

February 2010

Dear Parents,

Headmaster's Newsletter February 2010

I hope you all had a very good half term break. Although the Spring term is typically short I have as always an enormous amount of purposeful academic and co-curricular achievements to report on.

Academic

You should all have received interim reports for your sons and daughters for the first half of the term. Congratulations to the following pupils who are commended for their assessments.

Channon:

Toby Griffiths, Gregor Grant, Jonathan Jacobs, James Kwok, Chris Li, Joshua McCreadie and Rory Sear.

Jack Tigg:

Victoria Challes, Emma Cawley, Hannah Wilson, Abi Sanders-Dutton, Hope Pointing, Hannah Clarke, Shaneen Cureton and Justina Zhang.

Southcombe:

Corrine Walker

Sibly:

Henry Cole, Louis Kohlman, Edward de Havilland, Kyle Bishop, George Daniells, Milo Kite, Jason Baldacchino, Edward Wilkins, Tom Bryan, Chris Holyday, Reuben Kravis, Matthew Duncan, Jacob Ruffell- Hazell, Darius Vahdati, Euan Alexander, Alexander Birch, Sam Fawcett, Henry Felek, Alex Trepess, Matthew Worrall, Joseph Fender, Rhys Robson-Edmunds, Edward Barrett, Abdullah Akhter, Richard Venn, Maaz Akhter, George Searle, William Fisher, James Bolam and Jacob Slingsby-Smith.

Fielding:

Toby Page, Jared Wedge-Thomas, Charles Ling, Ben Rigg, Hobz de Caux, George Shepherd, Matthew Sawyer, Christopher Hedges, Joshua Coglean, Thomas Batchelor, Shayaan Akhtar, Callum Brunton, Daniel

Hood, Evan Storrs-Fox, Gregory Wotton, Patrick Thorpe, Euan Jones, Oliver Monks and James Ross

Laker:

Poppy Midgley, Lauren Moore-Williams, Sophie Hale, Rebecca Handford, Daniella Smith, Isabel Gooding, Tirion Smith, Molly Symes, Amelia Sturt, Tessa Down, Phoebe Wadman, Kate Hamner, Rosie Walker, Ella Vacani, Flossie Biss, Hannah McLeod, Sarah Marsh, Megan Loveridge, Scarlett Scott-Collins, Hope Turner, Pearl Wilson, Jess Orme-Dawson, Sidonie Kravis, Molly Joyce, Poppy Turner, Helen Weaver and Beth Donnelly-Ford

School:

Angus Yeung, Jonathan Mudge, Dan Moss, Kelvin So, Ryan Page, Henry Maxwell-Lyte, Ian Mak and Merrick Steward.

If you have any concerns over your son or daughter's academic progress then please address them in the first place to their tutor who will be happy to help you. Fortunately there are very few pupils who are giving us cause for concern and I am extremely pleased with the very good progress that the vast majority are making. Congratulations to Jonathan Dale and Katherine Wilkins who have achieved three Sixth Form distinctions and Matthew Rowe, Ryan Page, Lilly Tang, Jess Tidy, Lucy Robertshaw, Emily Ruffell – Hazell, Ian Mak, Laura White, Gemma Bagge, Lizzie Gray and Justina Zhang who have achieved 5 green commendations and have received book tokens from me.

9X have attended two Gifted and Talented days – the first at Yeovil which was demanding but enjoyable and the other with St Augustine's Year 9 pupils. Thanks to Mr Vicary and Mr Hamilton who ran the sessions.

Trips

There have been a number of academic department day trips which have been very successful. The artists visited Tate Britain and Tate Modern and hopefully their study of the art work will have provided useful exam

inspiration. The Sixth Form Psychologists attended a very informative conference. Year 10 Biologists enjoyed their trip to the Genesis Building and the A Level French students thoroughly enjoyed an outstanding performance of Les Miserables in London.

