

*Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College*  
**Report for the Student Committee of Governors**  
**April 2011**

Students have been involved in a wide range of activities since the last report in October. Some activities have been arranged by subject areas; others have been organised by students themselves. Individual and group achievements have been celebrated and community links have been developed.

### **Student Association**

- Students held a 'Back to School' day in October, dressing up in their old school uniforms to raise funds for the Teenage Cancer Trust and Cockermouth Mountain Rescue as their chosen charities of the year. It was a fun day with everyone entering wholeheartedly into the spirit of the event - staff also dug out their school attire and did their bit for the charity. A 'tuck shop' in the Student Common Room went down particularly well and traditional school games such as hopscotch and relay sports races were great fun. More than £300 was raised for the charities.
- To mark Remembrance Day, a display was created by the Student Association and Creative Writing Students which included information and poems written by students. Poppies were sold in the run-up to the day to raise money for the British Legion and, on the day itself, there was a two minutes silence at 11:00.
- In December, the annual Battle of the Bands was enjoyed with five bands - Stranger Danger, Queen Bees, Anywhere But Here, No Glove No Love and Caliber - performing in the Hall and fighting it out for the winning trophy, £100 and 5 hours worth of recording time at the Forum. Playing to an enthusiastic and sell-out audience, all the bands gave excellent performances and the standard of the competition was extremely high. Whilst the judges considered their verdict and the audience cast their votes for their favourite band, Jenna Keir entertained the crowd with a beautiful acoustic session. The winners were Calibre and Tim Fisher presented them with their prize.
- Over the Christmas period, the Student Association organised some activities for the festive season. During the last week of term, candy canes were on sale along with a cake sale held in the Common Room which was decorated for the occasion. The SA also organised an acoustic session. These activities raised a total of £133 for the Teenage Cancer Trust and Cockermouth Mountain Rescue.
- To bring a touch of romance to the College, the Student Association held a Valentine's Day Themed Cake Sale. Some lovely 'Heart Themed' cakes and biscuits were baked and the SA also sold some



Heart Shaped Lollies, which were incredibly popular. The activities helped to raise over £100 for Teenage Cancer Trust and Cockermouth Mountain Rescue.

- For Comic Relief in March, the Student Association held a fancy dress fundraising event based upon the theme 'Do Something Funny for Money.' A stage was set up in the Student Common Room with a competition for the best fancy dress costume in College – both students and staff joined in. There were all sorts of costumes including clowns, pirates, the Smurfs and Mr Blobby. In addition, a good number of lads braved the pain of leg waxing to raise money and helped to create a great atmosphere in the Common Room with the girls, in particular, enjoying this event! Red noses were sold all week and a total of £368.42 was raised.



- At the final Student Association meeting of the academic year in April, it was revealed that £1177.13 has been raised for charity through a wide range of fundraising events. As well as raising money for Children in Need and Comic Relief, the students chose to have the Teenage Cancer Trust and Cockermouth Mountain Rescue as their Charities of the Year. Money for the Cockermouth Mountain Rescue was raised in memory of Calum Williams, a student who tragically died during a climbing accident in the Lake District. At the Student Association meeting, Gary Doig, Teenage Cancer Trust Education and Advocacy Manager, was presented with a cheque for £429.07. Gary thanked the students for their support and explained how fundraising helps the charity and young people suffering with cancer.



## Business & Leisure

- Travel and Tourism A Level students made a visit to the seaside in order to visit the Blue Reef Aquarium at Tynemouth. The students visited the facility, had a talk by the manager and looked at a range of strange sea creatures. The students carried out the visit to collect information towards a unit on human resources and recruitment. The students got a huge amount from the visit; not only did they see a facility operating first hand but they also gained an insight into all of the possible career opportunities in the area.
- A Mad Hatters Tea Party was organised by Travel and Tourism Studies students to raise funds for an educational visit and the Help the Heroes campaign. The event had an Alice in Wonderland theme, including tea tasting, Mad Hatters bingo and a tea dance. The students coached the audience through the dance and over 70 pairs of feet joined in which was great fun. The evening was a huge success and was superbly



supported by over 110 students' friends and families. Throughout the organisation of the event, the students worked really hard to ensure a successful outcome. The whole evening had a very professional feel, helped by the decorations and students' hard work. A good time was had by all. The total raised is a real credit to the students' organisational skills and will go a long way towards subsidising their outward bound visit. The students felt very privileged to be able to give £250 to the Help for Heroes campaign.

- A Level Travel and Tourism students planned and organised a two night visit to London as part of their course. The students were allocated individual roles to plan the visit and, between them, they made all of the arrangements for the trip. The trip provided many educational opportunities and raised greater awareness of the travel and tourism industry. Visits included the London Eye, Buckingham Palace, Madame Tussauds and the West End to watch a performance of "Billy Elliot". The visit was a huge success as the students all worked well together throughout the planning and thoroughly enjoyed their time in London.
- In November, A Level Travel and Tourism students went to Jarrow to work with a Year 6 class at Dunn St Primary School. The purpose of the visit was to complete a piece of coursework on event management. The students planned for the primary school children a day on Italy. The day consisted of a range of educational and fun activities for the primary school pupils to develop their knowledge of the country and its culture. Activities included food tasting, map work, designing logos and t shirts along with trying Italian ice cream. The students from both QE and the school had a fantastic day, and a return trip to Darlington is on the cards. Nicola Noble, teacher at Dunn St Primary, complimented the QE students for acting as role models for the younger children and inspiring them to be as successful as possible.



- Travel and Tourism students visited York and The National Railway Museum as part of their studies. The visit provided the students with the opportunity to collect the information needed for the element of their course relating to customer service. The students were able to board the Segways – a small motorised scooter type machine - that took them round the museum and this proved a massive hit.
- As part of their course, A Level Leisure Studies students organised a three day visit to Edinburgh. The Leisure students took on responsibility for every aspect of the trip, and had to work together to ensure the event was successful and enjoyed by all. Whilst in Edinburgh, students completed challenges such as ice skating and rock climbing along with more leisurely activities like a visit to Edinburgh Castle, the Zoo and a ghost tour. The students really got involved and displayed some very positive qualities. It is difficult to put together a three day visit for a customer group, but they produced a visit any one would be proud of.

- A Level Leisure Studies students organised a sports activity day for a local primary school. The purpose of the day was to inspire the children to think about progression to college and then possibly university. The day started with a tour of the College and an introduction to college life by the QE students. The group then enjoyed a packed lunch together followed by an afternoon of fun challenges – both sport and brain based.



- In March, the Leisure Studies students made a visit to Castlegate Quay, an artificial white water facility in Middlesbrough. The students were there to study how customer service was delivered within the facility and to evaluate the effectiveness of this. Following a talk and a tour of the facility, wet suits and life jackets were issued along with the necessary safety talk. Few if any of the students had experienced Bellboating before, and certainly not in the tropical waters of the Tees in March. The visit to the watersports facility provided case study material for their external exam whilst a trip to Hollywood Bowl allowed the students to compare and contrast the voluntary and private sector leisure industry. Following a talk on customer service in the private sector, the students became very competitive in a bowling competition.
- A Level Business Studies students went on a A2 and AS Revision Workshop Day at Newcastle in March. Students found this very productive and enjoyable.

