

# Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

## Report for the Student Committee of Governors

**November 2007**

This report gives insight into the wide range of activities that students have been involved in since May 2007.

### **Student Association**

- Blackwell Grange Hotel was the venue, 007 James Bond was the theme for the Leavers' Ball in May. It was a glamorous affair with tuxedos, evening gowns and limos being the order of the night. The tone was sophisticated and chic with the casino being the centre piece of the celebrations. It was a huge success.



- In June, the Student Association was short listed for a prestigious national award. 'Leading the Learner Voice Awards' are organised by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, a national agency that promotes and develops leadership across the FE sector, and QE students were in the last five of the Representative Organisation of the Year category. On July 4th, Gemma Porter and Tom Crewe travelled down to London to the Kensington Roof Gardens for a reception and the awards ceremony. It was a fantastic occasion but, unfortunately, QE had to be satisfied with being runners-up.
- During A2 Week, in June, the new Student Association had lunch with the Principal, David Heaton and Principal Designate, Tim Fisher. The Student Executive were congratulated on their new positions and responsibilities and were presented with their official College name badges. Other key staff were present and gave talks explaining the finances of the Student Association and the Association's involvement in events such as Freshers' Fayre and Bridging Week.

- In A2 Week the new Student Executive met with Melanie Barker, Student Services Co-ordinator, for a team building session. As well as having fun, it was an important occasion, breaking down barriers and enabling the students to get to know each other.
- During Bridging Week members of the Student Executive gave a series of talks to prospective new students. A lively PowerPoint presentation gave a flavour of the work of the Student Association and the impact it has on life in College.
- The Student Association took a high profile role in the induction of new students. They helped with meeting and greeting the new arrivals and ensured that SA Executive members were on hand in the Student Common Room to answer any queries. In addition, they made an important contribution to the Freshers' Fayre, publicising activities and events - their stall was one of the busiest in the packed Hall.
- At the end of September the first full Student Association meeting was held. It was well publicised and the turn out of more than 100 tutor group reps was tremendous. The meeting was vibrant and good humoured and the SA really made their mark. They also used the meeting to promote the 'Great Stir' - the McMillan cancer coffee morning which they held in the Student Common Room. This raised more than £200 and was their first fundraising event.
- World Mental Health Day was marked on 10th October by the Student Association asking students to give a 'penny for their thoughts', submitting written ideas and organising a loose change collection through tutor groups. This was linked to the Harvest Festival Service which was held in the Hall and officiated over by College Chaplain, Chris Wardale.
- To celebrate the end of the first half of the Autumn Term, the Student Association organised a St Trinian's day. Students and staffed donned their old school uniforms and a collection was held for St Teresa's Hospice. The day was a huge success with students enjoying the atmosphere and joining in wholeheartedly with games and activities in the Student Common Room.



## Business and Leisure

- As part of their second year, Applied Business (Double Award) students organised an overnight visit to London. The aim was to develop skills in the planning, organisation, and co-ordination of activities and involved students organising transportation to and from London, booking accommodation and arranging a visit to the BBC studios. They also enjoyed a meal at Planet Hollywood and went to see the popular show `Blood Brothers`. Funds were raised independently with some students taking part in a 15 mile sponsored walk on the North Yorkshire Moors in October, organised by the 25<sup>th</sup> Middlesbrough Pathfinder Scout Group.



