

# QUEEN'S speech

Newsletter of The Queen's School, Chester  Autumn 2014

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## Top of the class

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## Headmistress's Welcome

By Sarah Clark

**After an exciting summer and some spectacular exam results, we find ourselves back at school for another term of hard work and fun at Queen's.**

We welcome all our new pupils into Reception, Year 3 and Year 7 as well as girls who have joined us in other years from schools near and far. A great deal of effort goes on to make sure they settle in well and, from my conversations with new starters, this year appears to be no exception. I am very proud of the way our school welcomes new faces and how quickly girls assimilate so that they feel like they have been with us forever. This doesn't just apply to new pupils but to staff as well.

September saw Rachel Cookson take the helm at Queen's Lower School and she has quickly got into her stride. You can read in this edition of *Queen's Speech* how some of her very exciting plans are already becoming a reality. As for the Senior School, we are looking forward to our newly redeveloped gymnasium which will enable us to deliver our *Fitness For All* aims in full. Even without the new facilities, a range of diverse sports is being introduced to girls through the curriculum and extracurricular clubs. This can be seen in the success of this year's superb Q2Q2 bike ride from Queen's to Buckingham Palace. For all of us that took part it was a memorable experience and we have already had approximately 20 girls sign up for next year. I hope you enjoy reading about our latest news.



## An inspirational occasion

By Irene Jones

'The sky's the limit' was the message reverberating round Chester Cathedral where the Senior School community had gathered at the start of term for the annual prize-giving ceremony.

Guest speaker Jo Salter MBA enthralled and amused her audience with anecdotes about her experiences as the first ever British female Tornado pilot. Described as one of the 50 most inspiring women in the world today, Ms Salter's approach to success was, in fact, wonderfully down to earth: she urged every girl to grab every opportunity offered in life and to believe wholeheartedly in her ability to succeed. Headmistress Sarah Clark spoke about the school's focus on ensuring that pupils do reach their potential and her delight at all their achievements.



In her first address as Chair of Governors, Marion Ardon warmly congratulated Queen's on a notably productive and successful year.

*"She urged every girl to grab every opportunity offered in life"*



## Rafting rivalry

It had started as a challenge last summer term from Felicity Taylor and her team at the Lower School to their Senior School colleagues: who could cross the finish line first in the annual Rotary Club Charity Raft Race.

And so, one Sunday early in July, two teams from Queen's braved the murky waters of the Dee to battle it out.



The plucky oarswomen may have been drenched by other crews and pelted from the suspension bridge with wood shavings and enough ingredients to make a pancake - flour, eggs, and mushy fruit - but determination and morale remained high. After plenty of heave-hoing, and perhaps the odd attempt at skulduggery, the Lower School ladies managed to pull away in their raft *The Queen of Hearts* to secure a slim victory over the Senior School team of cheery, if somewhat bedraggled, rock chicks aboard *The Ace of Spades*.



# Fitness For All is for *all* of us

By Paul Virgo

Two years ago we developed the *Fitness For All* campaign at Queen's with the aim of finding an activity to motivate and engage every girl in the school.

It could be rowing or sailing, yoga, dance or Zumba, running, rock climbing or road cycling - what matters is that our girls enjoy taking part and keep fit and healthy doing something they enjoy - even if they never considered themselves 'sporty' beforehand.

As part of the campaign, we are midway through redeveloping the School's gymnasium so that more sports can be offered as part of the curriculum and as extracurricular activities.

Thanks to all those families who have donated to the fundraising; more than £500,000 has been raised to complete the building and we are enormously grateful to you all.

We now need to fit the building out with equipment: rowing machines, spinning bikes, a music system, gymnastics equipment, new

mats, trolleys, teaching aids etc. The cost of this will be around £50,000 and we hope to raise this money quickly so that activities can start.

We have seen a massive increase in girls taking part in 'non-traditional' sports and activities. Karate, fencing and gymnastics have all proved popular and will recommence when the gymnasium opens again later this term. Meanwhile sailing continues while the weather remains clement.

The school running club is growing in numbers with a trip to Vienna seeing a UK winner among our ranks. Furthermore over 100 girls now participate in rowing, which was introduced as a curriculum sport this year. However, it is pleasing to note that the success of this element of the *Fitness For All* work has not diminished our elite success.

Last year we were Chester and District Athletics Champions and we had some outstanding tennis, lacrosse and hockey results. This academic year we have already seen national selections for one of our lacrosse players and one member of our equestrian team.