## Creative Arts

- The College's Christmas concert took place in December and, as has become the custom for this event, all tickets were sold so that the Hall was full. The choir, orchestra and Big Band took part with various solo items and there were also congregational carols. In addition, the College organ was also put to good use with contributions from Head of Physics John Thorley and AS student Jonathan Clegg.

- Three music students provided the accompaniments for the College's Carols in the Park event in Stanhope Park. They were Jonathan Swainston playing the clarinet, Tom Jones on trombone and Elizabeth Roe on trumpet. Head of Music, Ken Smith, also assisted on trombone.



- In March, the College's annual Leschinski Music Competition was once again held. This year, ten students entered the competition and the standard was exceptionally high. A variety of pieces, both

classical and modern, were in the programme with both vocal performances and a wide range of instruments including the organ, clarinet, guitar, violin, and trumpet. It was an excellent evening and the judges found it extremely difficult to choose the winners. The winner of the competition was Katie Coleman who sang Etta James' *I'd rather go blind* and the runner up was Robert Smith, on the trumpet, with a rendition of Allen Vizzutti's *Polka*. The Leschinski Prizes were first awarded in 1985 by Mr W M Wolf in memory of his piano teacher Olga Leschinski who was a refugee in Germany from Communist Russia; she was later murdered by the Nazis.

- The Big Band concerts took place on two dates in April, playing to a total audience of around 200 people. Wine and cheese were served and the evenings had a great atmosphere with excellent entertainment. "The Queen Bees", made up of students from AS and A2 Performance Studies, very ably supported the Big Band.
- In November, 28 Art Foundation students travelled to London to visit special exhibitions in major galleries to inform their Critical & Contextual Studies in Art. They visited Tate Britain to study the Turner Prize Exhibition and then took the Tate Boat along the River Thames to Tate Modern. Here they had the opportunity to see the Gauguin Exhibition and to visit the permanent exhibitions of contemporary art. They collected information and made drawings of art work which they were able to study at first-hand.
- Liam Jefferies became the College's first Artist in Residence in November when he joined the Art and Design Department for a year's part-time placement, funded by the Dover Family Fund. Liam graduated with an MA in Printed Textiles from the Royal College of Art in 2009. Since then he has worked as a freelance artist and designer for a number of commercial companies such as John Lewis and Designer's Guild. He has also worked as an artist and curator producing work for the Hayward Gallery and Droog Design Company and Gallery whilst facilitating a range of educational projects in schools and universities. The main strand of his practice, however, is focused on public and gallery art and it is in this capacity that he has been taken on as Artist in Residence at the College. Liam has been able to contribute to the student experience across A level Art and Design subjects, as well as working closely with Art Foundation students on a special exhibition project. Liam has been able to bring lively enthusiasm and practical help to many of our Art and Design students, as well as up to date knowledge of professional practice. Liam showed new work in an end of Residency Exhibition in the Lounge Gallery in the Arts Centre in March.
- Art Foundation students have worked with Liam Jefferies on a special project, the culmination of which is an exhibition in the Glass Corridor Gallery in the Arts Centre. The aim of the project was to encourage the students to use architectural and spatial inspiration to develop and produce artworks for transitional spaces. These are spaces that can impact on our interaction and emotional connection with environments, but are often overlooked as purely utilitarian intermediary areas. The students collected first hand inspiration from the transitional spaces that they encountered regularly in Darlington. Their ideas developed



into a diverse range of outcomes. Liam supported and facilitated their responses to this project through a variety of media, encouraging the students to produce experimental, exciting and original art and design pieces. Many of the students have produced Public intervention pieces that were temporarily installed in particular sites to encourage passers-by to engage with the spaces.

- Artist Mike Golding, formerly a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Northumbria University, spent several days in the Department working with a selection of Art Foundation students who had volunteered to participate in this artist's Remembrance Project. Mike's project is concerned with a recollection of the dead through the creation of fake photographic images using the creative possibilities of the forensic software E-fit, used by police forces to construct images of human faces from witness interviews. Memory recall is prompted by the visual qualities of the E-fit software which contains a photographic database of face shapes, eye shapes, mouth size, hair style etc. In short, photographic fragments are assembled to create a recognisable image of a face. Mike has been working with a number of participants, from a variety of community groups and ages, who were asked to remember people who have died. The resulting images will have the appearance of photographs, but they are inaccurate renderings shaped by the imprecision of recall, the state of mind of the respondent and the aesthetic qualities of photographic montage. This work will form an exhibition 'Remembrance', in the Myles Meehan Gallery in the Arts Centre in July 2011. Mike also gave an illustrated lecture on Photography and his own work and spent time advising Art Foundation students on portfolio presentation, as well as taking on the role of interviewer for some mock interviews for Fine Art and Photography specialists.
- In September 2011, the Art Foundation students aim to progress to a variety of specialist art and design courses in Universities throughout the UK. Their chosen future pathways include Fine Art, Textile and Surface Pattern Design, Fashion Design, Fashion Marketing and Promotion, Illustration, Photography, Interior Architecture, Design Crafts, Costume Design and Architecture.
- 40 Art students participated in an Art study visit to New York. Whilst there, they recorded their experiences of the city through drawing and photography and observed the work of many artists and designers. The group explored galleries such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim and the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Many famous sights were also visited including the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty and the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. In addition, the students watched a local production company filming a future blockbuster in Times Square and took part in a promotional campaign celebrating 30 years of the Barbie doll where they had their photos taken with a 'real life Ken.' On an evening, the students were able to see a different side to the city with everything illuminated. A particular highlight was ice skating, at night, outside the Rockefeller Centre. Those who couldn't skate were encouraged and supported by those who could! The entire trip was a valuable and life changing experience for the students. They bonded well and for many their confidence grew. It was a study visit they will remember forever.



- Art students have also benefited from several informative talks. These have included tutors from Huddersfield University, Northumbria University and Cleveland College of Art & Design, showing students' work and giving information regarding HE courses. Students have also enjoyed talks in the Arts Centre related to exhibitions in the Myles Meehan Gallery.
- Hurworth Primary School recently embarked on a whole school Photography Project and asked if some of our students would like to help them. Four Art Foundation students, with specialist expertise in Photography, were happy to become involved. They spent one day showing every class in the school their portfolios and talked through the work that they had done. They enjoyed talking to all the children, from age 5 through to age 11. The children were excited and inspired by what they saw. During the second day in the school, each of the students devised a practical workshop and worked with the children in different ways. Emily Long, whose specialism is Fashion Promotion and Photography, worked with groups who staged a fashion shoot, dressed up in an assortment of clothes and accessories provided by Emily. Holly Heathfield concentrated on studio portraiture and Aiden Atkin and Liam Slade worked outside in the school grounds, helping the children to find interesting surfaces and textural details. The staff and pupils were delighted with the huge contribution the students brought to the project and they have been invited back at the end of term to judge the best photograph produced by each class.
- All the students studying Art & Design subjects this year have benefited from working with many graduate volunteers and student teachers. These have included ex- QE students Ariana Preston and Sarah Degnan, who both have degrees in Fine Art. Anna Maughan, an ex-Art Foundation student at QE, has an MA in Photography and returned to do some teaching practice at the College. Ilki Varsarehli, another ex-QE student, with a degree in Graphic Design and who has been working as a designer, returned to gain teaching experience working with Graphic Design students. Phillipa Coad, with a degree in Textile Design and experience of working in an Art Gallery, has also been working with A level Textile and specialist Art Foundation students. Isobel Watts, an ex-QE student, who is in her final year of studying Fine Art at Nottingham University, also did a short work placement at the beginning of the academic year. Isobel was also a student who produced work for the first year of the Art in the Yards project and has maintained regular contact with the department throughout her degree course.
- The three year 'Art in the Yards' project, which has seen the development of original student artwork being installed in Clark's and Buckton's Yards in the town centre, was shortlisted in the Contribution to the Arts category at the "Best of Darlington" Awards. Students who had contributed to the project and who are now at University, returned to Darlington to be present at the Awards Ceremony. The students were proud to have taken part in this prestigious project and excited to have been short-listed. A film about the project is being made by a local media company for a web project.



