



Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



Term 2

www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk

December 2012

Message from Head

2012 is drawing to a close and RGS has achieved another successful year. The students and staff are to be complimented on their very hard work this term – it is truly a school working together that makes a difference. There have been many opportunities for students in the last term and they have been excellent ambassadors for both the school and the local area when they have participated in events inside and outside of the school. As you read through this newsletter you will be able to judge for yourself the excellent breadth of activities that the school has engaged in.

I continue to be proud of all the students in the school and hope that they will continue to focus on their learning to ensure they achieve their full potential. I would ask you to support us in this by ensuring your daughter attends school every day and is punctual. Wearing the full school uniform and bringing all the necessary equipment do indeed make a difference to her overall achievement.

I feel that I must inform parents and students that I will not be able to attend school during the next term as I will be recovering from a medical operation. Although I will not be there in person I will be able to continue to work using my computer. In my absence I know the school will continue to thrive and Ms Lavender, the Deputy Headteacher will become the Acting Headteacher until my return. Students are to return to school on **Monday 7 January 2013 at 8.40am** and go straight to their tutor bases.

On behalf of the staff and Governors at Reading Girls' School we wish you and all your family an enjoyable break and a happy and successful year ahead.

Regards

Viv Angus
Headteacher



WEC trip to The Victoria & Albert and British Museums

At the end of term 1, eight lucky Year 7 students were selected to visit the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London organised by the WEC. They had the opportunity to witness first hand artefacts from around the world, ranging from ancient Egypt, Medieval artworks and even contemporary pieces of art. They gained a huge amount from this visit and it was a real pleasure to accompany them.

Mr Ashmore



Citizenship trips to the Houses of Parliament

The Year 10 and Year 11 Citizenship groups recently had the opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament. A coach journey to London is always exciting, spotting famous landmarks on the way.

We entered the security check and were led down below ground and walked through an ancient passage which passes under the road which splits Portcullis House from the Houses of Parliament. We were allowed to take only one photograph inside the building because of strict security beside the stained glass window created for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The guides had many interesting facts to divulge about the history of the building and the way Parliament works. We were able to stand in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and the contrast between the two was very



interesting. After the tour we were invited to try to work like parliament, by dividing into two teams (the Government and the Opposition) to decide on a new piece of legislation.

Finally we had a short meeting with local MP Robert Wilson, who was happy to take questions. He was grilled on his views on immigration; bus fares in Reading; and how he started in politics. It was a wonderful day and some of us are already planning another visit!

Mrs Whyte (Administration Manager)

Bag2School

The November Bag2School scheme was a big success, with 67 bags of clothing, soft toys, shoes and bags weighing 381kg being collected. This raised **£190.50** towards the drama department's production fund. Do remember, if you are clearing out a cupboard, blue bags are always available from school and can be handed in at any time for storage. The next collection will be in the spring.

Mrs Eddy



Global Entrepreneurship Week



As part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, each tutor group has been raising money for **Children in Need**. On Thursday 15 November, Year 11s took their turn and raised £25 by running a variety of stalls and events. They asked us to guess the weight of the Pudsey cake, kindly donated by Deputy Headteacher Mrs Lavender. They had baby photos of some staff members and participants had to guess who they were and there was an old fashioned sweet shop



and a chance to paint for Pudsey. The girls are always extremely supportive of their peers' fundraising efforts, and look forward to them. There is always a lovely atmosphere when an event is in progress. Many events are held every year benefitting a large range of charities.

Other fundraising events during Global Entrepreneurship Week brought the total raised to about £250. Certificates will be going to the following students:

Team making most money: Mayah Bentley-Holder and her team (cinema at lunch times – made £120.36)

Best idea: Year 7s with Strictly come Teachers (we've told them to try the idea again another year when they know the teachers better!)

Best teamwork: Carly Newman, Kirsty Beckett (event in hall); Milly Allwood-Rose, Yeukai Jiri and Anupama Acharya (sponsored dance)

Mrs Thomson

LZ7

The Christian rock band LZ7 held lessons with Year 7 and Year 8 covering PSHE, RE, music, discussing topics around positive choices, respect, love, relationships, music production and faith. All other students were invited to attend a mini concert at lunchtime.

