



# Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



**Term 1**

**October 2012**

## Headteacher's Message

Once again Reading Girls' has achieved good results in this summer's GCSE examinations and was not affected by the debacle surrounding the English results. Our students are focused on achieving their best and are all working hard in every year group. I am happy to report that year 7 have settled in very well and are making positive contributions to the school. The academic year started off very well with our Sports Day where every member of the school rounded off the afternoon by being involved with the first House Competition of the year. It was great to see all the students working together, communicating and having fun.

Year 7 and 8 students are involved in the "Beat the Street" Competition which is an international competition and at present Reading Girls' are in third position. The competition is designed to highlight the health benefits of students walking to school.

The Year 7 and 8 students have also been treated to scientific demonstrations from the Science Museum in London, when they visited the school. Several brave students volunteered to help with the experiments, much to the delight of their friends.

As you read through this newsletter you will see that other Year groups have also been kept busy with visits from a Taekwondo instructor and a visit to the University of Reading for an event entitled "God, Robots, Free Will and the Big Bang".

I hope the mid term break is a safe and happy one and we will welcome all students returning to school on Monday 5 November at 8.40am.

**Viv Angus—Headteacher**

## Reading Girls' at the Olympics

Along with other Berkshire Schools, Reading Girls' was offered the chance to take three students to see the Kayak and Canoe Sprints at Eton Dorney. The three girls chosen were selected based on their contribution and commitment to school sports clubs and teams.

The girls selected were Gabryela Dopson Yr9, Amy Choules and Nieema Hassan Yr10.

After an early start from Reading we had a good morning, cheering for Team GB when they were competing and choosing other countries to support when they weren't.

### RGS Cheerleaders help entertain the crowds at the Olympics

Three RGS students; Grace Herron Yr10, Chloe Williams Yr10 and Leah Williams Yr8 along with their Cheerleading squad Crimson Heat Tigers were asked to perform between matches at the Olympic Basketball and Volleyball Games. They did a lot of fundraising to fund their stay in London for the two weeks of the games and thoroughly enjoyed being a part of London 2012.



## Olympic Legacy at RGS

We have decided to focus on British female success at the Olympics and are focusing on two contact sports this term; Taekwondo following Jade Jones winning the Gold medal and Boxing following Nicola Adams first ever female boxing Gold medal.

### Taekwondo Taster Session

A good number of girls from Years 9, 10 and 11 had a go at Taekwondo in a taster session that was being delivered by Reading

Taekwondo Club instructor Rob Morgan including Kanza Manzoor in

Yr9 (above) and Daniela Bussey in Yr11

(below). By the end of the session they were aggressively punching and kicking with confidence.



### Olympic Legacy at RGS – Boxing Club

Girls from Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 have been attending the 6 week boxing course being provided by Mark Edwards from Positive Futures. They have learned a number of techniques and had the opportunity to develop their power, strength and competitiveness.



Waheeda Khalifa and Tracy Kpani-Addy Year 7

## Year 7 and 8 Hockey League

Our new team of Year 7 and 8 girls took part in the 7-a-side mini hockey league at Leighton Park School. They worked hard to develop their stick handling skills, dribbling, passing and tackling. They made huge improvements over the league and their best result was a 1-0 win over Denefield School.



## Rugby Coaching

Girls have been working with Russell an RFU coach to prepare themselves for a Rugby tournament in November. As well as the basic Rugby skills and knowledge of the game, they have been developing their contact skills for tackles and ball possession.



## Sports Day

Sports day was originally scheduled for July, however due to the wet weather the track events had to be cancelled. As the weather was a little kinder on our return, it was decided to run the track events on Thursday 13 September.