## English, Media & Drama

- Julie Blake and Tim Shortis, Researchers for the British Library's Learning Team, have been to College to work with A Level English Language students. They were testing learning activities that will be available on the Library's website and have been developing the Language Timeline which allows online access to a variety of the library's texts and materials to support the study of them. They needed some willing volunteers to trial lesson ideas that will accompany the texts on the timeline. Five groups worked with them and the 'lessons' were recorded so that the team can evaluate them later. The students and staff were interviewed and their opinions will be used to finalise the materials and to show the Library's sponsors to ensure that the money for the next stage of development of the website will be forthcoming! The Timeline is now live (<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/timeline/index.html>) and the materials we trialed are now being added.
- In February, English Language A Level students enjoyed a visit to the British Library's 'Evolving English' exhibition. This exhibition is the biggest the Library has ever held and the first to chart the development of the language through key texts that the Library holds. It certainly was an opportunity that we couldn't miss. 60 students spent the day at the Library over two visits in February. They had a workshop led by Johnnie Robinson, curator of the extensive sound archive the Library holds, who showed them how his team focus on both past changes in accent and dialect and track the changes that are happening right now. In the afternoon they had a guided tour around the exhibition space and were awed and excited by the amazing texts that they saw – the Tyndale, Wycliffe and King James bibles, Johnson's dictionary, the first book printed in English and pages of Beowulf and the Anglo Saxon chronicles to name but a few of the highlights.
- Sixty AS English Language students attended The English and Media Centre's Language Conference in March. The conference was held at the Institute of Education in London and the speakers were an impressive line up. Professor Deborah Cameron, who holds the Rupert Murdoch chair in Languages and Communication at Oxford University, spoke about Language and Gender; Johnnie Robinson, our friend from the British Library Sound Archive, offered an analysis of the students' accents and dialects from data collected via an online survey they completed before they attended. The star turn was Professor David Crystal who never disappoints! He spoke entertainingly about texting and gained a new generation of Sixth Form fans. He has promised to come and visit us here again next year.
- In April, both AS and A2 English Language students had the opportunity to attend conferences at Newcastle University's School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics. These featured lecturers from the University department and guest speakers who were the chief examiners for our exam board. The days proved both useful in the run-up to exams and very entertaining. It was especially important in offering many of the AS students their first opportunity to see around a University department.
- A2 English Language staff have been invited to become part of a consultation group of teachers for a project by Queen Mary, University of London, to set up a Research Digest blog that will help A Level students to access the latest academic papers in the field. The team at Queen Mary are using us to assess how best to summarise papers so that they can be used directly by students.

- Students studying A Level English Literature enjoyed an evening of Elizabethan frivolity at Lumley Castle. As all of the exam texts at A2 are from the Elizabethan period - Othello, Dr Faustus, the poetry of John Donne - and the students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the context of the time, to go to a 'real' Elizabethan banquet seemed like a fun way of doing this. Students and staff knew it was going to be a magical evening when they walked through the floodlit courtyard to the banqueting hall with snow gently falling and a piper heralding their arrival. Following a pre-dinner drink in the cellar, the QE group was the first to be called to dine and there was more than a bit of pride in hearing the name of Queen Elizabeth in its original context. Some students and staff dressed up in the fashions of the period, the food and dancing were fantastic and the night was a huge success. It is hoped that the visit will become an annual event.



- A Level English Literature students also went to Newcastle University for a Library visit and lecture on TS Eliot by Dr Abbie Garrington whilst, to provide context for their study of Wilfred Owen's poetry, they saw a performance of "Journey's End" at Darlington's Civic Theatre.
- In the autumn of 2010, Film Education week gave our students the opportunity to attend a number of free events - screenings of The Hurt Locker, Precious and Tormented were accompanied by discussions from the British Board of Film Classification and Film Journalists.
- In March, 25 AS Film Studies students went to the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle for a study day on representations of crime on screen. The day involved a full screening of Get Carter (celebrating 40 years of the film) and included a question and answer session with the film's director, Mike Hodges. He was outstanding and generated tremendous enthusiasm in our students.
- 21 AS Film Studies students went to the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle in April for a study day on Independent British Cinema, exploring innovative ways of financing, producing and distributing British films.
- In September, A2 Media Studies students went to Teesside University to do a skills development session. They got professional guidance on how to film and edit trailers. They worked with industry standard equipment to produce their work which was directly related to their Advanced Portfolio unit.
- AS Media Studies students attended an all day master class at Sunderland University in November. They participated in two lectures and various seminars that examined the representation of social groups in a variety of TV genres. This inevitably helped them in their study of the Key Concepts in Media unit.
- Performance Studies student bands have been involved in a number of extra-curricular gigs. *The Queen Bees* have performed on QE's Open Evenings; at the College's Battle of the Bands; at

the Vibe awards at the Civic Theatre; during the College's Mad Hatter's Tea Party; at a Namibia Trip Fundraiser and as part of the Big Band concerts. *The Pretty Little Sinners* also performed at QE's Open evenings; The Vibe awards at the Civic Theatre and at a Cancer Research Fundraiser at Hummersknott School.

## Enrichment

- As part of Democracy Week, Darlington Borough Council held its 95th Citizenship Ceremony at QE.

AS Level Citizenship students hosted and helped to plan the ceremony which welcomed 19 new British Citizens to the UK and the local community. The students were absolutely superb and took a great deal of pride in planning the ceremony, ensuring that guests were looked after and that everything was available such as a programme and order of events, refreshments and music. They even arranged for student Jonathan Clegg to play the National Anthem on the College's pipe organ. Hearing the new citizens take their oath of allegiance to the Queen was



very moving and the students learned a great deal which will help them to be successful in their Citizenship exams. The students believed that it was a privilege to help organise such an important event and they found it very interesting talking to the new citizens. Everything went well and everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion. QE was very much involved in Democracy Week and the Young People's Darlington Debate was held in the College Hall after the Citizenship Ceremony. Chaired by Councillor Cyndi Hughes, this was an opportunity for young people from all over the town to put their questions about living in Darlington to prominent individuals such as Ada Burns, Chief Executive of the Council and Peter Barron, Editor of the Northern Echo.