If anything *Fitness For All*, as well as engaging girls of all abilities, is enhancing top level competition. Thank you to all those parents, grandparents and alumni who have already given to the appeal. Please continue to support us by encouraging your daughters to take up new opportunities offered and, if you are able, offering financial support to take the project to its next level.

*"More girls are feeling inspired to take part in sport and physical activity"*





## Getting a head start

**Three Year 13 students, Elizabeth, Priya and Emma (left to right) enjoyed a week at university this summer having achieved prestigious placements with the Headstart scheme.**

The girls' hands-on experience in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths included demanding team challenges and inspirational meetings with various role models from industry.

There was also plenty of guidance regarding the academic and professional paths available to them - extremely useful with UCAS applications on the horizon.



## Q2Q2

By Ian Abell

**They made it - thanks to training, determination, friendships and a keen sense of humour.**

Covering 240 miles of minor roads, cycle tracks and canal paths, eighteen Year 11 Q2Q2 cyclists and eight staff completed a demanding 5-day cycle ride from Chester to Buckingham Palace.

The route took the riders over hills, along valleys, through peaceful countryside and into cities, but the stamina of all of the riders grew throughout the venture, which raised funds for the *Teenage Cancer Trust* and *The Queen's School Commemoration Bursary Fund*. The ride ended with a jubilant approach through Hyde Park and along Birdcage Walk to The Palace, where the achievement

was celebrated with a relaxing picnic, prepared by parents and other members of staff.



## A taste of China

**In line with The Queen's School's status as an Advanced Confucius Classroom, students in Year 8 were offered a wonderful opportunity to spend two weeks experiencing life in Qingdao and Beijing this summer.**

Part-funded and organised by the Chinese Government, and led by Mandarin teacher Lucy Whittam, the trip offered a host of cultural experiences and 20 hours invaluable

language tuition. Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China, the Summer Palace, Beijing Zoo and Qiao Market were amongst the exciting

venues included in the group's packed itinerary. The girls were fascinated by a breathtaking martial arts display and were introduced to all kinds of new skills including mask-making, photography, cookery, paper cutting, calligraphy, traditional singing and dancing. They even won an excellence award at the Achievement Exhibition in Beijing for their innovative and thought-provoking architectural designs.

*"The trip offered a host of cultural experiences"*

# Girls excel in tougher exams

By Jane Coupland

The Queen's School is celebrating some of its best GCSE results ever.

With 46% of the grades at A\*, 77% at A\*- A, and more than 93% at A\*- B, the girls have proved that they are among the best in the country and deserve their place at the top in Chester according to *The Times GCSE League Tables 2014*. 100% of girls achieved

eight grades at A\*- C, with 83% getting five or more GCSEs at grades A\*- A. Every single girl in the year achieved A\*- B in English literature, with 95% getting A\*- B in English language and 93% securing A\*- B in maths. In the sciences, where girls take

physics, chemistry and biology as three separate subjects from Year 7, the results were also outstanding with 89% achieving A\*- B in biology, 86% A\*- B in chemistry and 92% A\*- B in physics. Everyone sitting art, classical civilisation, German, Latin and ICT received either an A or A\* and all those who took drama, Mandarin and religious studies got A\*- B grades. 15 pupils achieved at least 8 A\*s whilst two girls, Chloë and Emma, deserving particular praise as they each secured a full complement of 10 A\* grades.



*"The girls have proved that they are among the best in the country"*



## Vision for the future

Adventure, creativity and imagination form the core of Rachel Cookson's vision for the Lower School.

Taking up the helm this academic year, she is truly excited at the prospect of building on the wonderful foundations laid under Felicity Taylor's leadership, describing it as a great honour to guide the school into the future. Rachel considers herself blessed by an 'exceptionally able, committed, visionary and caring staff' who 'prioritise the individual needs of every pupil'.

Convinced of the importance of creating a magical setting for the girls, Rachel has already given focus to the Key Stage 1 playground which will gain a covered soft surface outdoor learning zone, new role play and ball sports facilities, climbing equipment and even a mini amphitheatre.

The new venture will enhance the significant opportunities for outside learning which already help bring such fun, freedom and imagination to our younger pupils' rich learning experience.

## GB call-up for Gemma

Dedicated equestrian Gemma (Year 7) was thrilled to receive news last month of her selection for the U16 GB Prime Dressage Squad.

She may be one of the youngest pupils in the Senior School but Gemma is getting used to outshining competitors several years her senior. In fact, following her successes at the 2013/14 British Young Riders Dressage Scheme Inter-Regionals and Home International, where she won the U16 Novice Championship, she has recently been awarded the U25 Wales Rider of the Year. Our congratulations go to Gemma.



