



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

December 2018

## NEWSLETTER

Tel: 01768 864621

Email: [reception@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:reception@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)

Website: [www.qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)

### The Colin Birnie Building *The Grand Opening of our new teaching block*



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School's new teaching block was officially opened on 12th December by former Headmaster, Mr Colin Birnie.

To mark the occasion, the school hosted a small reception for invited guests in the new building. Music was provided by QEGS' choir who performed a selection of traditional and modern Christmas carols, accompanied on the piano by Head of Music, Mr Daniel Roberts. The Friends of QEGS laid on drinks and a festive buffet and were assisted by Sixth Form students.



After an introduction by Mr Paul Buckland, in which he paid tribute to Mr Birnie's many achievements during his 26 years at QEGS, Mr Birnie unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion. In his speech Mr Birnie, who joined the staff in 1978 as Deputy Head and was Headmaster between 1993 and 2004, acknowledged the hard work of staff and governors from his time

in post. He also thanked his wife, Helen, who accompanied him to the event, for her support and many contributions. He said, "I'm very honoured to have this building named after me. There is no doubt that the school has gone from strength to strength, and that gives me a great deal of pleasure."

The Colin Birnie Building contains four spacious classrooms with state-of-the-art technology, a much-needed new laboratory, and a flexible, open-plan space, which will be largely used by Sixth Form students for private study as well as for presentations, staff training and concerts.

The construction of the building was paid for by QEGS' successful bid to the Department for Education's Condition Improvement Fund, which exists to improve facilities in schools, including replacing dilapidated classrooms. But the equipment and furniture was paid for by donations from students, their families and members of staff. A wall plaque inside the building lists the names of some of those who contributed. Mr Buckland said, "Without these generous contributions it would have been very difficult to get these marvellous new rooms ready so quickly for learning to begin here, as it did from the middle of September. This is a great new space and resource for QEGS in which our students will continue to learn and flourish".



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# GCSE Awards Evening



Our Y11 students from last year celebrated their GCSE success and considered the future at the school's annual Awards Evening in November.

After a welcome by Mr Paul Buckland, the students, most of whom are now studying for their A Levels at QEGS, enjoyed an address by guest speaker, Mr Alan Keegan from the University of Central Lancaster's School of Journalism, Media and Performance. In an entertaining speech, Mr Keegan challenged students to ask themselves what they love in life, to pursue the things that interest them and to follow their dreams. He pointed to his own experience, where his interest in his family's Irish heritage led to his dream job in radio and as match-day announcer at Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium and Wembley National Stadium. He advised students to always remain curious and to keep asking questions throughout their lives.

Mr Keegan was followed by musical performances from students Monika Davies and Will Ford, and a speech by year 13 student Jodie Gillon. Violinist Monika played Thomas Vitali's *Chaconne*, and Will played the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement from Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto in E Flat Major*. Jodie described her experiences volunteering with charities Gaudium, the Calvert Trust and the Eden Valley Hospice, and outlined the many benefits of volunteering.



GCSE certificates were then presented to students by Alan Keegan before Head of Year 11, Mr Steve Jones, announced the winners of the special awards. The Barrie Gardner Memorial Award for outstanding service to the school was made to Jacob Reid; Thomas Ridley received the CJ Kirkup Trophy for the most impressive contribution to a school stage production; The QEGS 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophies for Outstanding Achievement in Sport went to Ali Hassan and Beau Studholme; Lois Deans was the recipient of the Governors' Achievement Award whilst Angelina Shcherbakova won the QEGS@50 Endeavour Award and Christina Boving-Foster received the Headteacher's Award for the best GCSE results.



The evening concluded with a vote of thanks from Jacob Reid, acknowledging the role of staff and parents in students' success and ending on a note of optimism that everyone could get home in time to watch *The Apprentice*!

## Visit of The Good School's Guide

Friday 16th November saw QEGS visited by a representative of The Good Schools Guide. This is an independent guide for parents which visits about a 1,000 schools including independent and state remit giving 'unbiased and candid reviews'. The schools included are chosen by the organisation and you can not 'buy' a review. Mr Bancroft, the reviewer, spent the day with us meeting several groups including students and staff and held discussions with me. The report which has now been finalised, will be included in the guide from next year. It can be accessed on our website under the 'Parents' tab - 'Useful Documents'.

