



Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk

Term 5

May 2011

French/History trip

On Friday 1 April, 40 students from Reading Girls' travelled across the English Channel to the French borders to experience culture, history and, most importantly, the French language. We visited parts of Northern France which offered us the most contrast in culture, such as the petit village of Rue. This marché challenged our French skills and put our oral abilities to the test.



This was very beneficial and enjoyable for the students, as most bought souvenirs and gifts for family. Once the tour of the market was over, we travelled to a sweet shop and the students were able to participate in the traditional production of sweets by shaping their own, which all found to be entertaining.



The next day, everyone travelled to the Belgian city of Ypres, introducing us to a new language and culture.



Belgians are very multi-lingual and, to the students' surprise, were fluent in English as well as many other languages. The historical part involved visiting areas where WWI battles took place. These included Flanders Fields, a mass grave for the Germans and a museum in the city which is recognised as an important icon of remembrance.



The final event students witnessed was the Last Post. This experience was very moving. Throughout the day, we were all very respectful of our surroundings and honoured those who had sadly perished in that war.



On our last day we all visited a goat farm and the lady who owned the farm demonstrated how goats cheese was made and matured. This was a great opportunity for all of us to interact in French with the farmer, and the great majority of the group rose to the challenge and showed their business and enterprise skills. On the way to the port in Calais, we stopped off at a hypermarché (the equivalent of the Oracle but on a much larger scale). Most of the students were very sombre on the ferry as they were tired and sad to leave. A big thumbs up for the trip, hoping that there will be more to come.



10th Annual Making Progress Spring Residential

Reading Girls' School has an enviable reputation for ensuring that students have opportunities for personal development and learning beyond the classroom and in March, nine girls were among 120 year 10 students from across 12 Berkshire schools taking part in three day residential experiences at the University of Reading as part of the Making Progress Scheme.

Making Progress started ten years ago as part of the University of Reading's widening participation provision and became part of the Aimhigher Berkshire programme seven years ago.

Students on the scheme are each allocated a student from either University of Reading or Thames Valley University who visits them in school to share their expertise in passing exams and provide an insight into what it is like to be a

university student. The young people are then able to find out about higher education first hand by attending a three day course at one of the host universities, where they experience an intensive learning programme focussing on developing skills for educational and career success. Participants also get to experience the social side of university life.

Staying at Reading University's Windsor Hall, the team from Reading Girls' had fun making new friends during a quiz and karaoke evening and also enjoyed using the sports facilities where they tried new activities like yoga.

In June, Making Progress participants will get the opportunity to find out more about the courses they may want to study later in their educational career when they return to Reading University for the annual Open Day. Parents will be invited too, so that they can find out about what Higher Education has to offer their children.

Message from the Head

Although this last term has been a short one, it has been an extremely busy period. As you read this newsletter you will learn about the wide variety of activities the students at RGS have undertaken. A selection of students from all years visited France and Belgium—they all had a great time and extended their learning in both the French language and culture and in history. I was very happy to receive a letter of thanks from the coach driver who was so impressed by the standard of the students behaviour and level of courtesy they displayed. Well done girls you are indeed excellent ambassadors for the school.

Not only have we excellent ambassadors that travelled to Europe but our students have also represented the school at the ICE in Brighton—the Year 8 team achieved second place in this prestigious competition. More congratulations must also be directed to the Year 11 BAF Diploma students who were in the county final presenting their business and enterprise project, Dynamic. We continue to develop and devise new opportunities for our students with Kendrick School—Year 10 and 11 students participated in a French play—and I believe that three of our students became excellent French speaking actors!! *See report Le paquet mystérieux.*

At this time of year the Year 11 students are busy revising for their GCSE examinations—please encourage and support them. I have great hopes that this year



will see a further rise in the best GCSE results ever at the school. Year 11 students are focused and have shown great dedication to their studying—every one at RGS sends their very best wishes to all the students in Year 11.

The situation with parking in Northumberland Avenue is an ever present difficulty and I would ask all parents/carers to show courtesy to the residents by ensuring they do not park over residents' drives etc. It would be helpful if parents could pick up and drop off their daughters away from the school.

Finally I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and sunny mid-term break and remind you that school will start on Monday 6 June at 8.30am.

St Augustus



Windsor Castle Year 7

A lovely day was had by all of Year 7 who went to Windsor Castle, visiting the Chapel of St George, the State Apartments, Queen Anne's Dolls House and the Changing of the Guard.