- Fourteen students have been selected to be Student Ambassadors. Funded by Aimhigher, this project is an initiative to encourage young people to progress to further and higher education, to raise their aspirations and to support their transition from school to college. The QE students were appointed as Ambassadors from a wide variety of curriculum areas and many have faced barriers to learning. The scheme enables the students to develop core skills in effective communication and team work. The voluntary work of the Ambassadors has been well received and, so far, they have held group work sessions in College for pupils from Longfield, Branksome, St.Aidans and the Education Village. It is hoped that the scheme will extend to pupils at other schools. The students are thoroughly enjoying the opportunities afforded to them by the project.



- Creative writing is extremely popular at College and competitions have been held to stimulate students' skills and harness their creativity. The latest competition asked students to use the theme of 'A chance meeting' to write either a short story of not more than 2000 words or a poem of not more than 40 lines. The entries received were of a very high standard and the judges had a very difficult decision as all the entries had something unique to offer, ranging from mistaken identity and creatures that haunt the mind, to ghostly goings on in the graveyard. However, after much deliberation, first year student Hannah Mulley was awarded the first prize of £50 for her short story, 'The Fourteen Year Second'; Daniel Jones came second with his short story, 'Off The Rails', and the third prize was awarded to Alistair Jeffryes for his story, 'Chance Encounter'. Hannah is currently studying AS Levels in English Literature, Tudor History, Archaeology, German and Critical Thinking.
- In March, 7 students participated in the inaugural Sixth Form Colleges Model United Nations, hosted by Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College in Birmingham. The conference was well attended with over 300 students attending from Sixth Form Colleges from across the country. QE's delegation represented the USA, and the students involved were: Adam Smith (Ambassador), Peter Hall, Louise Hufford, Emily Sharpe, Edward Kirby, Amy Fenny and Elizabeth Roe. The students worked hard to research the United States' views on various world issues and prepared excellent and in depth resolutions on several topics such as the Korean Peninsula, Child Labour and Ecological Responsibilities in the Search for Gas and Oil. The students entered into lobbying with confidence and vigour and pre-conference nerves weren't visible as they attempted to gain signatures for their resolutions. All students gained enough support for their resolutions to pass lobbying and be approved for Committee stages.

Some students even worked hard to merge their resolutions to put forward a stronger argument and a more strategic standpoint on their issues. This level of cooperation was commendable and the experience will be beneficial to any current or future studies. Once the conference was underway, committees debated resolutions on their four allocated issues and our students managed to involve themselves as much as



possible. Unfortunately due to time constraints not all resolutions were debated, or debates over resolutions were stopped short. This obviously meant that some of our students' resolutions weren't debated or weren't debated to their fullest extent. There was success though as one student, Peter Hall had merged his resolution with China in the Disarmament Committee and this was passed to General Assembly. The meeting of the General Assembly to endorse the resolutions passed in Committee was productive for our delegates; some took the floor and expressed themselves fluently and astutely. We received many positive comments on our delegates' performances, their subject knowledge and their behaviour in general. At the presentation of awards on Sunday afternoon, there was jubilation as QE students received awards in several categories. The commendations presented were: Most Effective Lobbying - Louise Hufford; Persuasive Speaking - Adam Smith, Louise Hufford, Peter Hall; Best Dressed - Peter Hall. Further congratulations were then in order as the students were awarded with a commendation for being a Most Effective Delegation, for working outstandingly well over the duration of the Conference and working hard to

represent the views of their country. The award was collected by the delegation's ambassador Adam Smith. The conference was closed by Martin Bell OBE, journalist and current British UNICEF Ambassador. It was the perfect end to what had been a fantastic weekend of debates and current issues.

- In October, a team of QE students hosted the regional heat of the Institute of Ideas Debating Matters Competition. QE students debated motions on internet privacy and religious freedom on University campuses. The students involved were Sam Barningham, Lewis Brown, Emily Thompson, Kieran Young, Danielle Cawood and James Coe.

## Humanities

- Two students – Hannah Scott and Emily Thompson - joined more than 200 other young people from the North East to fly to Poland to visit Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The visit was part of the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' project organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust whose aim is to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are not forgotten and that lessons from history are learned. Hannah and Emily flew from Newcastle Airport to Krakow at 7.00am and arrived back in Darlington at 11.30pm. It was a long, moving and memorable day which started in a Polish synagogue in the town of Oswiecim and ended in Auschwitz-Birkenau with a service of remembrance and the lighting of candles at the end of the railway track which brought prisoners – Jews and others – to Auschwitz from all over Europe. Emily gave a reading at the service and both students found the visit life-changing, deeply moving and incomparable to anything that can be learned in the classroom. Hannah and Emily also attended two seminars in Newcastle before and after the visit, where they heard the first-hand account of a survivor of Auschwitz. To disseminate what they had experienced and learned, the students participated in one of the College's History Club meetings and made a presentation to the wider public as part of Darlington Borough Council's Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony in January.

- Around 100 students studying History came together for the annual Christmas History Quiz. In teams of four, they battled it out to win the top prize and the accolade of College History Champions. The winning team was made up of Liam Raine, Phil Bayles, Rebecca Evans and Abby Turner. The quiz comprised several rounds, testing students' general historical knowledge – the picture and music rounds were particularly popular. It was great fun, everyone seemed to have a good time and hopefully all improved their knowledge of History.



- 60 History students visited the Royal Armouries in Leeds in February. The students took part in a hands-on seminar where they examined historical objects related to the period they are studying in class.
- History Club has met every month this year covering topics ranging from the Romans to poverty in 19<sup>th</sup> century Darlington. John Roxburgh from the Durham University Fulling Mill Museum gave the

February talk on the abolition of the slave trade and Peter Hall, a QE student, talked very impressively about the Boer War and the nature of the Extended Project in the March meeting.

- A trip to Eden Camp in Yorkshire was organised for A2 Modern History students in April. A member of a World War II Lancaster bomber crew has been interviewed and this will be added to Moodle, the College's VLE, as an audio clip shortly.



- The History Department has been liaising with Groundwork North East to offer some AS History students the opportunity to take part in a year-long oral History research project about the Denes area of Darlington.
- To mark World Mental Health Day on 11<sup>th</sup> October, a team of A2 Psychology students organised a fundraising event in College. The event was launched last year, is run nationally by the Mental Health Foundation and is called 'Tea and Talk'. The premise was that the team invited everyone along to the Hall for a cup of tea and some cake (of which there was a lot!). They suggested donations for these and found that people were very generous with their small change. As a team they found information on mental health issues and displayed this information on boards around the Hall. There was information available on the Mental Health Foundation's website and some Jack Johnson tunes were played to set a calming ambience in a cafe style layout that the team had deemed most suitable for the event. Students suggested and then hand made money boxes to be placed on the centre of tables and these had information on them about where the money raised will go. The students made a real effort to organise this event in a proactive way and to promote positive mental health. Tips on how to maintain positive mental health were placed on each of the tables set out in the hall. The students involved worked hard to ensure the event was a real success. Overall, £114.00 was raised for the Mental Health Foundation.
- To mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James version of the Bible, QE student Richard Toth was chosen to read a pre-selected biblical extract as part of an on-going reading marathon of selected groups and organisations associated with Darlington.
- In December, more than 100 students braved the arctic weather conditions to get into college for 9.00am for a question and answer session with the town's MP, Jenny Chapman. The A Level Politics and Citizenship students had more than an hour with the MP and asked a variety of questions ranging from the effects of cuts in Darlington's budget to the role of a back bencher in the House of Commons and, of course, the burning issues of tuition fees and the loss of Education Maintenance Allowances. The students were very appreciative of the time given by Jenny and they learned a lot from the session.
- Fifteen A Level Politics students participated in a study visit to Washington DC in March. The week spent in Washington gave the students great insight into American politics and all of them enjoyed participating in political debates and visiting the key political institutions. This is the second year running that QE has teamed up with Shrewsbury Sixth Form College to run this joint trip. Whilst in Washington, the students met with and questioned independent Senator for Vermont, Bernie Sanders; took part in a debate between the National Rifle Association and the Coalition to Stop Gun