I am sure you would agree the report is extremely positive and gives a full and fair reflection of the ethos here and what QEGS is all about. The Guide is fully independent but I could hardly have written a better report myself. It is testament to the hard work and dedication of all of the staff here, teaching and support and rightly celebrates the fantastic students we have. It is a fitting way to end what has been a very successful and enjoyable term. It has been fully representative of all of the positives embodied in the report, from sporting successes such as the cross country, musical and dramatic triumphs in Hairspray and the hard work evident in the Yr11 mocks and end of unit assessments across the whole school which have produced some very encouraging reports of academic achievement from departments. We have also seen the formal opening of the Colin Birnie Building - more detail in the separate report- as a sign of our vision for the future of QEGS.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you all for the support you give us, not only in working together for the benefit of your children, but also in contributing to the ethos and future of QEGS. Parental contributions towards the costs of furnishing the Colin Birnie Building were tremendous and enabled us to equip all rooms to the high standard that is now available to aid our students' learning. I am also grateful for the significant response to our consultation about Sixth Form dress codes from parents in Years 10-13. We received in excess of 700 responses from students, staff and parents and will be publishing the outcomes in January.

I wish you all the very best for Christmas and the New Year and look forward to the start of next term on 7th January 2019. There is no staff training day, so students are straight back into lessons on the Monday, hopefully suitably refreshed after a good break.

Mr Buckland  
**Headteacher**

# Outstanding Achievement in Mathematical Challenges

Josh Losh in Year 13 has held onto the Kathy Duval award for success in the UK Maths Challenges for a third year as he still holds the most gold certificates in school, having accumulated a total of 7 gold certificates in his time at QEGS.



On many of these occasions Josh has also qualified for the next round called the Kangaroo and has also received certificates for these. Josh is a very talented mathematician and we are proud of his incredible achievement during his time in school.

Hot on his heels are William Fidalgo-Hull in Year 12 who has 6 golds and has also made it through to the Kangaroo rounds. Finley Ilett and Wilfrid Teasdale, who are both currently in Year 9 and have already gained 5 and 4 gold certificates respectfully too. They have also both got through to the Olympiad round on some occasions which is one step up from the Kangaroo. These are all excellent mathematicians to watch out for.

In addition this year, the QEGS Senior Maths Challenge team won the regional round of the Team Maths Challenge last month and are off to London in February to compete in the National Final. Good luck to them.

Mrs Ford  
**Head of Maths**



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## 'Top of the Bench' Competition



**Four of our students will represent Cumbria in the national final of the 'Top of the Bench' competition, which will be held at Loughborough University.**

The QEGS team, who were crowned Cumbrian Champions after winning the regional 'Top of the Bench' chemistry competition in October, will be travelling to Manchester University in early April where they will compete against teams from 30 other regions.

'Top of the Bench' is a national competition, which is run by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). It pits teams of the best 14-16 year olds in the country against each other in a competition which tests their practical skills and chemical knowledge beyond the chemistry GCSE syllabus.

Each team comprises of pupils from years 9-11. The team consisting of Henry Teasdale, Rhea Singh, Finley Ilett and Gemma O'Dowd should be confident going into the final after beating other schools from across Cumbria, including UCC, Keswick and Austin Friars.

Mrs Bent organises the teams for this annual event. She said, "This was an ideal opportunity for the students to stretch themselves beyond the syllabus and meet other like-minded pupils in a friendly, but competitive environment."

The winners of the competition will be crowned National Champions and will receive a trophy and a cheque for the school to spend on new chemistry equipment

# UKMT Senior Maths Team Challenge



Joshua Losh and Tansy Mak from Year 13, along with William Fidalgo-Hull and Will Ford from Year 12 made up the QEGS team for the regional round of the UKMT Senior Maths Team Challenge held at Caldew School on Friday 7th December. Along with many other teams from the region, QEGS competed to win entry to the National Final. QEGS made a strong start, being in the top three after the first two rounds. The final, and deciding round, was the relay competition, which the team had spent lots of time practising after we came a close second last year. The hard work paid off for the team when they got perfect marks in the first three questions. There was a tense end to the competition as the final question began. The QEGS team won by close margin beating Lime House by a very narrow margin. A great day was had by all, with great participation from all teams. We are now looking forward to heading to London in February to compete in the National Finals.



