

Queen Elizabeth's School

# The Elizabethan

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

AUTUMN 2023



**AMAZING ANNIVERSARY:** Watch our video for a whistlestop tour of 450th anniversary highlights to the soundtrack of *And Be It Known*, the anthem commissioned by the School from international composer Howard Goodall.



1573 — 2023

## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

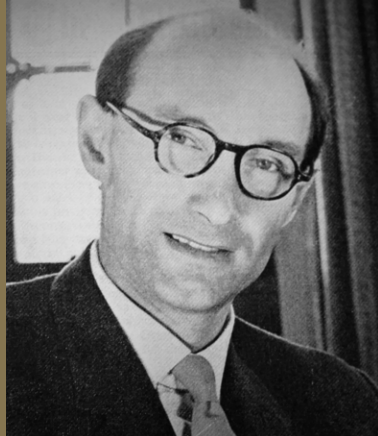
After Queen Elizabeth's School had reached the summer break in such fine shape, our A-level and GCSE candidates added still further lustre to our 450th anniversary year. We began this term basking in the light of GCSE results that easily outstripped our last pre-pandemic results in 2019, and of a brilliant Year 13 performance that saw 58.2% of A-levels being awarded an A\* grade, shattering our pre-pandemic record.

Such success does not go unnoticed: we recently had confirmation that QE

is the second-placed state school in this year's *Sunday Times Parent Power* league table. QE has now held one of the top two spots there for well over a decade, which is a truly remarkable feat of consistency at the very highest levels. Figures from *The Spectator* showed that QE pupils received more offers from Oxford and Cambridge than those at any other state secondary school – and since the magazine's survey was based on 2022 Oxbridge figures, it is not unreasonable to suppose that our lead may even be extended once this year's record figure of 47 Oxbridge offers is factored in.

So, the final term in our anniversary year began, and has continued, in an atmosphere of great optimism. We now wrap up our 450th year and remain very buoyant as we eye with eager anticipation all that 2024 will bring.

Throughout this term, boys have been enjoying the splendid new facilities in our refurbished Chemistry laboratories, following all the work done during the summer holidays. The arrival of an organ, courtesy of the Royal School of Organists, further extends musical opportunities here. More prosaically perhaps, but no less importantly, all



CHRISTMAS FARE: The Barbershop group served up a festive programme in Family Action's charity concert at St James's Clerkenwell.



of us have enjoyed being able to keep warm in recent weeks, with the boilers working well following the completion of extensive work in the Main Building plant room. FQE financial support was vital in ensuring that both the laboratory and boiler projects could go ahead: my sincere thanks goes to everyone who contributes through the *Giving to QE* scheme and in other ways.

*“a truly remarkable feat”*

It has been good to see the wider Elizabethan family playing their part in supporting the School community in a multitude of ways, from alumni

conducting mock university interviews to FQE volunteers turning out to serve refreshments at School events. Our revamped Old Elizabethans Annual Reunion Dinner was a great success, with record numbers attending from across the generations.

The launch of our 1:1 programme with Year 7 in September was significant: it is a huge step in the implementation of our digital strategy, [about which we wrote to you in September](#). By this time next year, everyone from Year 7 through to Year 10 will be involved. So far, it has gone very well – perhaps even better than expected – and I thank Year 7 and Year 9 parents for their unanimous support. Another important emphasis of the term has been on the [importance of dialogue and of oracy](#) in teaching and learning. The classroom etiquette poster that is now on display around the School serves to remind boys and staff of how good dialogue in lessons is initiated and maintained.

Amid all the celebrations this year, we sadly lost three figures who were, in their different ways, all significant players in the QE story. First came the passing of Ken Cooper (OE 1942–1950, becoming School Captain in 1949), who was both President of the OEs and Vice-Chair of Governors during a long retirement. At the end of August, we heard that FQE stalwart, former parent and retired staff member

Diane Mason (pictured top) had died. Just days later came news of the passing of former Headmaster Tim Edwards (pictured top) at the age of 98. A linguist who served at Bletchley Park during the war, he had a long headmastership here, from 1961 to his retirement in 1983. Tim was a man of principle and compassion, as well as being a figure of substance at QE and more widely, serving on the Education Committee of Barnet Council.