Violence; met with Law Clerks from the office of Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephen Breyer and questioned Hilary Shelton, the chief Washington lobbyist for the NAACP, America's leading civil rights group. They also visited the Supreme Court, Congress and other major sites and monuments. The visit was a wonderful chance for young people of a like-mind, from different areas of the country, to meet in an intense political environment before going on to university. The trip was a huge success and the students gained a lot from it. The knowledge and understanding they gained from the visit were demonstrated during a presentation evening to parents, other students and staff. The students spoke about the visit and answered questions in an entertaining and perceptive way. They have also produced an excellent resource pack for future Politics students.



- Young voters made up of Politics and Citizenship students opted against changing the voting system following a debate about possible change to the electoral system in April. Speakers backing both sides in the voting referendum spoke to students at College in a debate chaired by town MP Jenny Chapman. Jamie Matthews from the YES campaign, said AV would give MPs a stronger mandate and would mean the end of safe seats. John Greenshields, from the No To AV group, said AV would cost more, would promote extremist opinions and was not a fair voting system. A vote was taken, with 114 students against change, and 33 in support.



- 20 AS and A2 students attended a Law Conference at Lancaster University in October. The students had a full programme of activities and events including lectures on War Crimes, privacy, corporate crime and life as a law student. They also undertook a tour of the campus. The event was geared towards Sixth Form students and was well organised and very worthwhile. Student feedback was very positive and it is hoped to repeat the trip next Autumn.
- 150 AS Law students took part in a mock trial hosted by Darlington Magistrates' Court in late October. Groups of students attended either for a morning or afternoon session at the court and played the roles of witnesses, lawyers and court staff.
- 35 AS and A2 Law students watched a performance of Agatha Christie's "Witness for the Prosecution" at Darlington Civic Theatre in November. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and several went to see it for a second time!

- A team of QE Law students battled the snow to participate in the Bar National Mock Trial Competition at Newcastle Crown Court in November. Four students - Rebecca Auster, Jenna Kier, Lee Byers and Victoria Johnson - took it in turns to prosecute and defend two cases. One was a theft case raising issues of identification and the other concerned a charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and self defence. The remainder of the team played roles of witnesses, court staff and jurors. The competition is not scripted and students prepared at lunchtimes and after College throughout October and November. The QE team was assisted by Paul Renteurs, a former QE student and law graduate and Will Byrne, a Newcastle based barrister. QE students performed well and individual students were commended for their performances.
- A group of 20 AS Law students attended a Conference for A Level Law Students at Teesside University in March. Students attended workshops on the defences of insanity, consent and intoxication and on youth crime.
- Four AS Law students were awarded places at the Cambridge University Sixth Form Law Conference in March. The four students - Rob Lucas, Amy Fenny, Elizabeth Roe and Rachael Kitching - are the highest achieving in the year group and they attended lectures and seminars over four days, toured the University and attended presentations by Cambridge undergraduates and members of the legal profession.

## Mathematics and Computing

- 45 students entered the UK Senior Maths Challenge, a demanding national competition which tests the mathematical skills of students. Between them, the QE students achieved 12 bronze, 11 silver and one gold award. Nationally, 40% of students are presented with a certificate and QE students surpassed that average. Jack Shields won the gold award and was presented with the gold certificate and a prize for being the best in College and one of the top students in the country. Jack is in his second year at QE and hopes to progress to Manchester University in the autumn to read Mathematics. Jack achieved a bronze certificate last year so it is hoped that his success will inspire current first year students to aim for the gold next year.
- A photograph showing three young men standing in front of a wall with abstract blue and white artwork. The man on the left is wearing a light blue shirt and a red tie. The man in the middle is wearing a dark jacket over a plaid shirt and is holding a white certificate. The man on the right is wearing a dark suit jacket and a light blue tie. They are all smiling slightly.
- In February, 4 Mathematics students competed in the Teesside Memory Championships. They competed in four rounds recalling words, numbers, dates and cards. The students were very successful with Kate Armstrong finishing in 1<sup>st</sup> place, Helen Corby in 3<sup>rd</sup> and Daniel Glasper in 4<sup>th</sup>. This takes them through to the regional finals in Newcastle.

## Modern Foreign Languages

- A2 students had a French film day at the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle in November. This was organised by Newcastle University and involved their student ambassadors and Dr Leavy, a French film specialist, working on 'Les Choristes' with our students.

- Matthew Fisher, a former QE student, returned to Darlington after studying in Paris for 2 years, in order "to give something back to the College". He worked with French students for 2 days a week for 4 weeks, helping in lessons and doing extra speaking practice. He also spoke to the students about studying in London and Paris, as well as his forthcoming internship with the EU in Brussels. This proved to be a very inspiring visit!
- Alex Jones, currently a Year 10 pupil at Hummersknott School, was the Modern Languages' third work experience student. He had an excellent week's placement and enjoyed assisting with administrative tasks, observing lessons and helping to prepare for the trip to Lille.
- In February, the French department held a very successful Masterclass in Reading skills, attended by Year 11 students from Branksome, Hummersknott and Education Village schools. Some very positive feedback was received from the schools.

- 23 French students went to Northern France for a week, where they lived with families and worked in various placements such as schools, shops and even a baker's van! As a result they made excellent progress with their language skills and started to think and even dream in French! They also visited Lille, famous for its stylish Flemish architecture and vibrant city



life. It was a superb trip and inspired many to consider studying at university in France whilst some said it was "La meilleure semaine de ma vie! (The best week of my life!)". The students made a real effort to communicate and, although they were sometimes pushed out of their comfort zones, they enjoyed their experiences and made real progress. They were superb ambassadors for QE.

- In order to help French AS students with their oral preparation, they have been given an A2 buddy, with whom they practise at a mutually convenient time. A2 students have also been helping in some AS lessons, ensuring that first years get as much experience as possible of speaking French!
- French student ambassadors from QE have helped out at St. Francis Xavier and Longfield schools, and will be helping out at Branksome School.
- Three students have won awards for their commitment to the study of the German language. The Youthbridge Awards are presented to students who show outstanding dedication and motivation to the study of German and this year's winners were Clare Storey, Katie Palethorpe and Andy Page. They are all studying A Level German and each received a certificate and a cheque or book token at a ceremony held in the College. Youthbridge is a charitable initiative of the British-German Association and provides support for making German learning in English schools more relevant, interesting and fun. Clare, Katie and Andy are extremely talented linguists and are most definitely worthy winners. Claire has secured a place to read German with Philosophy at Oxford University,

Katie plans to continue with her study of German and hopes to become a primary school teacher whilst Andy's ambition is to do a degree in engineering with some time spent working in Germany.