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# Year 7 Christmas Celebrations

## Cumbria Family Support Christmas Appeal

Year 7 kicked off the festive season in fine style, starting with a mammoth present-wrapping session on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November! This year was our best year ever and we managed to fill well over 20 bin liners with presents. 7PCR did a fantastic job of wrapping them all and worked very well as a team. Cumbria Family Support is a vital local charity helping young people and parents in our community and QEGS is very proud to support them. Sarah Craig, Family Support Worker contacted school to say *“please pass on our thanks to all those who donated presents, and the wonderful year 7s for their wrapping! It has really made a big difference to the families we support.”*



## Year 7 Grandparents' Christmas Party

It was back to school for the grandparents of our year 7 pupils on Friday 30<sup>TH</sup> November as over 80 grandparents enjoyed a traditional Christmas party. The children had tremendous fun entertaining their guests and the two generations joined together for carol singing, a bumper raffle, quiz and a show. The grandparents enjoyed some delicious Christmas treats including delicious homemade mince pies. Mr Roberts, Head of Music, led the lively Christmas singalong. Grandparents also enjoyed some very accomplished performances from Jessica Wharton, Johanna Vivian, Thomas Dawson, Holly Kirkton, Sophie Jones, Honor Lavery, Sophie Ziejka, Laurel Sinner, Katie Wiasara, Katie Busbridge, Amy Ferrol, Ben Blackie, Alexandra Brook, Izzy Bellwood, Evie Baldwin, Rebecca Newby, Summer Davidson, Caitlin Padgett, Darielle Hogg, Poppy Crausby, Jessica Lui, Thomas Dawson, Neve Winder, Jessica Graham, Amy Graham and Sam Murray.



Head of Year 7 Mrs Wilkinson organised the party and was ably supported by a fantastic team of sixth form students. They transformed the school hall into a winter wonderland, with lots of festive sparkle. During the party they helped with the teas and coffees, organised the sound and lighting and chatted to the visitors.

Year 7 parents had donated very generously to the raffle and about 40 grandparents left with prizes, which included wine, chocolates, gift vouchers and toiletries. Many thanks to all who attended; it was a most enjoyable afternoon which really celebrated the QEGS family spirit.



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# Library News

## Arts Award



*Back row L-R: Katie Turnbull; Samantha Bell; Meg Jeffery; Christina Kirkpatrick; Jess Laithwaite  
Front row (L-R): Libby Orton; Aimee Ashurst*

The **Silver Arts Award** is a national qualification run by Trinity College London and is currently on offer in school to Y12 students which, if completed, culminates in a **Level 2 Award in the Arts**. It provides students who are not necessarily taking art A level the opportunity to explore their own creative side.

Students who have gained the Award this year are: Aimee Ashurst (drama); Samantha Bell (dress making); Meg Jeffery (photography); Christina Kirkpatrick (music); Jessica Laithwaite (photography); Libby Orton (dance) and Katie Turnbull (creative writing). They have all been presented with their certificates during a year group assembly.

Each student completed around 95 hours of work to gain the qualification, which is equivalent to a high pass at GCSE. Part 1 of the award focusses on arts practice and pathways. Students choose, plan, carry out and review an arts challenge of their choice, review an arts event and share their views; and research future opportunities and careers in the arts. Part 2 involves the students gaining leadership skills in the arts; choosing and planning a leadership role and reviewing their project and their effectiveness as leaders.

A wide variety of arts were represented by this year's group and the standard of the work produced was very high. That they have been able to complete the award alongside their A Levels is a great achievement and they should all be hugely congratulated on their success.

Libby Orton's Arts Award enabled her to choreograph dances for last year's school production of Oliver! and said, "The Arts Award has given me an opportunity to gain something meaningful from a hobby I love."

Samantha Bell focussed on dress making for her Arts Award and said, "Taking the Arts Award has expanded my creative thinking. I like making things and I've done some dress making before; I wanted to do some more – it's fun!"



# Library News *cont'd*

## Poetry Workshops with Katie Hale



*Kate Hale (back row, centre) with some of the creative writing students*

The library recently hosted a day with Cumbrian poet Katie Hale. Subsidised by the Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere as part of an initiative to get writers into schools, Katie worked with two groups of students during the day in a hands-on workshop.

The students, mainly from Years 7, 8 and 9 explored various elements of creative writing including metaphor, simile and personification in fun ways. Katie then used a selection of her own poems and some by fellow Cumbrian poet Kim Moore to inspire the students to write their own pieces, either about a place that inspired them or in praise of a seemingly random subject, such as an empty crisp packet or sad endings.