*“our 451<sup>st</sup> year will be just as exciting”*

As we head into the Christmas break fuelled by the huge positive energy generated through our anniversary activities, we look to take that energy with us on into the future. Work on the creation of our next new facility, the Robert Dudley Studio for drama and spoken word activities, is now due to start in the spring. The development of *QE Futures* – our extensive programme of guidance and support for boys in planning for university and for their later careers – is moving on apace. Look out for additional information on that later in the academic year.

Importantly, 2024 will see us enter the final year of our 2021–2025 School plan, [Building on Distinction](#). In the 2024 Autumn Term, we will be starting to think about where the School goes after 2025. That will be a wide-ranging process covering all aspects of the School's work. For a first glimpse of what it might mean for our campus, for example, take a look at the

Masterplan study outlined in [our recent FQE Impact Report](#).

I am confident that our 451st year will be just as exciting as our 450th, but

in a different way. We look back with gratitude on a year that has given much to celebrate; we look forward to all that the future holds for your sons and for generations of Elizabethans to come.

I wish all of you an enjoyable Christmas break.

**Neil Enright**  
*Headmaster*

## To the limit!

As part of QE's Flourish enrichment programme, hundreds of boys enjoyed new challenges on a series of trips.

An inaugural three-day stay at an Outward Bound centre in Aberdovey, north Wales, for Year 10, and day trips for Years 7 and 9 to the Stubbers Adventure Centre in Essex, provided participants with opportunities to

stretch themselves to the full, while developing existing friendships and forging some new ones. Activities included gorge-walking, canoeing, raft-building and horizontal rope-climbing.

## Champions

**Stop press:** QE has, for the first time ever, been crowned as champion in the national Ritangle competition run by charity Mathematics, Education, Innovation. The squad beat more than 1,200 other teams. Look out for a full report in January.

## Reacting well

Pupils are benefiting from two projects supported by The Friends of Queen Elizabeth's.

Two Chemistry laboratories in the Fern Building were completely refurbished over the summer. The Wolfson Foundation (an educational charity) gave a £100k grant after FQE committed significant funds. Old Elizabethan Tony Sherrard (1952–1952) also made a substantial donation towards the £230k total cost. With bids for Government funding to replace the Main Building boilers refused, FQE stepped in with £120,000. Phase I of the creation of the Robert Dudley Studio in Main Building, postponed because of the urgent need for work on the heating system, now goes ahead in the spring.



# Thriving from ancient roots: making memories, creating a living legacy

The Autumn Term brought a fitting culmination to Queen Elizabeth's School's 450th anniversary year, weaving together past, present and future, the academic and the co-curricular.



**A host of special activities put the finishing touches to 2023's colourful tapestry of rich memories.**

Colour was, in fact, much in evidence as Years 7 & 8 donned House kit for a drone photograph on Staplyton Field that spelt out #QE450. Year 12 Product Design students helped with the logistics.

One undoubted highlight was the recording of international composer Howard Goodall's anniversary anthem, *And Be It Known*, to feature as the soundtrack to the [new 450th anniversary video](#). Director of Music Ruth Partington

conducted boys from every year group in the Chamber Choir in The Friends' Recital Hall, where Indrajit Datta, of Year 13, oversaw the sound. The performers included staff (with Music teacher Jas Hutchinson-Bazely at the new electric organ), professional musicians and Old Elizabethans.

Alumni enjoyed their own anniversary celebrations at the OE Annual Reunion Dinner. The dinner has its own long heritage – this was the 127th. It drew record numbers this year after a revamp bringing a more informal feel and extra activities.



QE largely owes its 450-year existence to the patronage of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, so the visit of Joanne Paul, author of the award-winning book, *The House of Dudley*, was timely. In a lecture to Years 8 & 9, she explained



the family's huge impact in the 16th and 17th centuries, also delivering a workshop for A-level historians.

The anniversary year was heralded by HRH The Duke of Gloucester planting an oak. It ended in similar fashion, with boys playing their part in creating a sustainable future. Year 10s headed to Heartwood Forest with the aim of planting 450 trees – they actually managed 700-plus! – while back at Queen's Road, Year 7 boys boosted biodiversity on the campus by helping plant 450 bulbs, which should flower annually around the time of QE's March 24th anniversary.