Debating

Many congratulations to our team of Alex Knight and Sian Priory who won the Schools Debating heat against Taunton School, Kings, Wellington and Richard Huish. In March they compete for the right to represent the South West in the national finals by taking on the winners from Devon, Dorset and Cornwall.

Chapel

Many thanks to the Chaplain for a very moving service on Holocaust Memorial Day when we welcomed Rev Bruce Thompson from Temple Methodist Church as our guest speaker. Bruce provided us with his reflections from his visit to Anne Frank's hide out in Amsterdam and Auschwitz.

On the first Crossfire meeting of term our guest speaker was the former Chaplain of Queen's College, Ed Standhaft who inspired a fascinating debate on whether religion is a good or bad thing.

The boarders visited Creech St Michael Baptist Church and the Rev Lance Birks' address was based on 'Who Am I?'

Many thanks to the Chaplain and Mr Paul for organising the Lent Addresses last week. All School Worship was followed by a series of discussions which gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' death and resurrection. Many of the discussions were both deep and thought provoking.

Own Clothes Day on Friday raised over £1200 for the house charities. Each house has presented an assembly on a charity of their choice.

Chinese New Year

Many thanks to our Chinese students and Mrs Mainstone for their assembly that celebrated Chinese New Year on the 14th February. In a very colourful celebration they introduced the Year of the Tiger and presents were given to those pupils whose birthday fell on the day of the assembly. Most of Year 7 were born in the year of the tiger.

6th Form Open Evening

I hope that the Year 11s enjoyed the 6th Form Open Evening and found it informative and helpful. My thanks go to the 6th Form students who manned the departmental stands, talked about their subjects and then hosted the reception in the 6th Form Centre.

Music

Many thanks and congratulations to all the pupils who performed in the outstanding mid-term Orchestral Concert which featured the Wind Band, The Chamber Orchestra, The First Orchestra and the Middle-School Orchestra, the Singing Ensemble, the Swing Band and Justina Zhang on her Guzheng an instrument that she had played during the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Thanks also to Messrs Quick, Garton, Hedges and Miss Anderson.

Drama

Thank you and congratulations also to the AS Performance Studies students who performed a Passion Play at Trull Church. It really was sensational, moving and at times very humorous. Congratulations to the performers, Freddy Carter, Jake Evans, Beth Winter, Sidi Duke, Rebecca Turvill and Sam Lewis, together with the technical ensemble Carol-Anne Cheah, James Blackwell, John Nixon along with Mr Appleby, Mr Hedges and Mr and Mrs Evans.

Dance

The Dance Show – Chomolungma was inspired by the ascent of Everest by Sir Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tensing. Particular congratulations to the Director Mrs Kay Bloxham and the students and pupils who choreographed the dances. Gemma Sear, Lizzie Gray, Kate Marston, Hannah Shepherd, Annie Venn, Dannie Keitch, Charlotte Quick, Laura Benham, Bonnie Free, Kate Johnson and Hope Turner along with the technical crew of Mr Appleby, James Blackwell, John Nixon, Jack Johnson and Carol-Anne Cheah. Together with the dancers they all took a well deserved extra bow during assembly.

Sixth Form Society

The February Sixth Form Society meeting was entitled, 'Magic with Mark'. We were treated to a mind reading magic act which

left us all truly amazed. The Sixth Formers are looking forward to their formal dinner next week.

Boarders

The boarders have enjoyed two weekend excursions so far this term. The first to watch Mr Sprangle play for Plymouth Albion against Bristol in the rugby union championship. Unfortunately Plymouth were defeated. This was followed last weekend by a shopping trip to Bristol.

DoE Awards

A number of day and overnight expeditions have taken place over the last month at all levels. Walking, open boating and cycling groups have all done very well sometimes having to cope with very challenging conditions. Thanks as always to the staff who give up their weekends to lead the expeditions.

Sport

Results and reports on all the netball and hockey matches can be found on the school website. Teams have all performed well on a very competitive circuit.