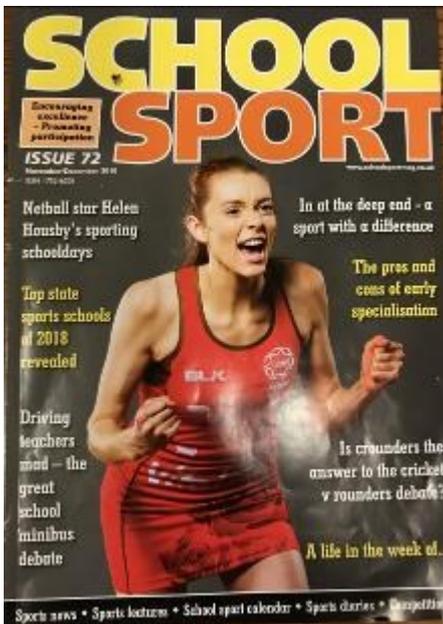
A QEGS student herself between 2001-2008, Katie read English at Royal Holloway followed by a Masters in Creative Writing at St Andrews. She now lives in Shap. A book of her poems, 'Breaking the Surface' was published last year and her first novel, 'My Name is Monster' is due for publication in June 2019. She said, "It's really rewarding to be able to come back and work with students who are where I was 15 years ago, just starting out on their creative journey. The students have been really engaged and really enjoyed playing with language. The poetry they wrote has been a mix of inventive, surprising, heart-warming and joyous. It's great to see such creative variety."

Dylan Hind Y9 attended one of the workshops and said, "I thought it was great. I haven't enjoyed creative writing much up until now but now I am seeing it in new light."

## And in Sporting News...

### Gymnastics Success

Three QEGS pupils: Danielle Shepherd (Y8), Abbie Wilson (Y10) and Summer Davidson (Y7) were part of a five-girl team from North Lakes Gymnastics Academy who travelled to South Durham in November to compete in the North Team Championships. They competed on floor, bars, beam and vault against 10 other teams from the largest clubs in the North of England. Their team placed second in the North of England level 5 competition, which is a fantastic achievement and rewards a lot of hard work and determination.



**School Sports Magazine** has poured over the outcomes of dozens of events to highlight those schools that have achieved the best results on the National stage in 2018. The results have been based on more than 20 different sports and more than 120 different National Competitions.

**QEGS is in the top 1% of schools in the country!** Our thanks go to all our students who participate and give up their time and energy, and to all the staff and parents who are involved with the running, organising and the supporting of all the individual students and teams who travel across the country to enter such a wide variety of sporting events.



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# Postage Stamp Appeal



**Help UK Air Ambulance Services by recycling your used postage stamps!!!**

The UK's Air Ambulance Services are charities which receive no government funding and rely entirely on charitable donations to continue flying and responding to life threatening medical emergencies. They are now volunteering their time to help raise funds through the recycling of postage stamps. All funds raised will be donated to the Association of Air Ambulances, to be distributed equally to all UK Air Ambulance Services .

Whether they're British or overseas, new or used, send them into school for the attention of Mrs Johnston to be forwarded to the Air Ambulance Service. All you need to do is cut or carefully tear the stamped corner from any envelope or packet that you receive in the post and start a collection.



Please can the textiles department ask for donations of unused zips for Y10/11 and 12 students. Thank you .

Mrs Johnston



# Student Commendations

Commendations were awarded this month to the following students:

## Headteacher's Commendations

Carys Ilett	8RP
Morgan Macauley	7AGM
Sarmad Khan	7AGM
Jessica Wharton	7AGM
Jessica Liu	7AGM
Evie Baldwin	7AGM

## Deputy Headteacher's Commendations

Morgan Macauley	7AGM
Carys Ilett	8RP
Jessica Liu	7AGM
Akshay Dharmrajan	7SC
Josh Willis	7AGM
Jessica Wharton	7AGM
Sam Murray	7CFB
Rebecca Newby	7AGM

**Congratulations!**



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## Friends of QEGS NEWS

### Next Meeting:

Wednesday 23rd January at 7pm

### *Dates for your diary ....*

Future event information to follow.....

### 100 Club winners for November:

1 <sup>st</sup>	£40	Frances Henderson
2 <sup>nd</sup>	£25	Cheryl Timothy-Antoine
3 <sup>rd</sup>	£20	Claire Borradaile
4 <sup>th</sup>	£20	Lucinda Weymouth
5 <sup>th</sup>	£20	Jane Walsh

## Friends of QEGS Committee

### Chair

Sandra Glassford & Alison Almond

### Secretaries

Lucinda Weymouth  
Tracey Holliday

### Treasurers

Clare Glassford  
David White

### Numbers Club

Sarah Thomas  
Claire McKeown

### Recycled Uniform

Kimberley Lawson

## Diary Dates

### November/December 2018

Friday 21st December	End of Term
Monday 7th January	Spring Term commences
Wednesday 9th January	A Level Awards Evening
Friday 11th January	Y11 mock exam results release
Wednesday 16th January	Y13 Parents' Evening
Thursday 17th January	Y9 Options Evening
Thursday 24th January	Y10 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 30th January	Y11 Exam Success Evening

For more events and up-to-date calendar information, visit the homepage of the school website and access the

[School Calendar via Google Live](#) which is regularly updated