Luckily after a cloudy and chilly start the sun came out and many treated themselves to an ice cream. Everyone behaved brilliantly and were a credit to the school.

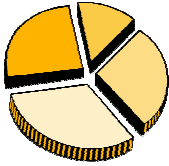


IMPORTANT NOTICES TO PARENTS:

Ear stretchers — are a fashion fad and our school uniform policy clearly states what is allowed - one small pair of earrings, therefore ear stretchers are not permitted. Students should remove them and have a plaster over their ears whilst in school.

Mobile phones — Can I ask support from parents regarding the use of mobile phones during the school day. We are aware that parents would like to ensure their daughters are safe travelling to and from school and would ask that if you need to contact your daughter during the day this is done via the main school office and a message will be relayed. The students have been informed that mobile phones will be confiscated if used during lessons. Continual offenders will have their phone confiscated and we will ask parents to collect them.

Reading Station Upgrade — we have been asked by Reading Borough Council to inform students and parents of the changes being made to Reading Railway Station. From **18 April 2011** Station Approach, which is currently used by buses, taxis and cycles will be closed and a new traffic system introduced in the central area. This will mean changes to where students will pick up the local buses. A map of the area will be on display in the main school reception and we strongly recommend that you look at the RBC website giving further detailed information: www.reading.gov.uk/station or contact **Chris Butler** on **0118 9372068**. Information will be on display at the Civic Centre and the drop in centre at **6 Cross Street, Reading between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday**.



Business &
Enterprise

Business & Enterprise

George Palmer Primary School

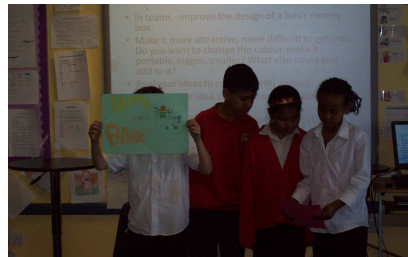
At the end of the spring term, staff and students from Reading Girls' School visited George Palmer Primary School to run an enterprise event for their Year 5 pupils. The day had two aims: to help the primary school children recognise the importance of money and the need to save, and to increase their 'enterprise skills'.



The introduction covered why money developed, how we use it and what we can do with it. Our Year 7 students then worked with the primary school children on their main challenge of the day - to design the perfect money box, working in teams, thinking about the look, security and access. They then told the other teams about their design. As well as reinforcing the message of keeping their money safe, they had to use their creativity, and teamwork, communication and planning skills. Finally, we looked at what we can use instead of money and how prices change.



The year 7 students involved enjoyed the chance to visit their old school and the Year 5 children seemed to enjoy themselves too. There were some very inventive and creative ideas!



CREATE SPORT CHALLENGE

On 6 May a team of Year 8 students attended the SE Regional Final of the **Create Sport Challenge**. The competition was organised by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and our students worked with mentors from professionals at Peter Brett Associates.



Their brief was to design a sports venue, looking at the structure and how it would be built including the aesthetics, sustainability and legacy, community and social aspects, as well as safety aspects. They had to write a detailed report, create a model and produce posters outlining their scheme. This was an excellent cross-curricular project covering subjects such as physics, ICT, maths, geography and technology. It was also a good project to improve their communication skills, teamwork, creativity and other 'soft skills'.

The design they came up with was called *The Seasons* and incorporated four glass pyramid buildings featuring sports to represent the different seasons, for example the winter pyramid had ice-skating and an indoor ski slope. A central dome-shaped building would hold the offices, cafes, shops and a crèche.



Only four teams got through to the SE Regional Final. The event was held at the new Brighton Stadium, the first event hosted at the stadium which is nearing completion.



The students had a guided tour of the site and got to walk into the stadium through the players' tunnel! The comments our girls got from the judges were that they liked the idea of *The Seasons* – it was different and unique, the layout was excellent and the brief was well answered.

Business & Enterprise



Unfortunately, another team had an even better report so they were the winners and our team were runners up.

Students from 8G ICT recently attended a



graduation ceremony at Verizon's European headquarters in Reading International Business Park to mark their successful completion of a ten-week website design course.



Verizon employees have been teaching the year 8 students web design and construction skills as part of Verizon's IT community outreach program which aims to raise awareness of the role technology plays in shaping modern life, the importance of IT skills and how those skills can be used in business.

Georgia Wheeler and Amy Choules said: "We learnt about all the effort and code that goes into making websites. If we got stuck we were supported, and the people from Verizon were good with people our age-group and very friendly. We are proud of our websites and what we achieved."



