

30th November 2009

Dear Parents,

Headmaster's Newsletter November 2009

We seem to be paying for the glorious sunshine of September and early October. To say that November has been wet would be an understatement but it certainly hasn't dampened spirits. I have a great deal of purposeful work and activity to reflect upon this month.

Academic

Congratulations to Hakimah Aziz, Sarah Grenfel, Jacqueline Kwan and Megan Lewis who have achieved three Sixth Form distinctions and Lydia Riches (twice), Kelvin So, Charlotte Byran, Vanessa Innes Palmer, Ellie Triffit, Lily Tang, Harriet Parratt, Winnie Yu, Ieuan Jones, Chris Li and Shaneen Cureton who have all gained 5 green commendations. All have received book tokens from me. It is also always a pleasure to sign so many yellow commendations brought to me by Years 7-9 pupils in the mornings. This confirms that a significant amount of high quality work is being undertaken.

Sixth Form

There has been a very positive response to the introduction of the Recognition of Achievement Award for the Sixth Form. The award has been endorsed by the Taunton Chamber of Commerce. I have always wanted an award to recognise all aspects of educational achievement at Queen's including academic, physical, cultural, leadership and service. The first presentations will take place at Speech Day in the summer. In addition we have our first cohort of students doing the AQA extended project which provides them with the opportunity to study a subject of their choice in greater depth. We are also offering Open University courses which provide an excellent bridge between school and university, as well as enhancing UCAS applications.

Mandarin

We have a small group of pupils taking co-curricular Mandarin with our teacher Sophie Turpin. If any parents would be interested in joining these

classes after school then please do email the Director of Studies, Mr Warner on ghw@queenscollege.org.uk.

I intend to put into next term's calendar another Headmaster's Question Time at which I will make a presentation on an aspect of education at Queen's and answer parental questions. My first such evening on the curriculum was attended by about 30 parents and it provided positive feedback. Please let me know if there is a particular topic that you would like me to cover next term.

Debating

Congratulations to Michael McLeod and Hero Suffield who represented the school in the first round of the Cambridge Union Debating Competition. Although they didn't win their heat, as Year 11 pupils they more than held their own against experienced Year 13 opponents. I am sure they will prove to be a very strong team over the next couple of years.

Inter School Quiz

Congratulations and thank you to Jon Dale, Carol-Anne Cheah, Sarah Marsh and Kate Johnson who put up a gallant effort in the first round of the competition. They beat Exeter B team but lost to Torquay.

Trips

Over half term there were four overseas trips which all proved to be extremely successful. The American exchange to Viewpoint was led by Miss Ashman. Our students attended the school and got on very well with their exchange partners as well as enjoying a full programme and glorious Los Angeles sunshine. We very much hope to welcome a party of pupils and staff from Viewpoint in June 2010. The Year 13 History trip to Madrid was led by Mr Bisson. He reported that everyone enjoyed the busy itinerary and conducted themselves extremely well. The Art trip to Paris was organised and led by Mrs Western. Pupils certainly enjoyed visiting galleries and exhibitions and had plenty of opportunities for sketching and photography. They enjoyed a night time ascent of the Eiffel Tower, a boat trip and a visit to the Pompidou Centre. Mrs Western

reported that the students were great company and very enthusiastic.

Mrs Greenow led a group of Year 9 and 10 pupils to Barcelona. They too had an excellent time and welcomed the opportunity to test out their Spanish on the local shop keepers.

As always I am extremely grateful to all the staff who give up their holiday time to lead and support these trips which enrich the all round education of pupils in so many ways.

There have also been a number of academic trips over the last four weeks.

The Geography A Level students have studied Taunton's business districts, the biologists have also been out on a field trip. The A Level French students attended an excellent conference at Birmingham University. The Year 9 historians have been to Blaenavon and the Big Pit. The Sixth Form Economic students attended the Royal Economic Society annual lecture on 'Law and Morality in Economic Life'.

Following the summer Geography trip to the Alps the pupils were asked to submit written reports. Mr Ross informed me that the standard was very high and the prize winners reports were truly excellent. My congratulations to Harriet Parratt, Jack Johnson, Kate Alger-Green, Blair Brown and Clara Elliot who were presented with prizes.

Sixth Form Society

The November meeting of the Sixth Form society was addressed by Lucy Turner who provided our sixth form with an insight into employability, applications, CVs etc.

Chapel

Our annual Remembrance Service took place at 11.00 on the 11th November. The Act of Remembrance was attended by the whole college on the front lawn by the War Memorial. The President of the Old Queenians, my predecessor Mr Chris Bradnock placed a wreath on behalf of the OQs on the war memorial and members of the school placed crosses in the ground bearing the names of all OQs who have lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts in more recent years. I was extremely proud of every single pupil. They looked smart, paraded with military precision

and showed a real sense of occasion. The ceremony was followed by a Remembrance Service in the Queen's Hall. My thanks to the Chaplain for his excellent address and the choir who led our worship so magnificently. We were pleased to welcome a number of OQs, governors, parents and visitors to the occasion.

Crossfire

There have been good turn outs at the two most recent meetings. The first by Fergus Llewellyn and the most recent by the Rev, Dr Lance Perks on the subject of Science and Religion. Both stimulated excellent debate.