- 14 students and 2 teachers visited the German Department from our partner school Otto-Pankok-Schule in Mülhem an der Ruhr, Darlington's twin town in Germany. They worked with AS and A level German students throughout the day. This is the fifth time that Erich Bittmann, Head of English, has brought his students to work with our German students in college. Plans are already underway for the next visit from Otto-Pankok Schule in September.



## Science

- There's no better way of learning than having a 'hands on' experience and that's exactly what Biology students did when they had the chance to handle lots of different animals. Jay Gunn, himself a former student of QE, runs Jay's Animal Encounters. He brings 'the zoo to you' and came into College with a selection of his animals. All AS level Biology students were involved and they loved seeing and handling some very different animals including meerkats, a bearded dragon, a python, a pygmy hedgehog, a blue tongued skink, a bull frog and even a tarantula! By discussing and handling the animals the students learnt more about ecology, biodiversity and evolution. It was an enjoyable and memorable experience. After leaving QE, Jay worked at Edinburgh Zoo as a zoo keeper and realised how hard it is for schools and colleges to get students out to zoos. He therefore set up 'Zoo to you' and now brings animals to where young people are studying.



- In December, all the AS Physics students visited Durham University to hear the Christmas lecture which, this year, was on the topic 'Sounds Interesting'.
- 30 A2 physicists, in March, attended a 1 day Master Class in particle physics at Durham University.
- In April, the College hosted an evening public lecture on behalf of the Institute of Physics. Dr Ross Reynolds from Reading University spoke on the subject of Extreme Weather.
- Once again, A2 Geology students ventured forth to Arran for their residential course in mid November. This was a week later than usual which proved quite fortuitous as Arran was lashed with gales and floods in the week prior to their visit, and when they were there the weather was

reasonably kind. Sixteen students worked for a week in the field experiencing Geology first hand and acquiring skills and data for their coursework.

- In February, Andrew Williamson who is now reading Geography at Girton College, Cambridge University was recognised by Darlington as an outstanding student in the borough. He was named as the winner of the "Academic Excellence" category in the Best of Darlington awards and received a certificate and a cash prize for his achievements. Andrew attained 5 A\* at A level. In Geography he was awarded full marks for all four modules. He also studied A levels in Geology, Chemistry and French as well as submitting an extended project on the theme of the Impact of Climate Change on British Agriculture.



- A2 Geology students visited the opencast coal mine in Cramlington where they were given a presentation about coal extraction and the impact on the environment. QE Alumnus Liz Shaw is the Chief Geologist for Banks, the operators.
- In October, Andrew Scott from Chemnet, a division of the RSC talked to all AS Chemistry students about careers in chemistry and the effects of chemistry on the environment. The students were offered the opportunity to take out membership at a reduced rate to keep them up to date with the latest developments in chemistry. There was a lot of interest from the students and several have taken out a subscription.
- Emma Clark, Tom Gray and Jake Hutton represented the College at the RSC Schools' Analyst Competition at the University of Teesside in March. The students completed a series of practical analytical determinations based on problems related to industrial or social needs.
- During two weeks in February, five students - Abi Barnett, Sam Carse, Hannah Harle, Sam Hannon and Jack Shields - took part in the first round of the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Chemistry Olympiad. This involved a challenging written test of chemical knowledge. Four students from across the country will be selected to represent the UK at the 2011 final in Turkey.

## Sport

- A celebration of the fantastic achievements of QE's young volunteers was held in the first ever Sport Leadership and Volunteering Awards evening. Over the last two years the College has developed a vibrant and highly successful Leadership and Volunteering programme which allows students to gain awards, qualifications and training in sport leadership, through links with many partners such as British Colleges Sport, Durham FA and British Blind Sport. Students are also encouraged to volunteer in College activities and in clubs in their local communities, gaining valuable experience and practical skills whilst being able to gain credit by logging voluntary hours on the Youth Sport Trust's Step Into Sport programme. The awards ceremony was organised and hosted by Hannah Marshall who, last year, was a student National Ambassador for British Colleges Sport. The Team Captain of the Year was won by Marsha Selby of the netball team for her work organising team

sheets, fixtures and for reporting results. Matt Carnelley was awarded the Community Volunteer of the Year for volunteering with Darlington Spraire Lads FC Under 6 team and Hannah Marshall won College Volunteer of the Year for her work in assisting College staff in many aspects of College sport. In addition, 15 students who completed 25 -200 hours of voluntary work were presented with Community Sport Leader Awards and Step Into Sport Awards.

- Following the successful introduction of the first ever Student Sport Management Team last year, a new 2010-11 team has taken on the challenge of improving sport at the College. This year's team was selected through a rigorous application and interview process. Their role is to assist QE's sport staff with the running of sporting activities and with improving the opportunities available at the College for all students. They have been busy organising new sessions such as Ultimate Frisbee, producing weekly results bulletins for all QE's sports teams and promoting sport at College to prospective new students at Open Evenings. They have also created a Sport Newsletter which has been circulated every term. The team members are: Maamun Hajmahmood – Team Leader; Anna Brassell – Team Leader; Karen Jackson – Secretary; Alycia Hodgson – Marketing & Promotion; Kirsty Lincoln – Leadership & Volunteering; Glenn Donaldson – Participation.



- Matthew Donne was selected for the England Squad for the 5<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Senior Taekwondo Championships that were held in Chennai, India and he came away with the bronze medal. Competing in the welterweight category, the championships were his first major international competition and the first time he had competed in the senior age group. To come third and seal the bronze medal for England was an absolutely superb achievement! Matthew started Taekwondo at the age of five and enjoys the challenging training schedule. At the same time he manages a demanding programme of A Level study at College – Biology, Psychology, French, Computing and General Studies. Matthew was extremely proud to represent his country and to win the bronze medal.



- More than 30 students attended a full day's Sport Leadership and Volunteering Camp. The camp was the brainchild of student Kirsty Lincoln and former QE student, Hannah Marshall who had attended a week-long FA national leadership camp in July. The camp was organised and promoted by the Student Sport Management Team and workshops on offer included a coaching masterclass taken by a Level 4 coach; disability training run by Nikki O'Donnell, Disability Officer for Durham FA

and an Introduction to Leadership session by Tina Reed, Durham FA's Education officer. The day was a massive success and all the workshops were really informative and great fun. Everyone who attended also registered onto the Step into Sport programme, which gives awards to young people who log voluntary hours in their community.

- Eleven golfers travelled to St. Andrews, Scotland to represent the College in the British Colleges Sport Golf Open Championship at the beginning of March. The championship was played over 36 holes on the Kittingtons and Torrance Courses at the Fairmont Golf Resort and is the third Golf Open to be staged by British Colleges Sport. The students who played were Nat Poole, Rob Lewis, Tom Musty, Phil Wake, Dan Harrison, Jonny Willis, Brad Dye, Carl Morfoot, Ryan Ford, Joel Tipton and Sam Scott. They all enjoyed a fantastic experience of playing two of the best "links" courses in the country at a resort rated the 18<sup>th</sup> best Golf resort in the world and all finished in very respectable places just outside the medals. As well as playing in the championships the students all had the chance to visit The Old Course at St Andrews – "The Home of Golf" - and all had photo opportunities on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes, including the famous bridge on the 18<sup>th</sup> which has been walked across by "greats" such as Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo and more recently Tiger Woods.
- Kathryn Binks has been selected to play for the British Colleges' Sport national netball team. Kathryn plays Goal Defence and had to attend a series of trials to win the prestigious place. Starting with regional trials and ending with a final national trial where she had to beat off stiff competition from players from 7 regions in England as well as Wales, Kathryn excelled and showed true talent and commitment to her sport. Kathryn has done exceptionally well to be selected as part of this international team, especially as she is only a first year student in an Under 19 squad. This means that she is fully two years younger than many girls in the selection process. At QE Kathryn is studying AS level PE, Psychology, Maths, English and General Studies. She hopes to eventually go on to university.

