble and Year 9 Blues, and Sixth Form saxophonist Sanjeev Menon performed a solo.

Later in the term, the tension rose considerably with the running of the newly revived Inter-House Music Competition. The contest featured specially formed ensembles drawing boys from across all year groups, who were required to choose a piece based on the theme of the Oscars and then arrange and rehearse it. The fiercely fought competition culminated with a performance of all the pieces to the whole Lower School (Years 7–10) at a special assembly. Pearce emerged as winners with their version of the hit song, (*I've had*) *The Time of My Life*, from the 1980s film classic, *Dirty Dancing*.

Like Mrs White, our Year 13 pupils enjoyed their own swansong, namely the Leavers' Concert in the final week of the Spring Term, which had the theme, *I have a dream*.

The Headmaster concludes: "Many boys find the shared experience of collaborating to produce a work of musical or dramatic excellence to be a deeply rewarding part of their School life outside their studies, creating lifelong memories as well as engendering the immediate satisfaction that comes from artistic achievement and from giving pleasure to others. As a School, we are fully apprised of the importance of the performing arts and will continue to allocate significant expertise and resources to them."



From the archives: “A healthy and ambitious dramatic tradition”

The annual staging of a School Play in recent years marks not the beginning of Drama as a major facet of life at QE, but its renaissance.

The archives record large-scale productions throughout the 1950s, including Shakespeare (*Henry IV, Part I*, 1953; *Julius Caesar*, 1959) and perennial favourites, such as George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (1951), as well as *The Would-be Gentleman* (1952, adapted from Molière’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) and the now little-performed comedy by James Bridie, *Mr Bolfray* (1954).

The performances were reported in the *Elizabethan* magazine of the day and attracted proper, critical reviews from the *Barnet Press* – and even, on occasion, in the national papers. In 1958, an unnamed critic for the *Times Educational Supplement* reviewed *Nightmare Abbey*, Thomas Love Peacock’s 1818 gothic satire: “Queen Elizabeth’s School, Barnet, is blessed with a healthy and ambitious dramatic tradition, and cursed with a constricting stage.” The reviewer went on to praise the cast for “playing their extraordinary characters as if they believed in them, never allowing them to degenerate into burlesque”, while offering a couple of suggestions to the producer.

For most, if not all, of these plays, that post was filled by English teacher Jack Covington. A glance through the programmes reveals some other familiar names, too, including Captain Absolute in the 1950 production of Sheridan’s *The Rivals* played by one K R Cooper – current Governor Ken Cooper.

Women’s rights and wrongs

The rights of women and steps to redress discrimination against women at work were among the topics which led to lively debate at two separate events.

Alice Fookes, an Awareness-Raiser for UN Women (the United Nations organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women), gave a wide-ranging talk about the work of the UN. She spoke about its flagship programmes for women, including providing decent work, ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, and encouraging

women’s participation and leadership in decision-making.

At a competitive debating symposium hosted by The Henrietta Barnett School in Hampstead, one of the motions which put 50 Year 8 boys through their paces was *This House would impose quotas for women in workplaces where they are under-represented*.

Sound in body and mind

The School added to its already comprehensive pastoral provision by inviting in two speakers who are experts in health issues facing today’s young people.

Tim Coombe from XenZone, an organisation set up by members of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, spoke to the boys about Kooth, an on-line, free, safe support service for young people. He said that boys currently are statistically much less likely

to look for support than girls, but challenged the perception that it is not manly to ask for help. Kooth facilitates easy access to high-quality mental health support and information.

And in a Year 12 assembly, Nicole Schnackenberg of the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Foundation spoke about body image, explaining that BDD is the perception of a major flaw or imperfection in appearance, which can lead to hours of pre-occupation, camouflaging and even self-harm.



Adding up to success

QE boys have recorded multiple successes in Mathematics competitions this term.

A team comprising Kiran Aberdeen, Bashmy Basheer, Aadi Desai and Niam Vaishnav from Year 12 achieved the School’s best-ever result in the national final of the Senior Team Maths Challenge, scoring 197 points out of a possible 230 to secure seventh place out of 86 teams.

Two of the three were also among three sixth-formers who won places in the second round of the elite British Mathematical Olympiad: Kiran and Niam, together with Aneesh Chopada, of Year 13, were awarded certificates of distinction and bronze medals, having scored 47 marks out of a possible 60, 48/60 and 49/60 respectively.

And in the UK Mathematics Trust’s Intermediate Maths Challenge, 175 of the 310 Year 9-11 boys who entered achieved gold medals, with 27 qualifying for the Intermediate Olympiad and a further 140 progressing to the other follow-on round, known as the Kangaroo. In all three cases, these are the highest QE totals across recent years. James Tan, of Year 10, was awarded *Best in School*.