# A\* performance

By Claire Dillamore

**Outstanding results have seen Queen's positioned top in Chester in the A level league table published recently by *The Times*.**

In addition to the 100% pass rate, nearly a quarter of the girls' grades were at the A\* standard and 86.4% were A\*-B; in fact, on average every girl outperformed her overall predictions by almost two grades.

Their excellent performance has enabled six girls to take up their places at top medical schools throughout the country. Jill, who applied retrospectively after achieving 4 A\*'s, has now started her veterinary science studies at Cambridge, joining Shani who is reading medicine after also achieving straight A\*'s in her A levels.

Sisters Grace, Evei and Frances

each achieved 4 A\* grades and the extremely rare D1 grade - ranked higher than an A\* - in their Fine Art examination.

In fact, Evei (pictured second left above) was awarded the highest mark in the country at this level and is now studying Art Foundation alongside her sisters at the highly prestigious Central St Martin's School of Art. Aby will be heading to the nationally acclaimed Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication. Harriet, Mareen, Isobel, Rhiannon, Isabelle, Lucy, Rachel, Farah and Lauren also achieved A\* grades at A level. Meanwhile talented national



lacrosse player Fiona also secured the grades she required to qualify for her coveted lacrosse and academic scholarship at Mercer University, Georgia in the United States.

*"In addition to the 100% pass rate, nearly a quarter of the girls' grades were at the A\* standard"*

## Healthy mind, healthy body

**The route to maintaining a happy, positive outlook and a successful work-life balance was key to two days at the end of last academic year devoted to a range of relaxing and revitalising activities.**

*The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Festival* saw Senior School girls learning about the benefits of reflexology and participating in pilates, yoga and Zumba. There was advice on skin, hair and nail care, while in the grounds pupils were able to practise t'ai chi and even try out caving in mobile apparatus set up outside the pavilion. Girls and staff were also invited to embrace mindfulness and the benefits of laughter as well as listen to the wisdom of well-being expert Dr Nick Baylis.

Naturally the importance of rest and nutrition was emphasised throughout the week, which culminated in everyone coming together to tuck into a superb spread in the sunshine. Healthy as well as truly delicious, it had been prepared specially by the school's catering team.



# Fit for a Duchess

By Margaret Corlett

Queen's choristers were thrilled to perform to royalty recently when The Lower School's *Young Voices*, semi-finalists in this year's *BBC Junior Choir of the Year*, entertained a delighted Duchess of Cornwall at the opening of the Countess of Chester County Park.

Their lively and varied programme included Alan Simmons' *Butterfly* and an African song of peace, *Amani Utupe*. Pupils in Year 9 were very excited to chat to the Duchess about the bird boxes they had made for the project and Sophie had the honour of presenting her with a bouquet of flowers. Members of the Chester Cathedral Choir, Louisa (Year 12), Sophie, Anna (Year 10) and Rosie (Year 9) were also given the honour of singing for the Duchess during the tour of Chester Cathedral which followed. She was accompanied by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales.



*"Pupils in Year 9 were very excited to chat to the Duchess about the bird boxes they had made"*



## Welcome!

We offer a warm welcome to new staff (left to right):  
Erin Duffy,  
Christina Prima,  
Brendan Durkan,  
Carys Chafer,  
Sarah Hardway,  
Jane Arthan,  
Rebecca Casson and  
Rachel Cookson.



## Summer fun at the Lower School

There was swashbuckling fun aplenty during the summer music and drama workshop at the Lower School, as participants set sail for an exciting pirate adventure on the high seas.

A wonderful week of singing, dancing and making music, also involved hunting for treasure using maps created by the girls themselves.

The splendid Jolly Roger inspired set which they crafted was used in an exuberant production performed on the final day to delighted family and friends.



*"The splendid Jolly Roger inspired set which they crafted was used in an exuberant production"*

# Congratulations

- Ben and Adele Bates on their recent marriage.
- Nia Tunnicliffe: winner in the *Write Your Own Christie* competition, organised by the official Agatha Christie website.
- Dakota Chamberlain (Year 9): selected for England Lacrosse's U16 Training Squad.
- Aisla Cairns (Year 10): selected for the North of England U16 Hockey Squad.