# Launching the 1:1 programme

## The world at their fingertips

QE's digital strategy took a major step forward this term with the launch of the 1:1 programme.

Since September, all Year 7 pupils have been using 1:1 devices (tablet computers). The programme is being rolled out to Year 9 in January; by September 2024, all boys from Years 7-10 will be involved.

The programme allies the powerful capabilities of a high-spec Lenovo tablet – complete with touchscreen, keyboard and writing stylus – with the Microsoft (MS) suite of apps and other, education-specific apps.

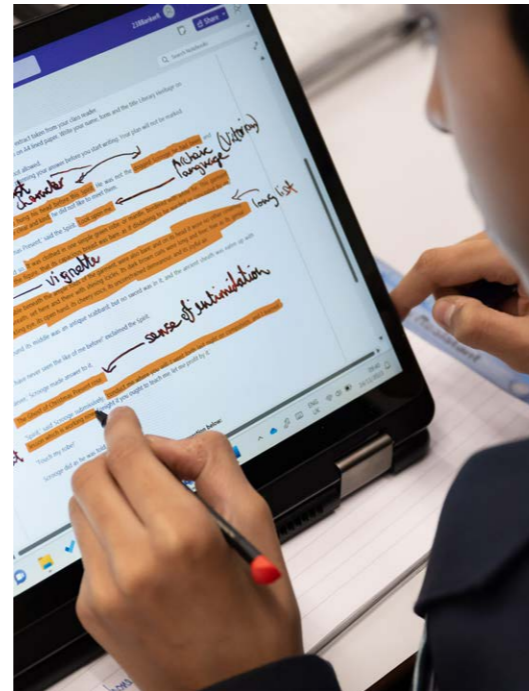
Assistant Head Sarah Westcott says: "We're now three months in and we can see that it has been quite transformational." Head of Digital Teaching and Learning Michael Noonan adds: "We are already seeing significant examples of innovation, as teachers embrace the technology both to devise collaborative learning activities and to better meet students' individual needs."

For Science teacher Gillian Martin, one key benefit has been in helping her classes focus better. Previously, if a portion of the class were not clear on an aspect of a lesson, she had to hold up the whole class to explain. "With the devices, everyone can work at their own pace, getting straight on with activities, with those who need more help putting

their hands up so I can provide more support." Assistant Head of Technology James Howard says: "The devices give students more independence." Before, if PowerPoint was used in a lesson, boys tried to capture the main points made in the presentation in their workbooks. Now they already have the presentation on their devices, so "they can highlight things and make additional notes, extending their learning".

One of the most significant decisions has been the appointment of Mr Noonan in the new role, Dr Westcott adds: "It means we have a consistent approach to staff training; we can look at our needs, and react as these change throughout the roll-out of the programme. Also, it allows us to reflect on and research about where the programme will go in the next one to two years."

[WATCH OUR VIDEO](#)



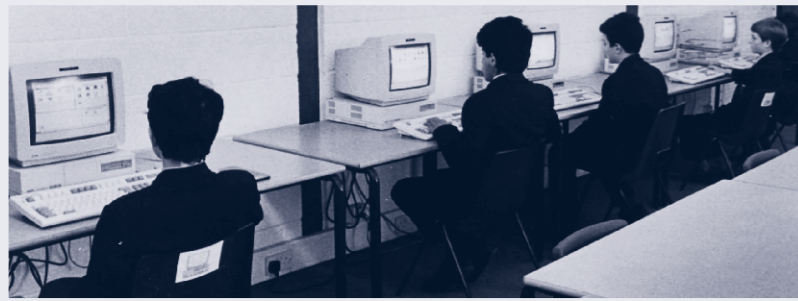
### 1:1 IN ACTION

The following include some subject-specific examples of the benefits of the 1:1 programme from Technology lessons and Year 7's Digital Literacy course, as well as its wider use:

- Using Outlook, To Do and Calendar to organise boys' days and appointments;
- Arranging bespoke tutorials and mock interviews using MS Bookings, reducing the administrative burden on staff and students;
- Using collaboration spaces to perform 'brain-dump' starter tasks and create detailed knowledge organisers during investigative challenges, enabling pupils to create detailed revision and learning resources ahead of tests and examinations;
- Showing worked examples of complex, diagrammatic problems using OneNote. Teachers first use drawing tools to provide detailed illustrations on the board, and then 'ink replay' to go over what they have done. The boys use Drawing tools to quickly sketch and jot notes, as they would on paper;
- Building assessments for students using Forms. The assessments provide teachers with instant feedback on performance; they can also use 'branching logic' to direct learning, and gather 'student voice' (pupils' views) through questionnaires;
- Saving time in lessons by using MS Stream (a video platform) to create student tutorials on the use of complex software applications or digital tasks in advance. Pupils are using the app to create instructional and informative videos on recipes (in Food Technology) and on UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- Creating instant tables for boys to annotate and analyse within a variety of applications. Through digital distribution, pages are placed in pupils' files before they even walk into the room – no printing required! – leaving more time for teaching and questioning;
- Using Digimap for Schools (an online maps and data service), allowing students to perform previously difficult analysis with ease.



# From the archives: the rise of computers at QE



From the arrival of its first computer in 1971 through to this term's launch of the 1:1 programme, Queen Elizabeth's School has long been at the forefront in the use of IT in education.

Fifty-two years ago, QE was among seven schools in the borough to be given computers – in its case, an Olivetti Programma 101 Desk-Top Computer (pictured top right), with an Olivetti Te300 teleprinter providing the user interface. Its arrival came a full decade before computers were widely introduced in state schools. *The Elizabethan* of June 1971 conceded the computer's visual similarity to "a sophisticated calculating machine",

but averred that it was "in fact a computer in the real sense of the word and is used widely in commerce." Yet boys eager to get their hands on the new machine had to wait several months. It could not be used until it had been "enlarged and modified to enable nine people to use it at any one time".

That was just the start. A successful curriculum was developed, such that the 1982 School prospectus stated: "Computer Studies courses at CSE, 'O' and 'A' Level are well established and still expanding significantly." In the same year, the Government introduced a subsidy, allowing schools to buy certain computers

at half-price. The School then boasted "a terminal linked to the Borough computer, a GEC 2050 recently presented to the school by the company, and several microcomputers..."

Headmaster Tim Edwards noted approvingly in a letter prior to his retirement in 1983 that his successor, Eamonn Harris, would be QE's first "computer-literate Head". Mr Harris's enthusiasm for all things technological was soon evident. When the School moved the computers from a cramped storeroom to a bigger location in 1988, Mr Harris, complaining of a longstanding lack of support for IT from Barnet Council, wrote that "the Authority paid for the wiring but were unable to provide anything else". That same year, the Trustees gave a substantial grant for work to start on a second computer room [*Old Elizabethan* newsletter, spring 1988]. When Education Secretary John MacGregor visited the following year, he was proudly shown "the new computer-based management control and record system under operation in the School Office".

1997 was a significant year, with £100,000 invested in computers. By then, QE had a



dedicated internet connection. "The new computer system, installed in May, comprises a 30-station network operating under NT4.0 and RM Connect 2.2," the OE newsletter records. From the turn of the new millennium, the revitalised Friends of Queen Elizabeth's were showing their mettle, funding a "state-of-the-art suite of 30 new computers" that "enables our boys to achieve at the highest KS3 Levels in ICT" (OE newsletter, August 2001). In 2002, FQE provided funds for a third suite of internet-connected computers, and in 2003 the School

invested in a bank of laptops.

Since then, IT has embedded itself into the daily lives of all students and staff. eQE, the School's intranet and e-learning platform, was established in 2008-2009. Overhead projectors gave way to electronic whiteboards; floppy disks, memory keys & CD-ROMs to cloud storage and apps. All this investment – especially in eQE – reaped dividends when the pandemic forced the adoption of remote learning, with the knowledge thus gained paving the way for the 1:1 programme.



## Political giant

Lord Michael Heseltine, a towering figure of 1980s and 1990s British politics, gave a wide-ranging lunchtime lecture. Invited by the Politics Society, the 90-year-old former Conservative Deputy Prime Minister, who worked directly with four PMs, addressed a capacity audience in the Friends' Recital Hall.