- An important aspect of the Travel & Tourism course relates to customer service. Therefore in the Autumn Term students visited Dynamic Earth, an interactive science museum, in Edinburgh to collect the information needed for this element of their work. To complement this, many successfully completed the Northumbria Tourist Board customer service qualification – Welcome Host. This was of particular value to students who recently went out on a week's work placement in local travel and tourism facilities, across the region.
- Double award GCSE Leisure & Tourism students visited Newcastle to gain greater understanding of the make up of the Leisure & Tourism industry. The students both visited and used key components of the industry throughout the trip. Sites visited included St James' Park, the Discovery Museum and the Quayside to see the Millennium Bridge, the Baltic Art Gallery and the Sage.
- Over a series of three days, 45 Leisure Studies students successfully completed their first aid qualifications, specialising in sports injury. The course was intensive and students became proficient in a range of procedures including mouth to mouth resuscitation, bandaging and the recovery position.
- As part of their outdoor leisure unit, second year Leisure Studies students visited the `Go Ape' facility in Grisdale. `Go Ape' is an award-winning high wire forest adventure course of rope bridges, Tarzan swings and zip slides up to 40 feet up in the trees. Students were fitted with a climbing harness, given instructions and then swung from tree to tree high above the forest floor. This was followed by a talk from a local farmer on the impact of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

- At the end of September, 3 Dance students attended the Alvin Ailey Dance Company at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle. This was a stunning performance demonstrating outstanding technique and the sheer joy of dancing!
- In October, 34 Dance students went to Newcastle's Theatre Royal to see Matthew Bourne's modern adaptation of Carmen - 'The Car Man'. It was an extremely enjoyable afternoon of entertaining, provoking and stimulating dance theatre. This was followed by students seeing the Ludus Dance Company's performance of 'Trapped' at Darlington's Art Centre. 'Trapped' is a contemporary dance piece designed especially for young people which explores the challenges of communication between children and their parents. It was educational and thought provoking .... for students and staff!

## Sport

- Sport at College continues to develop and thrive:-
  - This year there are 4 boys' football teams in the Cleveland Schools' League and we have entered an E team in the Cup for the first time. The A team will also play in the English Schools' National Knockout Cup & the British Colleges' National Knockout Cup. We've entered a girls' football team in the British Colleges' North-East Merit League for the first time and also in the English Schools' National Knockout Cup & the British Colleges' National Knockout Cup.
  - The boys' rugby team is entered in the County Cup and the National Cup. Girls interested in playing rugby train every Wednesday.
  - Netball, basketball & mixed hockey teams are playing in the British Colleges' North-East Merit League for the first time and also in the British Colleges' National Knockout Cup competitions. We also have a netball team in the Sunday night women's league at the Dolphin Centre.
- Recently 11 QE students competed in the North East racquet sports championships at Scarborough and three came away with gold medals. In the table tennis, Sarah Robinson was the girls' singles champion and Josh Richardson and Adam Hassan won every game in the boy's doubles tournament to be crowned champions. Sarah, Adam and Josh will now go on to represent the North East at the British Colleges' National Finals at Loughborough University in April. Students also did well in squash and tennis. In the boys' squash, Stephen Rowsby was a beaten semi-finalist whilst in the girls' squash, Karina Dixon was 2nd and Katie McTague 3rd. In girls' tennis, Genevieve Hewitson came 2nd.



- Following regional trials on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October, 25 QE students were selected for British Colleges' North-East teams and for a forthcoming "North of England" trial (probably on 21<sup>st</sup> November). The following stage will be a trial to select the England Team, which will play fixtures and tour abroad next year. Of the 25 students selected, 11 will play representative football – 6 for the boys' team and 5 for the girls' team- 10 will play rugby – 4 for the boys' team and 6 for the girls' team – and 4 will have places on the netball team. This is an exceptional achievement.
- Rachel Bird and Rachel Dauber attended trials over the summer for Team Northumbria which represents North East England in the new Netball Super League, the highest level of domestic competition in the sport. The League features world-class athletes competing against each other to become the country's number one netball team and has good media coverage on Sky Sports. The girls beat off stiff competition to be selected and are now members of Team Northumbria's youth squad. Having made a good impression, they have recently been invited to join the National League Team for training every week and hope to eventually win full places in the senior squad.
- First year student Joanna Dinsdale competed in the Northern Karate Championships at Barnsley in September and won the gold medal for fighting and the silver medal for kata (a range of techniques combined together to make a pattern.) She is now training hard in preparation for the UK Championships at Crawley in November. Joanna is a red belt.
- Gareth Lee Competed in a grade 2 trampolining competition in Perth and did very well. As a result, he has qualified for a place in the National Finals in November.
- A staff/student team entered the Rotary Golf Competition at Blackwell Golf Club in August. David Heaton and Paul Edwards teamed up with some talented students and came away as winners.