On the visit, students found out more about what Verizon do and how their fibre optic cables are made to provide phone and internet networks across the world. They had a guided tour of the offices in groups. Via a video-conference they also spoke with the chief executive, Tony Dragoni, who was in New Jersey! Prerana Gurung said: "It was interesting seeing where the Verizon people work, the fibres they use and what they do." Diksha Ghimire added: "I think what everyone enjoyed most on the visit was the video conference with Tony Dragoni. When the video call was being made, it felt like Tony was right there."

All students received a certificate to mark their participation on the course. In addition, Amy Choules, Prerana Gurung and Yashna Rajendra were awarded prizes for the best websites developed using skills learnt on the course.



historypin
from we are what we do

7I History class had a visit from Brendan Carr of Reading Museum and Nick Stanhope, CEO of We Are What We Do. They told the class about HistoryPin which allows users to show old photographic images against current views on Google Maps. This exciting project, which brings local history to life in a modern, compelling way, aims to bring different age groups together as they talk about the photos and local areas. The project will stage an exhibition at Reading Museum in the autumn and in the meantime we are asking students to talk to their families about photos they may have at home. The website is in its early stages but can be seen at www.historypin.com.

Strawberries!

Some of the local primary schools are taking part in a competition we are running growing strawberries.



We have provided their teams with a few strawberry plants for them to grow and they have to come up with ideas for the best ways to make money from the plants – selling strawberries, making lip balms, cook food, creating artwork ... We are looking forward to hearing about their ideas.



Dress Up Day

On Friday 13 May, Year 11 had a 'dress up day' to raise money for their leavers' assembly. Each student paid £1 to wear smart clothes suitable for business women.



"Wow" is all that can be said; What a difference these clothes made! Gone were the uniforms turning the girls into beautiful young women. They looked a million dollars. Beautiful dresses, smart suits and high heel shoes all made them look so grown up. It was a great success and they should be proud of themselves.



Altogether £90 was raised and I hope there were not too many sore feet.

Mrs Kink, Pastoral Leader Year 11

GCSE drama practical performance 2011

Thursday 7 April saw the Year 11 GCSE drama group treading the boards for their final practical performance before their examiner.

This has truly been the most exciting group I have ever taught at Reading Girls', and their performances were challenging in content, and outstanding in presentation. When you have watched how students have grown in confidence and knowledge it seems trivial to put a GCSE grade on such achievement and development, but I am in little doubt that this year's results will be as impressive as their performances and am thrilled that so many of the group are going on to further their studies in the subject post GCSE. As usual the Year 10 GCSE group provided technical support managing lighting, sound, prompt and stage manager roles to ensure a totally student led production.



The examination opened with the highly emotive *'Top Girls'* by Caryl Churchill. It contrasts the lives of two sisters, one a stay at home Mum, Joyce, looking after her mentally disabled daughter called Angie; the other, Marlene, a career woman who has stopped at nothing to make a success of herself. The twist comes when it is revealed that Angie is actually Marlene's daughter.



Next up saw an extract from Dennis Kelly's *'DNA'* about a group of teenage girls desperate

to cover up a murder that they believe they might be responsible for. Only after they have devised an elaborate plan to evade being 'caught' do they find out that the 'victim' is actually still alive.

The stage was then transformed to 1950s Ireland to regale the story of *'The Magdalene Whitewash'* by Valerie Goodwin. This follows the tale of Mary who was placed in a convent launderette aged 13 for being pregnant, and flashes forward to the present day when the baby who was taken away from her, now grown up, goes back to find her mother still working there and institutionalised.

Continuing the theme of institutionalisation came *'The Cagebirds'*. A short play that looks at how a group of psychiatric patients deal with the arrival of a new patient into their 'cage'. The patients are likened to birds and exhibit very bird like behaviour as they struggle to find their pecking order.



And finally to the world of Harold Pinter's *'The Caretaker'*. While originally written for a cast of three males proved quite a hit when cast with three females in the roles. A tramp takes up residence with shy Aston and it all seems peaceful until Aston's intimidating brother Mick arrives on the scene to question the motives of the new resident.

Mrs Eddy, Head of Drama

Le paquet mystérieux

Jeudi matin, le douze mai notre classe et des filles de la quatrième année sommes allées à Kendrick pour regarder une pièce qui s'appelle ' le paquet mystérieux'. Kendrick nous a invité donc c'était un plaisir d'y aller. Nous sommes arrivées un peu en retard mais ce n'était pas grave.