## Miscellaneous

- At the annual Best of Darlington Awards in February, many QE students were once again honoured for their talents and voluntary activities to help the community. In the Academic Excellence category, Andrew Williamson was named the winner for his phenomenal A Level results. He recorded five A\* grades making him one of the best qualified young people in the country and his results helped him to secure a place to study Geography at Girton College, Cambridge University. Among his results, Andrew scored full marks in all four of his AS and A2 modules in Geography, full marks in half of his Geology modules and full marks in two of his French modules. Matthew Carnelley won the Exceptional Student category after juggling his A Level studies with over 100 hours of community work including coaching at Darlington Spraire Lads and Lasses football teams and volunteering at the Blind Football World Cup in Hereford – all despite having hydrocephalus. Matthew was diagnosed with the condition where there is too much fluid on the brain aged just six weeks, following meningitis. He has been treated in nine hospitals across the country to drain the fluid. He also achieved A Levels in PE, Psychology, General Studies and Business Studies and won a place at Leeds Metropolitan University to study sports coaching. In the same category, Patience Wambui was also shortlisted for her



amazing achievements. Only three years after coming to Darlington as a Kenyan refugee after her family was caught up in pre- and post-election wars, Patience achieved excellent results in her Access courses in Biology, Mathematics and English Language at QE. As a result, she progressed to study Forensic Psychology at Staffordshire University. Kirsty Lincoln was named the winner of the Young Person's Contribution to the Community award for her extensive voluntary work including coaching Darlington Spraire Lads and Lasses and at South West Durham RA Ladies FC. Kirsty has also been selected as a National Ambassador for British Colleges Sport - one of only ten students in the whole country. In this role, she has helped to develop sport from a student perspective, to increase participation and to organise events for leadership and volunteering. QE's Foundation Art students were shortlisted for the Contribution to the Arts award. Over the past three years, the students have created colourful individual artworks for Buckton's and Clark's Yards in what is known as the Art Trail. Working with Darlington's town centre management team, the students have installed pieces of art inspired by the town's heritage including abstract paintings and a model from Lego blocks in order to brighten up this area of the town for shoppers and business owners. All of the QE students who were honoured at the Best of Darlington Awards thoroughly deserve to have their achievements recognised in this way, and are truly inspirational members of our community.

- Eighteen students and two teachers travel to Namibia in the summer to assist with local community projects. Whilst in Namibia they will walk along the Skeleton Coast, visit the Himba tribe and view the wildlife in the Etosha National Park. However, the most important part of the project will be spending 16 days helping to create sustainable vegetable patches and to build a school classroom. To fund the project, each member of the group has to raise £3000 and they have been involved in a range of activities to do so - cake sales, ice cream sales, bag packing, bungee jumping to name but a few. However, their most spectacular fundraising event was the organisation of a Ball at Headlam Hall Hotel which featured a sumptuous four course meal, an African drumming troupe, a live singer and a giant raffle with an auction of promises. The auction was kindly conducted by Mr Maurice Scott of Hawes Auction Mart who encouraged the Ball guests to part with large sums of money for items such as a dinner party in their own home, saxophone lessons and sailing lessons. The evening was rounded off with the raffle of a villa holiday and a vote of thanks from the students. A grand total of £5000 was raised. It was a great night and the students worked extremely hard to produce a very professional and enjoyable event. In preparation for their work in Namibia, the 18 students and two members of staff undertook pre- expedition training in Northumberland. The group camped and walked with full rucksacks around the countryside, covering approximately nine miles each day. They learnt camp craft and used budgeting skills, having to purchase four meals for each person with an allowance of only £2.20 per head. They also carried out a lost and found scenario, gave some basic first aid and used an improvised stretcher to carry a casualty to safety. The students were fantastic. It was one of the coldest nights of the year and they coped with it without any problems. There was only one blister and the students showed they could work as a cohesive team – something they will need to do in Namibia. Whilst they were away, an 18<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated round the camp fire with contraband muffins which had been hidden in rucksacks!



- Over 190 QE students were honoured for their achievements in a variety of categories at the 16<sup>th</sup> Vibe Awards which were held at Darlington's Civic Theatre in January. 161 students received awards in the Outstanding Achievement in Learning category. To qualify for this, students had to achieve at least 3 grades of A or A\* in their AS or A2 Levels; an outstanding accomplishment. The very high number of students receiving awards in this category is testament to their and their teachers' hard work and commitment. All of our students' exam successes enabled over 700 QE students to progress to over 100 universities last year and it was wonderful to see so many ex- QE students take a break from their university studies to attend the ceremony and receive their award in person. The College's Student Association Executive received an award for their Contribution to the Community. Alongside keeping up to date with their studies, these 18 students volunteer their time to organise events for all students in the College; raise money for charity; foster links with community groups and participate in various College committees and working parties. The College's Student Sports Management Team also won an award in this category for the tremendous voluntary work they do in encouraging others to participate in sporting activities, both in the College and in the local community. Both groups of students work enthusiastically and energetically, and are excellent ambassadors for the College. In the Outstanding Achievement in Sport section, Cole Henderson won an award for his achievements in rugby union. Cole represents QE and Billingham but has also represented the county and been selected to play for the England Colleges North East squad. Charlotte Arrowsmith was also recognised in this category for being selected to play for England Colleges North East squad in football. She too has represented QE and the county in her chosen sport. Glenn Donaldson's award was also for representing the College, the county and England Colleges North East squad in football. Kirsty Lincoln was honoured at the ceremony for her achievement in being selected as one of only 10 National Ambassadors for British Colleges Sport in the whole country. Kirsty does a tremendous amount of voluntary work in coaching younger students and she is part of the FA Coaching Scholarship Programme. Alex Porritt won an award in the Outstanding Achievement in the Arts category. Alex has played bass guitar for the reggae band "The Trenchtown Six" and has formed his own blues band "The Queen Bees" where he plays lead guitar. He has performed in a number of shows and "The Queen Bees" entertained the audience at the Vibe Awards. Three students studying A Levels in Dance at QE also achieved awards for their contributions to the Arts. Danielle Mercer, Kate Pilbeam and Gabi Rawdin were commended for their expressive and highly skilful performances in a range of dance styles and for being great ambassadors for Dance in the community. Matt Carnelley won awards in several categories – Contribution to the Community; Outstanding Achievement in Sport and Against All Odds- and he is truly exceptional and an inspiration to others. Diagnosed with hydrocephalous at 6 weeks after having contracted meningitis 6 days after birth, Matt has had numerous operations over the years and has been treated in 9 hospitals in this country and abroad. Despite this, Matt has been very successful in his academic studies and, after achieving A Levels in PE, Psychology, General Studies and Business Studies, he is currently studying for a degree in Sports Coaching. Alongside his A Levels, Matt did over 100 hours of voluntary work – he coached at Darlington Spraire Lads and Lasses FC, was



part of QE's Student Management team for sport and was selected by Durham County FA to help at the 2010 Football Blind World Championships; the biggest disability sports event ever to be held in this country. In addition to all these QE students receiving well-deserved Vibe Awards, other students at the College either performed on the evenings or helped to organise the ceremony. Ben Million and Sarah Parsons, both students at QE, did a fantastic job of hosting both evenings. The Vibe Awards are a wonderful celebration of the outstanding successes achieved by young people in our communities. The students who were honoured are extremely talented, hard-working and selfless individuals who deserve every success and commendation.