## Creative Arts

- Following the successful Alternative Fashion Show in May, which involved over 100 students in the design, making and modelling of exciting garments, £250 was raised for charity from the sale of DVD's of the event. This was given to the British Heart Foundation.



- In June, Foundation Art students held their final exhibition. It showcased the exciting and diverse work of 35 students, reflecting their personal specialism. Included were excellent project outcomes Fashion & Textiles, Graphic Design, Fine Art, Interior Design, Photography and Video. The exhibition was launched with a private viewing for invited guests and was then open to the general public.
- To give them the experience of seeing artists' work first-hand to inform the Personal Study element of their coursework, 36 A Level Fine Art students spent the day in Edinburgh seeing exhibitions and listening to specially arranged talks. This included looking at the work of sculptor, Richard Long in the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art, seeing a variety of drawings, paintings and photography from the group show 'The Naked Portrait' at the Scottish Portrait Gallery and two and three dimensional works by Pop Artist, Andy Warhol in The Scottish Academy.
- In September, to enable them to draw and photograph at a seaside location, 40 A2 Graphics students and 40 A2 Textile students spent an enjoyable day working in Whitby. They were able to collect imagery to use in their coursework projects.
- The 34 Art Foundation students participated in a very special day at Belsay Hall, where they had the opportunity to work with Judith King, the curator of the Picture House Exhibition, and Installation Artist Tanya Axford. They began the day with lectures and background information about the development of the Arts Programme at Belsay and then, more specifically, about how the Picture House was formed and the distinguished designers and filmmakers who had agreed to produce site-specific works. The workshop in the afternoon gave the students the chance to develop their own imaginative skills; in groups they adopted the roles of either 'artists' or 'curators' and had to propose and present a possible idea for a future exhibition. It was a very intensive, challenging and memorable day which gave the students a valuable insight into professional practice.
- In September, 60 AS Graphics students spent a busy morning at the Botanical Gardens, Durham. They drew and took photographs that will be developed in their first projects on their course.
- In October, Art Foundation students spent an enjoyable day at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park walking in the open air, looking at sculpture in the beautiful autumnal surroundings of this vast countryside location. They also visited the Andy Goldsworthy Retrospective Exhibition and were able to see how he utilises natural materials in his site-specific work. The students were able to draw, take photographs and make written responses to inform their Critical and Contextual Studies in Art.
- In October, speakers from various Universities visited the Art & Design Department to talk to students about the courses available in their institutions. Matt Cooke, talked about the Foundation and Honours Degrees on offer at Cleveland College of Art and Design, and the special 'compact' arrangement in place for QE students. Paul Squires, Subject Leader in Textile Design at Huddersfield University also talked to our students; he came laden with a

portfolio of examples of current students' work from a variety of courses. His talk gave the students much information on the structure of courses and very important tips on portfolio preparation.

- During the first half of the Autumn Term, sculptor Raf Fulcher gave a talk to Art Foundation students about his own work and professional practice, including the numerous public art projects that he has been involved with.
- The 54 AS Fine Art students spent the day at the Baltic in Newcastle looking at contemporary art exhibitions. The aim of the day was to give them the opportunity to see work first-hand, to draw and to make a personal written response. This experience helped to inform them of contemporary art process and to encourage critical debate.
- The final concert of last academic year was held at the end of May. The programme included the choir, orchestra, big band and numerous solo items, particularly vocal solos. As is traditional at this concert, a special acknowledgement was made to the students who were performing for their last time at College; tribute was also paid to Principal, David Heaton on his retirement. One of the highlights of the evening was teacher Steve McGarvie's special Big Band arrangement of "My Way."
- The first concert of the Autumn Term took place in October and featured more than 50 students, including those playing in the Orchestra, the Big Band, Junk Band and Choir. It was a very enjoyable evening.