Il y avait deux acteurs, un garçon et une fille. Ils ont créé un spectacle magnifique qui s'agissait d'un paquet. L'intrigue était curieuse. Qu'est-ce qu'il y avait là dedans? C'était une bombe, un cadavre ou la drogue? Il y avait aussi des mimes et des blagues au sujet de Justin Bieber.

Nos élèves ont participé ; Alisha Vales parce qu'elle est grande et Rebecca Hanton comme un gangster et Baindu Amara comme vendeuse. C'était une expérience super car nous avons appris beaucoup de nouveau vocabulaire en écoutant le français. Nous avons aussi dansé.

Maryam Qureshi, Year 11

PE and Sports News

Leadership Camp – Bradfield College

Two Year 10 students Anjana Radhakrishnan and Katarina Svobodova were selected to attend the two day Leadership Camp at Bradfield College for students in Berkshire. They spent the first day meeting and mixing with other students and working on their general leadership skills with Olympic themed activities.



On day two students completed nationally recognised leadership awards.

Both Anjana and Katarina selected tennis as their activity. They will be organising a tennis

tournament for girls in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 in June.



Year 10 BTEC Sport Students go climbing again

Having now completed their six week training programmes, the Year 10's returned to the climbing centre to see if they had improved on their fitness sufficiently to affect their climbing. Most students felt they had improved and climbed higher or completed more difficult routes to the top.



U16's Athletics League

Girls from Year 9 and 10 competed at Palmer Park over two evenings. They scored particularly well on the second evening moving up three places on the team rankings. Mariah Conteh was the best overall performer coming 1st and 2nd in her two races.

Fencing Leaders Course

Amy Choules in Year 8 and Anjana Radhakrishnan in Year 10 were selected to attend a one day training course in how to coach beginner level fencing. The purpose of this was to promote an Olympic Sport in schools that is not usually on the curriculum. The girls learnt the correct way to stand, lunge, attack and defend. They also had a go at umpiring matches. We will be offering some fencing in term 6.



Year 7 and 8 Quaddkids Competition

A number of students from Years 7 and 8 competed in this team event. Each student had to complete a sprint, a middle distance run, a throw and a jump. They accumulated points for each event to contribute towards their overall team score. A number of our Sports Leaders also did an excellent job assisting with the events.



Year 10 Rounders Tournament

The Year 10 rounders team played a rare fixture held at our own school. They played matches against Kendrick, Denefield, Highdown and JMA.



Athletics County Final – Saturday 11 June at Palmer Park

The following girls have qualified for the County Finals based on their times this year, well done and good luck:

Year 11 – Shanice Licorish 100m and relay

Year 10 - Mariah Conteh 300m

Year 8 - Gabriella Millard discus.

Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

Please keep collecting and remember to bring them into school – the more we collect, the more PE equipment we can order!



Olympic Countdown



On Friday 27 May it will only be 425 days until the London 2012

Olympics start!

Tesco for Schools & Clubs Vouchers



To date our total is 4090. Although Tesco stores has stopped issuing vouchers, please check to see if you have some lurking in your purses, pockets etc and bring them in. Schools can use them to 'buy' all sorts of equipment ranging from arts and craft materials to classroom resources. This year we are hoping to get some large laminated world maps for geography, water colour paint palettes for art and if we can push the total up a bit further, some percussion instruments for music.

Dates for your diary

- National Sports Week – 27 June to 1 July
- Olympic Values Day – Tuesday 19 July
- Sports Day – Wednesday 20 July

Keeping up with Reading Girls' School News and Events

Are you making the most of our web site? Please remember to check out the 'Parents' section for all current letters. School events are listed in the 'News and Events' section. Don't forget to check out our 'News' items too.

Recent items have included a write up about a Year 11 fundraising day and a visit to Kendrick School to see a French play. Also in the 'Parents' area you will find the 'School Gallery' where you can view photos of events that have taken place recently.

Holidays are fine but not in term time

Any absence in term time undermines the continuity of your child's education and reduces her chances of success. **Parents and carers are asked to take family holidays during the school holidays.** The Headteacher may authorise leave of absence but will consider the reasons for the request, the effect on the continuity of your daughter's learning and her overall attendance. Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for an unauthorised holiday during term time, you may be issued with a **fixed penalty notice of £50 per parent for each child.** School holiday dates for 2011 are as follows:

Mid term break Monday 30 May to Friday 3 June

End of term Friday 22 July