- Amy Williams (Year 12): bronze medal winner in the U17 Triple Jump at the English Schools Athletics Championships; bronze medallist in the U17 Long Jump at the UK School Games.
- Maisie Tipping (Year 9): 5th place in the U15 Hurdles at the North of England Athletics Championships.
- Emily McBurney (Year 11): 35th place in the English Schoolgirls Open U15 Golf Championships.

- Scarlet Banfield (Year 13), Lauren Dimbylow, Nikitha Sathyamoorthy (Year 9), Jasleen Sambhi (Year 8), Mary Brown, Mica Hird, Ellie-Mai Gibson and Isabelle Thane (Year 6): awarded distinction in their ABRSM examinations.

- Jenna Asad, Bella Band and Aisla Cairns (Year 10), Alexandra Ibbetson, Tia Booth, India Edwards, Eira Fearnall, Maisie Fenner, Carmen Garcia-Diaz, Rosa Hall, Olivia Spillane and Thea Watts (Year 8): awarded distinction in their LAMDA examinations.

- Zoe Thornton-Reid (Year 10): team winner of the engineering design competition organised by the Smallpiece Trust at its Bristol University summer school.

- Amy Banim, Mary Brown, Lucy Thomson, Faye Monk and Issy Donnachie (Year 5): regional representatives in a national St John Ambulance First Aid competition.

- Sian Jones (Year 11): qualifier for the Virbac 3D Trophy and the Prince Philip Cup at the forthcoming *Horse of the Year Show*.



<b>DATES FOR YOUR DIARY</b>				
OCT	Thur	23-3	Half-term	
	Thur	23-25	Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Expedition	Senior School
	Mon	27-31	Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Expedition	Senior School
NOV	Mon	3-8	Sixth Form Taster Week for Year 11 pupils	Senior School
	Mon	3	Year 13 Parents' Evening	5 - 7pm Senior School
	Fri	7	INSET - no school for pupils	Lower School
	Sat	8	Open Morning	9.30am - 12.30pm Lower School
	Tue	11	Year 11 Parents' Evening	5 - 7pm Senior School
	Sat	15	Sweet Science for Year 6 pupils	9.30am - 12 noon Senior School
DEC	Wed	10-12	<i>Bugsy Malone</i>	7pm Senior School
	Tue	16	Gymnasium Opening	3.30 - 6pm Senior School
	Tue	16	<i>Fitness for All</i> gymnasium visit/ dinner	7pm Senior School
	Wed	17	Carol Service at Chester Cathedral	10.30am
	Wed	17	Term ends	12.25pm
JAN	Mon	5	Term starts	
	Thur	8	Year 7 Parents' Evening	5 - 7pm Senior School
	Mon	12	Entrance Exam - no school for pupils	Senior School
	Wed	14	Year 9 Parents' Evening	5 - 7.30pm Senior School
	Fri	30-1	Year 13 trip to Dublin	Senior School
FEB	Thur	5	Parents' Evening for peripatetic staff	4 - 8pm Senior School
	Fri	13	INSET - no school for pupils	
	Mon	16-23	Half-term	

## Queen's School Parents' Association

■ **Friday 14th November:** Lower School Coffee Morning, 8.30am.

■ **Friday 21st November:** Senior School Coffee Afternoon, 2.30pm.

■ **Saturday 22nd November:** QSPA Ball at Chester Racecourse.

The QSPA has an active events group which is always looking for new members. Please see the website for more details of forthcoming events or email [qspa@queens.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:qspa@queens.cheshire.sch.uk) for more information.

## Alumni news

■ **Saturday 18th October:** Drinks and canapés at the Senior School followed by dinner in Chester.

■ **Saturday 6th December:** Leavers' Lunch ('81) at Oddfellows, Chester.

Please contact Jane Crossley (Harper) or the Alumni office.

■ **Wednesday 17th December:** Annual Carol Service followed by lunch in the Refectory, 10.30am at Chester Cathedral.

To reserve a place for this event, or for any further information, please contact the Alumni office on 01244 888640 or email [alumni@queens.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:alumni@queens.cheshire.sch.uk)

### ■ Michaelmas Supper

Queen's girls of 2014 enjoyed their first official reunion at the Michaelmas Supper, when current and former staff joined them in celebrating their time at school.



### ■ Annual Reunion Lunch

25 ladies from the cohort year of 1964 were delighted to get together at the Annual Alumni Reunion Lunch in July. Tours of the school followed welcome drinks and a delicious buffet lunch.

### ■ Remembering Ismena Clout

With great sadness we received the news that Ismena Clout (class representative for 1993) lost her battle with cancer on 15th September. Our sincere sympathies go to her family.