## **English, Media and Drama**

- During A2 Week, Angela Goddard and Nikki Swift from the Language and Communication Department of York St John University came into College. They were generous with advice about all sorts of Language based courses at their own and other institutions. Angela had just completed a survey of all these courses nationally and was able to clarify the confusion around the many different names institutions use for their courses. It was useful for both staff and students and reinforced a valued contact with York St John.

- All AS Level Theatre Studies students were able to take an early opportunity, in September, to see a valuable performance of their set text, Sophocles' "Antigone", at Nottingham Playhouse.
- In October, A2 Performance Studies students gave a performance, that they had devised themselves, in the town's South Park. It was about Darlington's captured and controversial Russian cannon which is sited in the Park.
- Early in the Autumn Term, A2 Theatre Studies students watched an inspirational performance - by students from the previous year - of Sarah Kane's "4.48 Psychosis."
- Mark Dixon, Head of Media: Communication & Production organised a College photography competition in June. There was great interest from students and a shortlist of 10 entries was passed on to Mike Gibb (ex Chief Photographer of the Northern Echo) who selected the top 3- 1st Adam Thompson, 2nd Jack Outhwaite and 3rd Chris Welburn.
- Following a major change in the A2 Media: Communication & Production specification, students now work on real client commissions from local employers. They are producing advertising material in a year long project that emanates from a client sponsored brief and the students' progress is periodically assessed by the clients themselves. Clients this year include: Browne Smith Baker Architects, The Local Motion Group, Darlington School Nurses' Team, Darlington Arts Centre, The Forum and Darlington Football Club. Some clients will be using students' work as real advertising material.
- Media and Film students are involved in the Darlington Youth Project: E-Vibe. E-Vibe is a website run by and for local young people. Lots of our students have written reviews and stories for the site and, subsequently, some such as Sian Williams have had work published in the Northern Echo. Some students have also had the opportunity to work with the Echo's sport photographers, producing images for the Local Heroes publication.
- The Intertextuals English Literature Group continues to flourish. There are regular lunchtime meetings and in the first part of the Autumn Term they studied the Russian novel Anna Karenina.
- In October, 40 English Literature students travelled to Birmingham to see a production of Othello. It was a long journey but well worth it.

## **Enrichment**

- A Motivation Event for Transition to A Level students was held on October 4th. 50 students were involved in activities organised by the Mentors. They looked at what their career aims are for the future and how to achieve them. They also carried out some practical activities to encourage them to see the importance of managing their time effectively whilst they are at College. The students really enjoyed the event.

## Humanities

- In October, 60 AS Law students visited the Houses of Parliament and enjoyed a walking tour of Legal London, seeing the courts and Inns of Court. At Parliament the students were given a presentation by the Education Unit and then toured the House. Our MP Alan Milburn was in the States but his assistant Helen Cook met up with the group.
- 13 A2 Law students are taking part in the Bar National Mock Trial Competition in November. They are currently practising hard, preparing to prosecute and defend two cases - one concerning the theft of a computer, the other relating to the destruction of exam papers.
- The annual History essay writing competition attracted a good number of entrants. The first prize of £80 was awarded to Adam Chaffer who wrote about the Fall of the Venetian Republic; Kelly Forster came second with her essay on Asquith and Janeen Colville was third with her analysis of the career of Che Guevara. A total of 7 prizes were awarded.
- In June, three A Level History students and one member of staff attended an Aimhigher gifted and talented day at Prior Pursglove College. Students from all over the Tees Valley area came together to investigate the local history of Guisborough, including Guisborough Priory.
- On October 2nd Kimberley Dobson and Natalie Lowes visited Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The students were accompanied by Gary Darby, Head of History, and were part of a group brought together by the Holocaust Educational Trust. Before going to Auschwitz they attended an orientation seminar in Newcastle. This was a briefing about what they could expect and they also heard an account of the horrors of the Holocaust from a survivor. A similar follow-up seminar was held after the visit and the students will now disseminate their knowledge and experience.