Many congratulations to Archie Jeffrey who represented the Southern Prep School Barbarians against the North of England Prep Schools side at Rugby School. Playing on the left wing he had a storming game putting in several ferocious tackles and great runs with the ball in hand. He helped his team to a comprehensive 42-17 victory. As a consequence he has now been selected to represent the England Prep School Barbarians on their tour of Northern Ireland ahead of an international rugby festival in Biarritz in May. The final of which will be broadcast live on French TV.

Congratulations also to Michael McLeod and Zac Slingsby-Smith who continue to enjoy success on the international fencing circuit. At the recent International Fencing Competition in London they finished in the top 40 out of a 150 competitors from 13 nations.

Congratulations also to Alice Brayley and Rosie Dunkley who have been selected for the Somerset Girls County Cricket squad. I very much hope we will be able to arrange some inter-schools fixtures for our girls cricket team this coming summer.

Friends of Queen's College

Many thanks to the Friends of Queen's College for organising the very successful Quiz Night on Friday evening. It was sell - out with 17 teams who all had a most enjoyable time- not least because of the excellent curry provided by Mr Dyer. Particular thanks to last year's winners Mr and Mrs Winter, Mr and Mrs Haswell and Mr and Mrs Hinchcliff who set the questions and organised the evening and congratulations to this year's winners Mr and Mrs Mason, Dr and Mrs Hall, Viorica Barbu and Mr Cole.

The Tempest - You should all have received a flier about the production of The Tempest which is taking place at school in the open air on the evening of Saturday 26th June at 7.30pm. Please apply for your tickets as soon as possible so that the Queen's College family has the first chance to purchase tickets. It promises to be a great event. Should the weather be inclement the play will be staged in the Queen's Hall.

Conference Centre

All members of the Queen's College family staff, parents and families are invited to our new Queen's College Conference Centre on the evening on the 13th March to watch the England v Scotland Six Nations rugby match on the wide screen. Liquid refreshments will be available from 4.00pm and burgers and hot dogs will be served throughout the evening. Hopefully it will be a most enjoyable social occasion and provide you with an opportunity to view our smart new facility.

Passion Art

Do please come to the Queen's Hall foyer to view the Passion Art exhibition which is absolutely stunning.

Mephedrone

It has been brought to my attention that this recreational drug is now in Taunton. The Somerset Drug and Alcohol Action Team have issued all schools in the area with a bulletin about Mephedrone. Mephedrone is also known as Meow, Meph, M-Cat, Plantfood, 4-MMC, Bounce or Bubble. Local and national intelligence suggest that it is increasing in popularity as a drug of choice for stimulant users in the UK

What is Mephedrone? It is a stimulant drug with similar properties to amphetamine. It is

available as a powder which can be snorted or smoked or in pills or capsules. The effects can start between 15minutes and an hour after it is taken and last up to 3 hours.

Recognising the signs of use: It produces a rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure, sweating, goose bumps and dilated pupils. Users have also suffered anxiety, irritation to the skin, heart palpitations, muscle twitching, dizziness, light headedness and vertigo. After a high dose there is an unpleasant 'come down' period with low moods, memory loss and irritability.

It is sold as plant food and is marketed as 'not fit for human consumption' and so is not regulated by existing legislation.

Mephedrone cannot be positively identified on the street, therefore any person caught in possession of it would be treated in the same way as for any other suspected drug.

Book Fair

From Tuesday 16 to Thursday 18 March 2010 there will be a lunchtime book fair in the Performing Arts Centre. This annual event is an opportunity for pupils to browse a wide range of fiction and recreational non-fiction. Pupils may pay in cash or, unless Mrs Ross is advised otherwise by yourselves, via their school accounts, up to a maximum of £25. Parents are welcome to attend the fair. The commission earned at last year's fair allowed the purchase of over 70 fiction books, which will be donated to Brikama Methodist Academy in the Gambia when a party from Queen's College visits this Easter.

We have a great deal to look forward to between now and the end of term and I look forward to seeing you at the various cultural, sporting and social events.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Headmaster