## House Off

Although the fun sports activities had to be cancelled due to the weather on Thursday 19 July, we held our first ever House Off Competition, organised by the school council prefects and head girls. Students and staff attended in clothing based on their house colour. **Austen-Royal Blue; Bronte-Red; Curie-Yellow; Roddick-Green; Seacole-Orange; Tussaud-Light Blue.** During the afternoon, the girls prepared chants and banners and took part in a quiz. They had the opportunity to sponge the teachers then the assemblies and quiz finals were held.

The Winning House at the end of the event (based on Achievement points through the year plus activities held on the day) was: CURIE. They have been presented with a trophy which is being displayed in the reception foyer.



## School Council

We are pleased to announce the following students have been elected to serve on the School Council for the next academic year:

Year 7: Rosie Mulhern, Daisy Penn and Victoria Turchyn

Year 8: Ajeye Hassan, Comfort Oppong-Mensah and Jenny Regi

Year 9: Saida Begum-Chowdhury, Mayah Bentley-Holder and Arzoo Gurung

Year 10: Franchesca Alvarez, Mairead Casey and Shreeya Paudel

Year 11: Evangelia Kappos, Zeneb Muneer and Samata Shrestha

Head Girls: Kirsty Beckett and Carly Newman (below).



The new Student Council is meeting to establish their priorities for the coming academic year: their decisions will be reported in future newsletters. Students are always welcome to contact the School Council about any issues that concern them. There is a link on the intranet which gives them a quick means of contact or they can speak to their tutor group or year group representatives.

The Council will meet about three times each term, whilst the year group councils, which consist of two representatives from each year group, generally meet once a term. Make sure you have your say about the school!

## Fundraising

Cake sales are always a welcome fund-raising activity at Reading Girls' School and this year's Macmillan coffee morning raised £150 from the staff and a further



£105 from the students. Thank you to everyone who took the time to bake the wonderful cakes for sale.

## Morrison Vouchers

The school is collecting Morrisons Vouchers which we can exchange for gardening equipment to enhance our school allotment. This scheme ends shortly, so please get any outstanding vouchers into the collection boxes in school.

## BAG2SCHOOL

Last year this scheme was popular and so continues with the next collection on Wednesday 7 November. Clothing, bags, fabric, shoes and soft toys can all be used to fill a bag which helps to raise funds for extra curricular activities in school. Donated bags can be brought in at any time.



## Teddy Tombola

GCSE Drama prefects have been organising a weekly 'Teddy Tombola' where students can chance their luck for 20p a go to win one of many donated prizes. So far they have raised £40 to go towards paying for a visiting practitioner to come in and work with them later in the academic year.



Easyfundraising is the easiest way to raise money for Reading Girls' School. Shop with any of over 3,000 well-known retailers listed on [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and a percentage of what you spend is passed to Reading Girls' School at no additional cost to you. Retailers include Amazon, M&S, Vodafone, eBay, Tesco, Viking and many more. Please register to support us today - <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/readinggirls>. For more information check the parents area of our web-site.

## Christmas Show Auditions

Nearly 80 students from all year groups auditioned for parts in this year's Christmas production. Scenes resembling that of the 'X Factor' were to be seen outside the drama studio while they waited for their moment to impress. Rehearsals are well underway with a cast of 40 students taking acting roles, and a choir of 30 being vocally challenged in readiness for the performance on Wednesday 19 December. If there are any talented



parents or carers who would like to be involved in the preparations please do get in touch. We are specifically looking for sewing and costume making skills! If you can help please email [caeddy@readinggirls.reading.sch.uk](mailto:caeddy@readinggirls.reading.sch.uk)

## Drums

The Music department has been very fortunate recently with a donation of a full set of Pearle Forum drums and a Yamaha electric organ. These have been very kindly donated by Mrs Tanya Brown in memory of the late Bill Brown of Linden Road. The drums will bring an extra dimension to the Music Department and are very much appreciated.