- The History Club's first meeting of the Autumn Term was exceptionally well attended. John Gilmore gave a presentation on the Russian Revolution to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event and explained the significance of the Revolution for the development of European History in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- The Politics Department is developing close links with the Borough Council's Democratic Services Section. As a result, three A Level Politics students have been given an exceptional opportunity. Will Leatherbarrow, Chris Iles and Lee Auchterlonie will each spend a day shadowing Councillor Chris McEwan, the cabinet member for Darlington whose portfolio is for children and young people. Chris has already spent a day with Councillor McEwan and Will

and Lee are scheduled to do the same over the next few weeks. Staff from Democratic Services also spent a day in College talking to students and raising awareness of local democracy. A display was mounted in the Student Common Room and the views of students were surveyed in relation to what the Council can do to encourage young people to become involved in the democratic process.

## **Modern Foreign Languages**

- During A2 Week, representatives from Northumbria University came into College to talk about studying languages at H.E. Level. The turn out was excellent and was followed by a 'cultural experience' where students enjoyed sampling different food and drink from France, Spain and Germany.
- In October, the French market once again came to Darlington. Students were encouraged to visit the market in their own time and had a quiz sheet to complete - prizes being awarded for the most accurate answers.

## **Science**

- During the June exam period the Chemistry Department held its annual revision days for both first and second year students. As usual all staff participated, donning T-shirts bearing suitable exam advice. In total over 70 students benefitted.
- During A2 Week the Chemistry Department contributed to the careers programme by hosting outside speakers. As part of our link with Northumbria University, Dr Justin Perry gave an entertaining talk about what it is like to study Chemistry and related subjects in higher education. This was followed by staff from International Paints speaking about their experiences in the chemical industry.
- Two A Level Chemistry students - Lenka Novac and William Clifford Brown - spent four weeks over the summer holidays working on a Nuffield Bursary Scheme project. Lenka was at the Lingfield Countryside Centre where she helped to design and create resource materials for primary school teachers taking children to the Centre; William was with a chemical company, Davy Process Technology Ltd, investigating the hydrogenolysis of diesters. They have both submitted write-ups of their projects for a gold CREST award and will be making poster presentations at University of Teesside at the end of October.
- This term, for the first time, the Physics Department is offering a twilight Astronomy course. Dave Smithson, a teacher from Longfield School, is assisting with the sessions and it is hoped that many of the 20 students who are currently involved will go on to obtain a GCSE in the subject. The students are actually looking forward to the dark nights, when they can do some observational astronomy using the College's 250mm Newtonian Telescope.

- All second year A Level Geography students visited Wasdale Youth Hostel in the Lake District in either mid September or early October. They were accompanied by all the Geography staff and spent time partaking in strategies for data collection to help with A2 skills work. The work was varied and covered river, sand dune, and woodland data, alongside some assessment of urban data from Keswick and Cockermouth, and urban regeneration in Whitehaven. Students also experienced some of the tourism issues associated with National Parks. Each trip lasted for three days and students were expected to work in the evenings. On both occasions the weather was kind to us.

## Miscellaneous

- An intensive week of Higher Education and Employment preparation sessions was held in June. Subject areas and the careers guidance staff hosted workshops and a large number of outside speakers came in to College. A range of speakers came into College during A2 week to assist students with university choices. They covered the most popular courses from traditional areas like Chemistry to newer disciplines like Disaster Management and Film and Television Studies. In addition, 60 students travelled to Manchester for the UCAS 'Examine your Future' Exhibition which focussed on careers in Health and Science; two bus loads of Leisure & Travel students visited Leeds Metropolitan University to find out more about progression routes in their areas of study and 350 students went to Harrogate for the UCAS Higher Education Convention. This was followed up in the Autumn Term with Graham Hackney and Louise Oldfield, Student Advisers from the University of Central Lancashire (Preston) coming into College to answer queries from prospective students; Helen Etty, from Mansfield College, Oxford also gave tips on the admissions process to Oxbridge applicants.
- In June, 22 students stayed in Oxford and enjoyed the university's Open Days; 15 students sampled Cambridge University when they went for their Open Days in July.
- In May, the local Adult Learners' Ceremony was held at Darlington Football Club. Ben Richardson received an individual award for his incredible achievements, overcoming many barriers and difficulties to win a place at Cambridge University; the daytime English Language Access group was honoured for their commitment and mutual support. Later in the month, Ben went on to receive one of five regional Adult Learning Awards at a ceremony in Middlesbrough.