## Warming up winter

Playing to a packed audience, QE performers kept the chill at bay with some hot performances that spanned musical genres in the Winter Concert.

From the Indian Ensemble through to the Orchestra's Beethoven, and from the Electric Guitar Ensemble's Guns N'Roses numbers to the Senior Strings's Holst, there was something for everyone in the Shearly Hall.

During the evening, the Headmaster presented Junior and Senior Music

Colours, and Music Bars – given to boys who had already earned their colours but continued to excel. He said: "There was super music, supported by excellent production from our sound, lighting and stage crews and many others working back stage and front of house: these concerts are a big team effort, and my thanks go to all."



## Lecture for leaders

Paul Steggall, who spent 20 years advising companies and senior business leaders on succession, talent management and diversity, gave a lunchtime talk for pupils, covering topics including entrepreneurship.



## Grieving for Grenfell

Ten sixth-formers drew inspiration for their Art & Design A-level from five hugely different London exhibitions.

Their day began at Tate Britain, where British painter Chris Ofili's *Requiem* pays colourful tribute to fellow artist Khadija Saye, who died in the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire. Head of Art Craig Wheatley praised the "scale and beauty of such a poetic piece". They also saw: vast glass works from British artist Brian Clarke; a bamboo installation from India's Asim Waqif; Ethiopian American painter Julie Mehretu's solo exhibition of paintings using images from current affairs media; and sculptures by London-based Alvara Barrington.

## From refugee to doctor

Former Afghan refugee Waheed Arian told Year 9 he had arrived in the UK aged 15 near-penniless, but went on to study at Cambridge, Imperial and Harvard. He qualified as an NHS doctor, set up medical charities, and is a WHO digital health expert. Yet he finished his lecture by focusing on the importance of community and giving back.



## Matter of life and death

Some 40 boys came to a special workshop led by Year 12 St John Ambulance volunteer Jason Tao and a team of senior pupils to learn how they could save lives – expected to be the first in a series of first-aid events.



## Speaking, writing and drawing for a sustainable world

Environmental concerns have been at the forefront in a series of activities this term.

QE hosted a Year 13 academic symposium with North London College School on sustainability, with the boys and girls grouped by university application. The Headmaster said: "The girls bring a challenging new context for the boys to discuss and debate in."

Two QE boys enjoyed success in the Grantham Climate Art Prize competition run by Imperial College London ahead of COP28, the UN climate meeting.

Year 9's Kelvin Chen, a runner-up in the 11-14 age category, saw his artwork displayed on billboards around London, while Year 8 boy Aaryan Prabhaker's highly commended design was transformed into a mural close to Battersea Power Station.

December's edition of the pupil-run *Econobethan* magazine focuses on climate change and Economics. It has a new editorial team: Zaki Mustafa, Tejas Bansal, Akheel Kale and Uday Dash.



## Talking up a storm!

QE's debaters have been excelling, progressing in the English-Speaking Union's famous Mace competition and emerging unbeaten from a South Hampstead High School competition.

At South Hampstead, the three teams shook off the disappointment of missing the first debate because of travel delays and went on to win every one of their remaining six debates.

In the latest round of the Mace, the QE team turned the tables on Harrow and John Lyon, who had bested them in the previous round, securing their advance. Lev Crofts, English teacher and QE Flourish tutor, said: "The boys put in a huge amount of work for this, and their preparation really came off."

## Good neighbours

QE Together reached out to support a third Barnet school as part of its community outreach. A QE Together team – comprising pupils from QE and Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School – visited QE's near-neighbour, Christchurch Primary School, to shoot a video to encourage prospective parents to sign up for its nursery.

## Promoting inclusivity

Following a training day with author, educator and broadcaster Jeffrey Boakye, staff are reflecting on greater inclusivity in the School's academic and pastoral curricula. "It was a really productive day," said the Headmaster. "Jeffrey opened up difficult discussions with refreshing openness: it will help us as we strive to deliver on the priorities of our current development plan, **Building on Distinction**."