## Jane Austen visit

On Monday 9 July 7E visited Jane Austen's museum in Chawton. One of the fascinating things they did at the museum was watching a short clip of Jane Austen's life. It was really interesting and gave them better insight on the writer and how she incorporated her daily life to write her books. The following students gave their thoughts on the day:

Inside Jane Austen's house there was an old fashioned piano from her time. It was very different compared to the normal ones we see today. The noise it made was very high pitched, soft and quiet and no matter how much you tried to make it play louder it would still play soft notes. When you pressed on the keys it would feel like you weren't even pressing them! The actual piano was a lot smaller than the ones today. It was tiny compared to a huge grand piano. Also it was really hard to squeeze all your fingers onto the keys as they were quite small. *Yashica Gupta—8T*

At about 12pm we all had our lunch on the grass in the garden. It was wet but warm and Mrs Norris took a picture of us all on the benches. After that we all went to different parts of the house. My friend



and I went back inside the house and looked around and took pictures. Some people went to make some lavender bags or use the quill pens in the kitchen. *Emma Philpott—7E*

Our final part of the visit was seeing Jane Austen's brother's mansion. I liked the long drive that we walked up. The mansion was huge, there were wooden designs on the walls that made the mansion look more old fashioned. We also went to the library and saw books from 200 years ago. I loved the dance because it was fun and I wore a man's coat. There was a part of the dance where you have to link arms with your partner and walk down an aisle. When it came for me and my partner to dance, she forgot and I had to walk by myself; it was embarrassing but really funny. This was an amazing trip and inspired me in a new direction! *Atiya Chowdhury—7E*

## Parental Survey

We are currently conducting a survey of parental views and would welcome your participation. The survey should take less than 5-minutes and we want as many parents as possible to take part. You can remain anonymous when responding to this survey. The survey can be accessed from our website or this link: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/fgpcn38](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/fgpcn38).

## Reading in Bloom

On 17 September 2012, the 'Garden Angels' were invited to the Reading in Bloom Awards at the University of Reading. The girls were very proud to receive the Silver Award for secondary schools for the second year in a row.



## The Global Walking Challenge



Reading Girls' School was selected as one of three schools in Reading to compete in this promotional event that aims to encourage children to walk to and from school and ultimately aims to increase their participation in physical activity. RGS is competing against six schools in London, two in Vancouver, Canada and three in Reading. The competition which

started on 1 October will run for four weeks. Two weeks into the event and Reading Girls' is in fourth place just ahead of Highdown.

## God, Robots, Free Will and the Big Bang

About 40 schools had applied for places on this conference which was held in late September at the University of Reading and only 16 were selected, including us, with schools from as far away as Torquay and Birmingham attending.

Our Year 10 girls were a great credit to the school participating in all events and being selected on many occasions to be interviewed. BBC Breakfast were there for most of the day and our girls were frequently the group being portrayed and being interviewed. They were articulate and well presented, and the organisers of the day were very pleased with them.

Besides giving them the opportunity to see a robot and consider issues like 'can robots appreciate music' and 'what are the different ways that engineers, scientists and philosophers/theologians consider questions', it was a great experience for them - visiting the University, being involved in a large scale event with many different schools, and interacting with the media.

## Aspire2B

On Friday 28 September students were encouraged to wear an outfit that represents what they aspire to be.



There were a variety of outfits representing lawyers, doctors, artists, sports people and even an architect. Over £220 was raised from the donations for the Aspire2 charity. During the evening there was a quiz with 15 teams mainly from Whitley schools which also raised over £200. The winning team "We don't need no education" consisted of members of Reading Girls' School staff and their partners.

**Aspire2** is the Whitley charity which funds many of the holiday activities we offer in South Reading. The money raised goes towards family day trips, supporting the Whitley Arts Festival and development of the residential site at Ufton Court.



## Sports Ambassadors



Amy Choules moves up to Platinum as she was a very proactive Gold Ambassador last year.



Gaby Dopson and Kanza Manzoor have been selected as this year's Gold Ambassadors and will be invited to attend the Ambassadors Conference in November. We will be asking a number of our



other excellent leaders to apply to become Silver Ambassadors for this year.