- Katie Zissler and Rachael Watson won Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. Recommended by the College, Darlington Rotary Club nominated the girls and they joined 24 other young people from all over the region for a week's course in Weardale. The course was challenging and demanding and included a variety of activities - orienteering, mountain boarding, archery, paintballing and an overnight expedition - designed to develop and enhance their leadership qualities and skills.
- Four students – Jack Madden, Kelly Snow, Isobel Watts and John Hassan - completed their PADI Open Water Divers' qualification. Organised by Principal Tutor, John Beilby, the students teamed up with the Battye About Diving Centre and undertook two days of theory, followed by two days of diving in the North Sea off Beadnell on the Northumberland coast. This is the first time that students have been involved in such an activity and it is hoped that further courses will be organised.
- In July, the College's debating team triumphed at the National Final of the Institute of Ideas Debating Matters Competition, the toughest debating competition in the country. 118 teams entered and QE was one of the 8 that made it through to the three day final at the National Portrait Gallery. The victorious team was made up of Lucy Madden, Chris Wakefield, Rebecca Castle and James Metcalfe; their coach was Giles Bayliss, Head of Law. Part of their prize was £3000 worth of books and resources for the library.



- Crystal Wright and Lauren McCutcheon took part in this year's Tall Ships Race on the sail training vessel 'Black Diamond of Durham'. They boarded on July 8th at Arhus in Denmark and participated in the Baltic Sea race to Kotka in Finland, arriving at their destination on July 20th. Neither had sailed before.
- Organised by Darlington's Community Youth Service, a group of young people, including 10 QE students, travelled to Lesotho in August. During their ten day stay they visited schools and villages putting on drama workshops to raise awareness of HIV/Aids and to promote sexual health. Before they left, Alan Milburn MP visited the College to encourage them in their fundraising – they had to raise £18,500 to fund the project.
- There is a vibrant and lively College Christian Union that meets on a weekly basis. Led by students and supported by Director of Enrichment, Joy Colthup, the Union engages in a variety of activities. They organise discussion groups where any student can air their views and where they try to come to agreement based on Biblical principles. However, there is complete freedom of speech and people are encouraged to speak out and say what they think. The group has also welcomed visiting speakers and members are encouraged to lead

and give 'teaching' on Biblical texts or issues. They are currently running an Alpha Course which is particularly appropriate for non-Christians. The course is being funded by King's Church, Darlington and is led by student Richard Ward.

- A large number of our students were nominated for Darlington Vibe Awards and attended the presentation evening at the Civic Theatre in October. The awards recognise the achievements of young people in the town and many organisations recommended our students for various activities. However, 3 students were nominated directly by QE -- Kim Pavey and Lorna Ellis in the category 'Against All Odds' and Lauren Lawton for 'Community Service'. Two students – Ashleigh McKenna and Lauren Sproates - provided part of the evening's entertainment, performing with Darien Wright (winner of Strictly Dance Fever) in a very lively dance routine.
- Over the weekend of the 6th/7th October, 14 students participated in the International Model United Nations Conference hosted by Cheadle Hulme School. The students represented Spain, Slovakia and North Korea. The conference was smaller and shorter than the ones we have attended before. It was a good experience, especially for students who were attending their first MUN.

**Anita Blackburn**

**October 2007**