"The students thoroughly enjoyed the show by LZ7. The interaction between the band and the pupils was brilliant, and a fair few of the students took some of the comments on board. The lead singer expressed his views, however the thing which I believe was successful was the way they didn't seem to go over the top with this. I believe the students really enjoyed this fun (loud) workshop. Top work LZ7!" *Mr Ashmore (Art teacher)*

"The lunchtime concert was well attended, with students vying to be noticed for their dancing in order to win tickets to the evening event at St Lawrence Church. Four lucky winners were chosen from those attending at lunchtime in addition to the winners from the lessons in the morning. The staff also enjoyed the event, commenting on the good atmosphere and the friendliness of the performers." *Mrs Whyte*



WEC Pupil

Council
Students elected to represent Reading Girls' School on the Whitley



Excellence Cluster Pupil Council, attended their first meeting of this year's Council on Friday 16 November at the Council Chamber in the Civic Offices in Reading. The Mayor of Reading addressed the meeting and the new pupil council discussed issues relevant to the schools in the area.

Youth Cabinet

Some members of Year 10 recently attended an event entitled Health for Youth at South Reading Community Centre run by the local Youth Cabinet, which this year is chaired by Sanna Shahnawaz, one of last year's Year 11s here at Reading Girls' School. Reading Youth Cabinet has been running since 2005, and is an elected group of young people, who work to make Reading a better town for young people. They meet regularly with Council officers, Councillors and other staff, to have their say.

The event gave the opportunity to explore how they can better support their own, and their friends', emotional health and wellbeing, through examining their mental, financial and social health and the support available. There was also the opportunity to question those who look after the health of young people in Reading. The students found particularly interesting the workshop on the issue of self harm and its different aspects, along with the help available.



Business & Enterprise

Business & Enterprise Activities

Business Cluster Events

Reading Girls' School is part of an initiative called **Business Class**. This is administered nationally by Business In The Community, with assistance locally from the Central Berkshire Education Business Partnership. Our linked company is KPMG.

On Wednesday 21 November, we took part in an event with other schools in the local Business Class cluster. This event was hosted by Blessed Hugh Faringdon School and funded by Prudential.

Ten of our Year 9 students attended, the aim being to increase students' awareness of a variety of careers, the importance of key subjects, and how relevant subjects



relate to the current and future job market.

The students took part in two activities. The first was a careers carousel where they worked in pairs to interview a variety of employees on their education, career history, talents, work skills and progression. The business volunteers came from Prudential, KPMG, Oracle, AWE and Miller Construction. The second activity was a 'What's my Line' style of game where students worked in teams. Three business volunteers had two minutes to describe themselves in general terms then each team took it in turns to ask them questions so that they could guess which company they work for and what their job title might be. The winning team was Reading Girls' School, and their prize (a large box of chocolates) was awarded by one of the guests – Stephen Twigg, the Shadow Minister for Education.

The afternoon finished with Stephen Twigg giving students some advice on selecting their options for GCSE: choosing subjects they enjoy while looking to the future and ensuring they can follow whatever path they want to follow.

Maths Comes Alive!

An innovative Dragon's Den style activity was designed for Year 9 students to engage them in practical ways to understand the application of maths in enterprise and business. The activity was launched in October 2012 to 122 students who were presented with the challenge of designing a business that will help raise money for the school.

The launch included a two-hour session with KPMG employees helping students to generate their business ideas. The five best ideas and teams were selected and a series of follow up sessions will be led by KPMG staff to develop their ideas. Students are encouraged to use teamwork, maths/finance and communications among other skills during this process.



The activity recently culminated in presentations to a judging panel including KPMG staff and the winning idea was a new-style magazine for students. The winning team will have an investment from KPMG of £250 to make their business idea a reality and they will be starting work on this in the New Year.