## Year 10 trip - Swanage

On Thursday 4 October the Year 10 geography students went to Studland and Swanage in Dorset to see for themselves what the theory they had learnt in the classroom looked like for real. The day out included field sketching and a demonstration of long shore drift using a tennis ball.



## Houses of Parliament

On Monday 15 October, the Year 11 GCSE Citizenship group had a day in Parliament which included a tour of the Palace of Westminster, and a workshop in Portcullis House which adjoins the Houses of Parliament. During the workshop they had to come up with their own new bill and then work on its progress to becoming a law. They were also visited by the Reading MP Rob Wilson who told them about his job and answered their questions.



## French Play

GCSE French students watched *Les Filles*, a French Play at Kendrick School which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Most of the girls were surprised by their level of understanding of the native French speakers and are looking forward to writing and discussing the resume!

## Media Competition

Girls had to either create a film poster or a script for their own film, or they could write the review of a film. The lucky winners have won a free ticket to see the Hunger Games next week. Well done to: Shreya Gurung, Yashna Rajendra, Anna Porter-Blunden and Mollie Barker in Year 10 and Dion Vandj, Kripa Pandey and Venisha Fernandes in Year 11.

## Science Museum Visit

We were delighted to welcome back the Science Museum team of Asya and Tracy on Thursday 11 October, who delighted and thrilled Year 7 and 8 students with their demonstrations which were greeted by 'oohs-and-ahhs'.

In the section on States of Matter, a poor jelly baby was subjected to physical and chemical actions— you might never eat another jelly baby if you heard the scream that it emitted during the demonstration.

Have you ever wondered why baby Billy's nappy doesn't seem to leak? One of our keen Year 8 girls was prepared to put herself forward as a guinea pig to show one of the uses of chemicals called polymers. This special polymer in nappies can absorb up to 500x their own weight! They can do this without leaking – ask our brave student who managed to return to her seat with a dry head!

There is no need to worry about torrential rain and lightning storms because Year 7s and 8s are suitably trained to give advice on what position to take if caught in a lightning storm. They were taught how to stay safe by removing jewellery, seeking low ground in open areas with no shelter and how to squat on the balls of their feet with their ears covered.

Before lunch, animated Asya regaled us with a most graphic description of the journey of food in the digestive system from start to finish. We look forward to seeing them again this time next year.



## Careers Carousel



In September, the Year 11 students were out of school on their work experience placements. The following week they had visitors from a variety of businesses and employers talking about work and careers in their organisation and field. Visitors included representatives from KPMG, Olswang, Pentahotel, Thames Water and RBC. One of the visitors from Thames Water ecological division even brought along a bat to show the girls! We are grateful to all the visitors for their time.



## Maths comes Alive

Reading Girls' School has a partnership with KPMG through a BITC initiative called Business Class. A series of events are taking place targeting students of all abilities to both showcase the importance of maths in a variety of career choices and also to excite students about the different career opportunities that exist in a company such as KPMG.

To engage students in practical ways to understand the application of maths in enterprise and business, an innovative dragon's den style activity was designed for the entire Year 9. The activity was launched in October 2012 with all the current Year 9 students presented with the challenge of designing a business that will help raise money for the school. The launch included a 2 hour session with KPMG employees helping students to generate their business ideas. Some of the ideas will be developed through a series of follow up sessions led by KPMG staff. The students involved will be using teamwork, maths/finance and communication among other skills during this process. The activity will culminate in presentations to a judging panel including senior KPMG staff. The best idea will be given £250 seed money from KPMG to make their business idea a reality, and additional support will be given to implement it.

7J, 8J and 8E took part in an online maths competition involving 105 other school across the UK. Overall we were placed 17<sup>th</sup>. We also won a daily prize for being the highest scoring school on that day.