QE's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors led a School-wide celebration of Black History Month, which included essay and art competitions and student-led House assemblies. The *Econobethan* magazine also majored on BHM, with a theme of *Saluting our Sisters*.

## Winning formula

QE is through to the national finals of the prestigious *Top of the Bench* Chemistry competition. The team – Zayn Phoplankar, of Year 11; Vu-Lam Le-Nguyen, of Year 10; Aarush Choudhary, of Year 9, and Rishan Virmani, also of Year 9 – scored 92% to win the regional round in a performance described by the RSC's Chilterns & Middlesex Local Selection Committee as "magnificent". Three other QE teams were placed joint third.

## In love and war

QE's production of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Shakespeare Schools Festival brought vividly to the stage both the tender love story between the two title characters and the bitter feuding of the Montague and Capulet families.

A 19-strong cast drawn from Years 10–13 gave their festival performance at Finchley's Arts Depot, as well as performing in the Main School Hall so that all of Years 10 and 11 could see the play, which is part of their GCSE English syllabus.

[of Year 12, playing Juliet] and Dhruv Pai [Year 10, Romeo]: it can't be easy falling in love in front of an audience of your school mates, but it is a credit to both the cast and the audiences how convincingly this was handled."

Crispin Bonham-Carter, Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement), praised Year 13's Keiaron Joseph's "outstanding Mercutio" and Year 12's Saim Khan's "convincingly thuggish Capulet – complete with gold necklace – [who] almost stole the show! "Special praise must go to Anshul Nema

The cast took a break from rehearsals to watch a matinee performance of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* at the Noël Coward Theatre and enjoyed meeting the actors afterwards. The play is based on a 2013 novel by Neil Gaiman.



## Best with the bard!

*Romeo and Juliet* remained centre-stage when Vihaan Pal's reading from the play took first place in the Year 8 **Performing Shakespeare** competition. Daiwik Khedekar was second with a reading from *Henry V*, while Niketh Putta's oration from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* took third.



## Madness, betrayal and murder

All of Year 9 saw Macbeth's descent into madness, relishing the visually exciting production at the Globe Theatre, while 22 Year 12 historians saw a play about an altogether different political murder – the 1948 assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. *The Father and the Assassin* at the National Theatre explored themes of betrayal and the conflicting aims behind the struggle for Indian independence.



## Surprise successes in Cambridge

Year 13's Shivam Singh, Yash Patel and Om Patel were pleased to be invited to a weekend residential at Homerton College, Cambridge, after submitting their design for a speaker aimed at protecting construction workers' hearing to the college's Design Programme. But it was only on the second day, at

the awards ceremony, that they learned they were overall winners, receiving the judges' praise for their "dedication to making the world a better place".

The weekend included a conference, a formal dinner and opportunities to talk to current Homerton College students.



## Aero inspiration

In a five-day residential at RAF Cosford in Shropshire, QE boys were inspired by industry experts. Keeyan Shah, Kyle Goldband, Neil Kulkarni, Keshav Aggarwal and Ishaan Mishra, now in Year 10, were among only 40 pupils nationally to win places on the Summer Time Advanced Aerospace Residency.



## Power surge

The QE crew's perseverance turned disaster into triumph at their electric car's first-ever Greenpower Trust race meeting. After suffering terrible weather and a breakdown in the first race at Castle Combe, Wiltshire, they summoned up energy to rebuild it in just two hours and go again in race two.



## Huge effort against Habs

A hugely committed First XV took on Haberdashers' Boys' School, reports Director of Sport Jon Hart. The eagerly awaited fixture was held at Finchley Rugby Club. "Nearly 30 minutes in, it was two tries apiece and QE with all the momentum, but a further score from Habs tipped the balance and they grew their lead in the second half, thanks in part to the speed of their outside backs. It ended in a 36-14 defeat," said Mr Hart. "Great support on display from the QE faithful in the stands!"

## 3D pioneers

Year 12 Technology students visited Hackney-based Batch.Works – a start-up at the very forefront of 3D printing. By automating its array of machines, the firm is championing 3D printing for true manufacturing, not just building prototypes. And through recycling the already-recycled plastic filament its printers use, it is making the 'circular economy' a reality.



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