A great day at Microsoft

Eight students from Year 9 made the most of their opportunity to spend the day at Microsoft's wonderful offices at Thames Valley Park on 23 November. The Digirlz day is an annual event, which aims to encourage more girls into the IT industry. It was fascinating to see all the latest technology and learn about all the many career options in IT. The new Windows Surface tablet was available to use and there was also an opportunity to play with the latest Xbox at lunchtime!

The challenge the girls faced was to develop a new app for the new Surface, and they came up with a great idea. Sadly they didn't win, but our Microsoft mentors were very impressed with their creativity and drive, and in particular their skills in videoing their ad. Lord Sugar would have been proud of them!!



RMBme

Monday 3 December four students launched RMBme a customisable mobile app that uses pictures to help jog people's memories. The Android app allows users to customise the way they receive reminders for different events; from showing pictures to remind them to take their bus pass to text only to remind them when an assignment is due in.

The app was designed by **Kanchan, Urooj, Zobia and Shreya** from Years 9 – 11 and created with app developer Service2Media and Dell as part of the prize for winning the *Apps for Good Award* in June 2012. The launch event was held at the BT tower in London and business men and women from the IT



industry were invited including a special visit from Davina McCall. RMBme is now available for download from the Google Play for Android (watch out for the app on iTunes in the near future). <http://bit.ly/TxARK3>



National Blind Children's Society Fundraising

The Year 10 drama prefects hosted a fundraiser where, for a £1 stake, participants could guess where the dinosaur soft toy was from. This raised £50 for the charity and the winner Miss Rosier, got to take the dinosaur home.

Drama workshop—Dr Michael Pinchbeck

Year 10 GCSE Drama students took part in a devising workshop with esteemed theatre practitioner, Dr Michael Pinchbeck from Nottingham University. Dr Pinchbeck was one of the founding members of the theatre company 'Metro Boulot Dodo' which tours internationally. The students experimented with several methods for devising theatre performance from nothing, including use of movement, mimic, music and observation. Devising is a key part of the GCSE Drama experience and Dr Pinchbeck was impressed with their flare for innovation and creativity.

SHINE Whitley Arts Festival

Milly Allwood-Rose, a gifted performing artist from Year 9, joined students from John Madejski Academy to appear in the shine festival on Saturday 24 November. Her talent was quickly spotted and she was thrust into the spotlight with a solo vocal performance that gained a standing ovation.

Music Department

The Music Department has been very lucky recently in being given two, high quality musical instruments. A lovely drum kit donated by the family of Shannon Hemmings and Kayleigh Beaumont, arrived first, followed by an

electric piano, funded by a grant from EMI. Both instruments have already been made good use of by students throughout the school. The drums will bring an extra dimension to the Music Department and both are very much appreciated.



Photography Exhibition

As part of the BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in the Creative Media Production Course, Year 11 Media Studies students took part in a photography exhibition. They had undertaken extensive research in: the history of photography; how equipment has evolved; notable photographers over time; composition and framing techniques. They applied these on their photos and conducted a survey to get feedback from the rest of the school.

Mrs Njuguna

Horrible Histories

On Thursday 8 November 40 very excited girls travelled to the Hexagon to see a stage production of the popular TV series of *Horrible Histories*. This centred around the Vile Victorians and the girls learned a variety of gruesome facts including the one that the worst baby farmer of the period lived in Reading! She paid poor parents for their babies promising to give them a better life but she then wrapped them in brown paper and hurled them into the Thames!

We also learned about the horrible and dangerous jobs that children had to do and were able to see the collapse of a Scottish bridge in 3D. This was an extremely entertaining afternoon.

Mrs Nicholson

SCHOOL CLOSURES

If for any reason the school has to close (ie severe weather) we have uploaded onto the school website work that students can complete from home. Please visit www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk and go to the *Parents* page then *School Closures* for further information.