- The College is once again celebrating the success of its students in being offered places at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This year nine students have conditional offers from these prestigious universities where competition for places is intense and offers are only made to high achieving students after rigorous selection procedures, including interviews. To take up their places in the Autumn, they must now all keep working at the exceptionally high levels they have shown themselves capable of and must attain top grades in their final A Level examinations. Two students have offers from Oxford University: Clare Storey will read German and Philosophy and Anna Stephens will read French. The seven students with offers from Cambridge University are: Tom Chappell, Charlotte Howell, James Currie, Rebecca Auster, Owen Cundy, Ross Lindsay and Laura Raine. Tom will study Engineering, Charlotte's place is for Economics and James will read Computer Science; Rebecca's degree will be in Law, Owen and Ross will both study Natural Sciences and Laura's place is for Veterinary Science. QE continues to be the most successful institution in the region for enabling students to gain places in the most prestigious and competitive universities in the UK. This is a result of the hard work and determination of both students and staff.
- Students have experienced various events to give them a taste of studying at Oxford or Cambridge universities. A visit to the Oxbridge Roadshow at St.James's Park, Newcastle was arranged whilst, in March, an interesting and informative Oxbridge evening was held at College. Prospective students and their parents benefited from talking with current Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates, including ex-QE students, and from listening to a presentation from a member of staff at King's College, Cambridge.
- To assist with their applications to university, over 150 first year students attended a presentation on Teesside University's Passport scheme which is designed to help students applying to any Higher Education institution. Students interested in applying to study at Newcastle University attended a talk by a member of the university staff on its Partners scheme.
- During the Year 1 Parents' Evenings in March, the College held its inaugural Higher Education Convention in the Main Hall. Thirteen local and national universities sent representatives and set up information stands. The event proved extremely popular with parents and students who were able



to receive general information about Higher Education and more specific advice about studying at the universities in attendance.

- Over 400 students also attended the Higher Education Convention at Spennymoor where they could talk to representatives from over 100 Higher Education institutions. Students found the event very useful and came back loaded up with prospectuses and a range of “freebies”. The representatives were extremely complimentary about our students, stating that they asked astute questions and demonstrated thorough research about courses they were considering.
- Students due to begin university in September attended a series of talks by Chris Turner and Michael McTeague, Student Support Officers at Teesside University, about financial matters and assistance available to them before and during their time in Higher Education.
- Students applying for university courses where they will undergo interviews – teaching, social work, most medical and nursing courses as well as Oxbridge applicants – received interview practice and preparation sessions.

- In March, the College organised an Employment and Gap Year Fair in the Main Hall. At the event, various organisations were represented including employment agencies, gap year organisers, members from the voluntary sector and local employers. The event was very well attended and students received useful information and advice about current part-time employment opportunities and about their longer term plans.



- The College celebrated Black History Month in October. Displays of successful black people in a variety of fields were put up in the Atrium, Library and Student Common Room and postcards and messages were distributed via tutor groups. A competition based on the displays was held and a large number of entries were received.
- In December, students and staff met in Stanhope Park for a short Carol Service. Traditionally, the College has held a Christmas Service in Holy Trinity Church and 'Carols in the Park' was a new idea – a way of celebrating and getting into the spirit of Christmas. In addition, students were asked to collect toiletries as gifts for women and their families living in a local refuge. They brought these gifts to the Park with them where they were collected and arranged to be distributed – emphasising that Christmas is about giving. 'Carols in the Park' was the idea of the College Chaplain, Elfrida Savigear and Head of Religious Studies, Julia Redican. College students playing brass instruments accompanied the carol singing. Mulled wine and mince pies were available, and the large number of people who attended really enjoyed the service.
- As part of the College's support and celebration of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans) History Month in February, members of Gay Advice Darlington and Durham held a stall in the Common Room to talk with students and a postcard campaign happened via tutor groups. Displays of successful LGBT people were put up in the Atrium; Library and Student Common Room and a very popular competition based on the displays was held. All of the activities

were designed to reinforce the message that the College celebrates diversity, values equality and respects individual identity.

- In March, the College's annual "Make a Difference Day" was held in the Main Hall and once again proved popular with students and staff. A range of voluntary and community groups and organisations set up stalls to highlight how students can be involved in their work and to raise awareness of cultural and religious diversity. Interactive events and food tasting from different countries proved particularly popular.
- The College's Equality and Diversity Promotional Group created a fun event for the end of the Spring term, focussing on Celebrations and New beginnings. Three key festivals of Easter, Passover and Vaisakhi were celebrated and there were displays around College in the bookshop window, Library, Atrium and Common Room. There was also an opportunity to sample foods from the three festivals and this proved very popular. An Easter egg competition was incorporated into the celebrations, which entailed answering three key questions from the displays. Three lucky winners were randomly drawn on the last day of term and the students received a pleasant surprise when they were presented with their prize during their lessons. Overall, the event went very well and gained a lot of interest from students and staff. The displays around College provided some interesting reading and insight into how these festivals are celebrated. The food samples were an attractive mix of culture, religion and different ways of celebrating the key festivals. Spring is an important time in these religions to celebrate and think of new beginnings, and everyone seemed to enjoy the activities.



- Two years ago, as a tribute to her Grandma who died of cancer, Vicky McIntyre, a student at QE, organised a concert to raise funds for Cancer Research UK. She repeated the tribute last year and this year, with the support of family and friends, Vicky did the same again in February. Vicky's Grandma, Pat McIntyre, was a music teacher and therefore to put on a concert, of singing, dancing and music was perfect – Vicky believes she would have loved it. This was the last time that Vicky could organise it as next year she will be at university. As such, she wanted this concert to be bigger and better than ever. 15 out of the 22 young people who took part in the performance have either been to QE, are currently studying at QE, or are going to study at QE in September. All of the performers were aged 18 and under and they spent a number of Thursday nights rehearsing in the Hall at College. To make the show more personal for the audience and performers, there was a huge banner at the door on which was written 'We are performing for ...' The aim of this was for those present to write the names of anyone they know who is currently fighting cancer or who has suffered with it. At the end of the finale the banner was brought on stage by the cast who performed the inspirational number, 'I'm a Believer'. The concert was a great success and Vicky



deserves immense credit for her tireless work in putting it together. At QE, Vicky is studying A Level English Literature, Drama, Psychology and Performance Studies. She is hoping to go Leeds University in the Autumn to study a degree in Theatre & Performance.

**Laurence Job**  
**April 2011**