Music

There have been some memorable concerts in recent weeks. The Chamber Orchestra performed at Honiton Parish Church and were extremely well received. My congratulations and thanks to all the musicians for taking their skills into the community which is greatly appreciated. Soloists were Ellie Morley, Hannah Chidgey, Jonty Hedges, Tom Harris, Stephanie Cheung, Asako Onishi, Hakimah Aziz, Christopher Hedges, Carol- Anne Cheah along with the Chamber Orcherstra.

The recent Jazz concert in the Queen's Hall was one of the best concerts in recent memory. My congratulations and thanks to the soloists Laura Benham, Georgie Mitchell, Sidi Duke, Jade Geldard, Henry Maxwell -Lyte, Freddy Carter, Katie Gough, Jonty Hedges, Alice Alger-Green, Caitlin Evans along with the Barber Shop Quartet, the Swing Band, Sound School, Jazz Combos, the Vocal Group and the Middle School Orchestra. Sincere thanks to all the music staff and to the parents for supporting the event which raised over £500 for the Sidney Lawton Trust.

Thank you also to members of the College Choir who joined forces with Taunton Choral Society at St James Church to perform Elijah. Thank you to Alice Alger-Green, Laura Benham, Carol-Anne Cheah, Isabel Evans, Nicola Forbes, Jade Geldard, Katy Gough, Lizzie Gray, Georgie Mitchell and Molly Symes.

Taunton Young Musician of the Year

The first rounds of the annual competition took place last week. The standard was formidably high – the semi finalists have been selected for the final which takes place in the Queen's Hall on 24th January 2010. Many congratulations to Tom Harris who has won a place in the final playing the saxophone. Congratulations also to Daniel Chidgey who although he didn't make the final impressed the adjudicator and was awarded a distinction. We wish Tom all the very best for the final.

OQs Reunion Weekend

It gave me great pleasure to welcome back a large number of OQs to the Autumn reunion which was held on the weekend after Remembrance. The foci of the day were the Hockey match between the girls 1st XI and the OQs which for the first time in many years was won by the OQs who put out an extremely strong team. The rugby match which this year was played between the OQs and the Old Boys of Wellington School was supported by a very large crowd who saw the OQs power to victory and become the first winners of the Bradnock Trophy presented by my predecessor Chris Bradnock and his brother who taught at Wellington for over 30 years. The matches were followed by an excellent lunch in the PAC. Thank you to Mr Dyer and his team for providing for us so well as always.

Boarders

Last week the boarders enjoyed their termly formal dinner. Everyone enjoyed dressing up and enjoyed each others company. We were entertained afterwards by Mr and Mrs Mason who provided a Tommy Cooperesq double act, followed by a disco. Thank you to Katy Gough and Tim Urch for organising the event. The boarders also enjoyed their Sunday paint balling trip to Crealy and are looking forward to their Christmas retail therapy at Cribbs Causeway this coming Sunday.

D of E

Walking expeditions have been affected by the weather, but the canoeists and open boaters have enjoyed the thrills of fast flowing rivers.

Sport

I hope you are enjoying reading the weekly updates of all our fixtures on the website. There have been a number of notable individual achievements in recent weeks. Congratulations to Catherine Wilkins who was runner up in the County Squash Championships and is now ranked 54th in the UK U19 rankings. This is an outstanding achievement for Catherine who has been playing squash for less than 2 years.

Congratulations also go to Michael McLeod and Zac Slingsby-Smith who have been having considerable success competing in international fencing competitions.

Notable team achievements include the junior girls cross-country team who have qualified for the national cup final at Newquay next weekend by winning the South West championships. Many congratulations to Holly Brown who was second, Hannah Wilson eighth, Keren Greenow ninth, Rebecca Wilde thirteenth, Elen Falkingham fourteenth and Katie Cross thirty fifth. The event was run in awful weather and the girls ran with great grit and determination. Well done and good luck to them.

The 1st XV rugby team are also to be congratulated on excellent victories over local rivals Wellington and Taunton and a narrow defeat in the wind and rain against Kings.

U12 girls hockey team have been playing some impressive hockey this season and have scored a significant number of goals.

Congratulations to Rebecca Wilde who came 1st in the Year 7 girls South West Biathlon Championships and Keren Greenow who was 2nd in the Year 8 girls competition. Congratulations also to the Year 7 girls team of Rebecca Wilde, Livvi Hoskins and Elen Falkingham who became South West Champions, and the Year 8 girls team of Keren Greenow, Hannah Wilson and Chloe Bagge who came 3rd.

Drama

We are all looking forward to the production of Macbeth on Thursday, Friday and Saturday this coming week. I know that a vast amount of rehearsal time has been put in and that everyone is in for a scary treat. Tickets are still available through the school office. Please don't miss it.

Café des Amis

This is proving to be extremely popular. Parents are very welcome to visit at anytime. It is open from 11.00am to 5.30pm daily and from 1.00pm on Saturdays with the hot drinks being particularly popular. There is also a good range of hot snacks, cakes and other treats available. Do please pay it a visit if you haven't already.

My thanks to the Co-Chairman of the Friends Committee, Simon Willetts and Abbey Thresher and to their committee members who are currently organising an event in the new conference centre, formally the civil service club. The centre will be under going some refurbishment over the next few weeks and we hope to hold the event in early February. We will provide details of the date and theme in my end of term letter.

I look forward to seeing you at Macbeth next week, the Chamber Music Concert on the 8th December, the Informal Concert on the 11th December and the Carol Service which brings the term to an appropriate conclusion on the morning of Thursday 17th December at the Temple Methodist Church.

Thank you all for your support which is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Headmaster