PE and sports news

Young Ambassadors Sport Conference



Kanza and Gabryela were selected as this years Gold Sports Ambassadors due to their

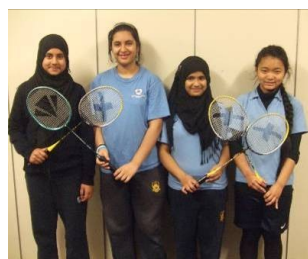
commitment to extra curricular clubs and teams. They attended the Sports Ambassadors Conference at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre and have been looking at ways of promoting the legacy of the Olympics in school. We look forward to implementing their ideas during the coming year.

U15's Contact Rugby Tournament



For the first time Reading Girls' entered a team in the full contact Rugby Festival held at Reading Rugby Club. After a careful start in the first game the girls really threw themselves into the tackles, taking down the opponents like a line of dominoes. In the remaining games they secured 3 wins and 2 draws, winning the second group outright. Well done girls for showing outstanding determination to succeed.

KS3 Badminton Tournament



The girls from Year 8 and 9 played in a number of singles and doubles matches.

They played

two different teams from Kendrick and showed a good range of skills and tactics to try and outwit their opponents. A good effort girls.

KS4 Badminton Tournament

The girls from Years 10 and 11 also played two teams from Kendrick in their singles and doubles matches. Their skill level improved as the matches went on and the A-team (shown below) had a few wins. Well done girls.



Year 7 and 8 Football League



Year 7 and 8 have taken part in the Reading Schools' 6-a-side Football League. The Year 7's improved game by game as they got used to their positions and worked more as a team. They held off some tough opposition with a couple of good draws. The year 8's got off to a good start with some strong attacking football and they had wins and draws after the first round. Both teams have had some close matches with some excellent skills on display.

Year 9 and 10/11 Football League

Both teams made a good start during the first week of the league with wins and draws. Unfortunately the pitches were then frozen so the remainder of the league will now be played on Wednesday 9 January 2013.

Year 11 BTEC Sport Multi Skills Festival for Year 4 George Palmer Students



As part of their Unit 7 coursework the girls had to plan and deliver a sporting event. They delivered an excellent festival which developed Agility, Balance and Coordination. The Year 4 George Palmer students really enjoyed it and all their staff were very impressed with the RGS Girls. Well done!

Book Club

Keen readers can now get together in small groups, read the same book and then discuss what they have been reading. Survey forms have been put out in the library to help Caitlyn Murray and Dion Vandi decide when and how often each group will meet. The first sets of books are ready for next term with a choice of six titles: Saffy's Angel; Pig-heart Boy; The Graveyard Book; Oranges in No-man's Land; Framed; and Northern Lights. If your daughter is a keen reader but has not registered yet the forms are in the library.

'Phobia'

Performance

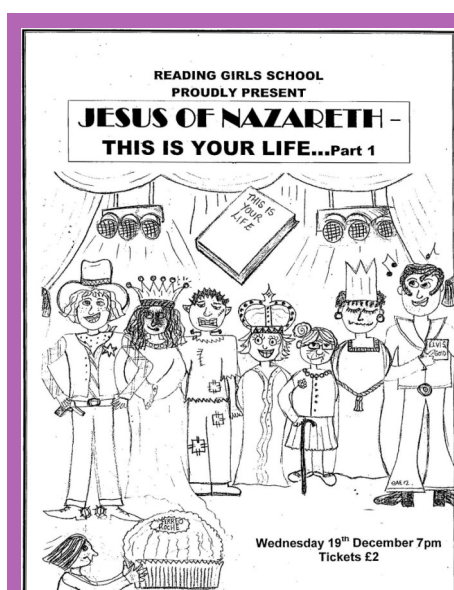
It was a pleasure to be invited to



at Reading Girls' School

see former students performing in the Reading College 'Phobia' performance experience on the evening of Thursday 29 November. This theatrical experience involved entering a walk-through maze in which various sinister characters lurked. Several Year 10 GCSE Drama students attended and were impressed with the students.

Hairdressing students are holding a *Blow Dry Bar*, on Wednesday 19 December between 9.00am and 4.00pm for charity. They are raising funds to help sponsor a 9 year-old boy called Aron from Tanzania with his education, medical care and health and hygiene education.



Look out for a full report on this wonderful show on the school website.