Élite physicists' awards

All three QE boys entered in this year’s British Physics Olympiad won awards. Aneesh Chopada took gold, placing him in the top 9% of the 1,740 pupils who took part, and was invited to take part in the Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad. Abhishek Balkrishna won silver and Milan Hirji received the bronze I award. All are in Year 13.

Physics teacher Georgina Garfield said: “Our three competitors are to be congratulated: these are excellent results achieved in a prestigious competition marked at a very high level.”

Superb! QE robotics teams reach world finals

Four QE teams have won places in next month’s VEX Robotics World Championships in the USA.

The success of the Hybrid Alpha and Beta teams in the School’s very first year of participation in the senior VEX EDR competition is matched at junior level, with two teams, Gear Squad and Technogear, reaching the VEX IQ World Championship in Louisville, Kentucky – repeating QE’s double qualification in that competition last year.

The boys’ efforts have been boosted by the support of the Foundation Trustees and of one particular OE, Sachin Dev Duggal (1994–2001), who is an AI entrepreneur.

Hybrid Alpha qualified after scooping the Excellence Award in the regional EDR event at Stowe School during the winter. Then, at the national finals held at Telford International Centre, team Beta picked up the highly sought-after Design Award for the design process itself and their excellent logging and tracking of it, which secured them a berth at the World Championship.

Gear Squad qualified at the IQ national finals, also at Telford, by retaining the Teamwork Champions title won by QE last year, whilst Technogear won the

Design Award in the junior category. Commenting on the seniors’ success, Head of Technology Michael Noonan said: “This was an extremely accomplished performance from Alpha, and a huge relief for BETA in gaining their World Championship qualification. Beta proved they have what it takes when the chips are really down on a national stage. Both teams have done superbly in their senior competition debut.”

Mr Noonan also commended the junior teams: “In the biggest national finals to be held yet, the boys held their nerve and performed valiantly.”

The Alpha team is made up of: Year 12’s Aadi Desai, together with Deshraam Ganeshamoorthy, Bhargab Ghoshal, James Tan and Ukendar Vadivel, all of Year 10. The Beta team comprises: Dilan Sheth, of Year 12, along with Daniel Radzik-Rahman, Yai Sagolsem, Devin Karia and Sunay Challa, from Year 10.

Gear Squad consists of Year 9 boys Vihaan Jain, Varun Vijay Kumar, Shilacshan Lingakumar, Dillan Shah and Alex Woodcock. Technogear comprises five Year 8 boys: Arjun Arunkumar, Dylan Domb, Aditya Khanna, Anish Rana and Yash Shah.



All rise!

A 15-strong team of Year 11 and 12 pupils, coached by English teacher Lucy Riseborough, have progressed through three qualifying rounds of the Bar Mock Trial Competition to reach the national final.

The competition involves mock criminal trials in a crown court in front of real judges. In preparation, the boys visited the Supreme Court, sitting in on a case in Court 2, the Royal Courts of Justice and Middle Temple, one of the Inns of Court.

Head of Philosophy, Religion & Society Jack Robertson said: "The boys were impressed by the formality and ceremony, but also surprised at how straightforward the language of the barristers was."



National finalists

QE debaters have won a place at the European Youth Parliament national finals after a strong performance at a regional event.

Eight sixth-formers headed to the European Commission's London building in Smith Square for the EYP South East forum, where they were selected – together with independent schools St Paul's and Guildford High – to go through.

The QE team, all from Year 12, defended a resolution which proposed steps towards greater integration and co-operation between the armed forces of EU countries. Academic Enrichment Tutor Helen Davies said: "The boys worked exceptionally well as a group, having done their research well; they made interesting points, often bringing new lines of argument into the debate."

Foil turns to gold

QE's U13 First team took gold in the foil discipline at the inaugural Hertfordshire School Fencing Championships. Abdullah Chisti and Mrinaank Chilkoti, both from Year 9, and Umer Saad Rahman, from Year 8, saw off five other teams to win the title, including the QE U13 Second team, who were placed fourth.

The U15 team won silver, also in Foil. The boys received their medals at a presentation at the event and were given certificates for the School.



Capacity crowd

A visit by two VIPs from the world of football proved popular with both boys and staff. It was 'standing room only' when David Dein, a respected entrepreneur and businessman with a long association with Arsenal, and Gary Mabbutt, a former professional footballer for Spurs and England, delivered their presentations. Mr Dein spoke about the business side of the Premier League, while the former FA Cup-winning captain explained the role of the Professional Footballers' Association.

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