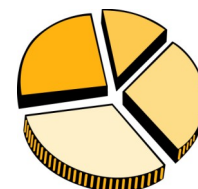




Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



Business &
Enterprise

Term 5

www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk

May 2014

Headteacher's News

Although this last term has been a short one it has been an extremely busy period. Students have continued to work hard and behave exceptionally well in all activities they have undertaken. As you read this newsletter you will be able to see the wide variety of events the students have undertaken this term.

At this time the Year 11 students are busy revising for and sitting their GCSE examinations – please encourage and support them – I have great hopes that this year will see the best GCSE results ever at the school. Everyone 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' driveways etc. I also need to inform you that the Police will be patrolling Northumberland Avenue and anyone who is seen contravening the law in respect to parking will be issued with a £30 fine or risk their vehicle being seized.

The new school build is progressing well and the planning application has now been forwarded to the Planning Committee at RBC for approval. We expect to hear a positive outcome to this in July 2014. The design of the new school is excellent and students will be even prouder to be a member of RGS.

As you are aware the uniform has changed slightly this academic year and we have given a whole year for students to purchase the correct uniform. This is a reminder that as from September 2014 students will be expected to be in the full school uniform of school jumper, white blouse and navy blue skirt or trousers with black shoes.

Finance is an ever present problem and in this economic climate all of us have been affected. To help preserve and develop the school further I wish to offer the opportunity to parents and carers to make a financial contribution to RGS to help us to purchase items that would benefit all students but which are not within the school budget to buy. Therefore in September 2014 we will formally ask you to make a donation to the school funds.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the parents and carers for their support – RGS is a school that totally believes in working with students, parents and the community to ensure all students receive a first class education.

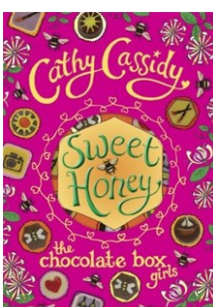
Finally I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and sunny mid-term break and remind you that school will start on Monday 2nd June at 8.30 am.

Mrs V Angus
Headteacher

Cathy Cassidy coming soon!

This popular author will be visiting on Thursday 5 June to talk about her latest book "Sweet Honey" in *The Chocolate Box Girls* series. All Year 7 and 8 girls will be there and have had letters enabling them to pre-order books at a small discount.

There will also be books on sale on the day. This visit has been made possible by Waterstones Bookshop and Puffin Books.



Short Story Competition

In April many of our girls entered the *Young Writers Short Story Competition*. The girls had to write a mini saga with a twist in the tale of 100 words or less. Our girls took on the challenge and wrote brilliantly, some revisiting traditional tales and others creating something wholly original. To write an entire story in so few words is incredibly challenging but the girls threw themselves into it wholeheartedly! To our delight we received a letter from the Editor informing us that a selection of our students had been successful and now have the opportunity for their work to be published within a special anthology.

Humanities Trips:

The Year 11 geography GCSE classes went to the **River & Rowing Museum** in Henley in April for a revision session ready for their exams. As you can see, their favourite part of the trip seems to have been the exhibition of *Wind in the Willows*! I'm sure they did learn a lot about rivers too!



Wednesday 30 April saw the Year 8 students visit the **Natural History Museum** in London. The focus of the trip was to view the exhibits in the Red Zone area. The girls had previously been studying the *Restless Earth*—a topic which included volcanoes, earthquakes and the causes and effects of these natural hazards.

Year 7 went on a visit to the **Science Museum** in London this month. The focus of their trip was climate change and energy usage, but there was so much to see that they were kept in awe all day.

The Next Big Thing

Students from Reading Girls' recently took part in a challenge organised by SATRO to think of 'The Next Big Thing' for Siemens to develop. As well as receiving certificates from Siemens, they also achieved Level 2 Silver awards as Industrial Cadets. This is a new initiative which has been inspired by HRH The Prince of Wales. We would like to thank SATRO and Siemens for their support, particularly Louise, the team's mentor.



Five students from Year 10 (Sahara Pandit, Neyma Siddiqui, Aisha Alobaidi, Anupama Acharya and Aneesa Bses) participated in the competition on Friday 9 May in Frimley for which they had been preparing for the past four months. Their idea was a wristband that helped tackle the problem of wandering Alzheimer's patients and they named it *Semita*. The competition was a chance to showcase teamwork and science skills while also bringing in marketing and business ideas. It gave the students a better idea of how big companies like Siemens operate.

By Neyma Siddiqui
& Sahara Pandit
10A



Year 10 Business Studies students attended *Skill! Reading* at the offices of

Microsoft. They worked in teams with a mentor from **Aldermore Bank** to think of a business idea to develop; the event was led by very motivational and energetic young entrepreneurs.

There were eight teams in total, including two from RGS. All the students were shy to start with but the mentors soon put them at their ease and they came up with some great ideas. Well

done to our 'Solar Beats' team for winning the competition! They received a beautiful trophy and gift vouchers each. Their idea was to create headphones with solar panels to recharge mobile devices from and is now part of an online competition to win £1000 for charity. Please visit our website to access the link and cast your vote for Solar Beatz. Congratulations to the winning team of Elizabeth Buttazzoni, Aishat Hamzat, Anika Javeid, Tasnia Talukder and Asya Mohammed.



Magistrates Court

A group of Year 9 students has recently been working on the Magistrates Court Mock Trial Competition which is organised by the **Citizenship Foundation**. The competition aims to introduce the legal system to young people in an innovative and exciting way, giving them the opportunity to gain hands on experience. Students take on the roles of lawyers, witnesses, magistrates and court staff and prepare the prosecution and defence of specially written criminal cases. Teams compete against each other in a live format at Magistrates' Courts with their performances judged by Magistrates and other legal professionals.

The team put in many hours of preparation, study and practice and they did very well indeed. In the Berkshire heat, of the 10 teams taking part in their heat they came second, and they got through to the regional heats which was an excellent achievement. At the regional heats they faced some stiff competition. The organiser congratulated all the teams on the high standard of the teams in the competition at this event. Unfortunately RGS didn't make it to the national finals but this is an excellent experience and one that will impress colleges and future employers.



Thank you ...

The school is lucky to have the support and help of many local businesses and we are very grateful for their support. Recent activities include:



Valley has been working on interview skills and CV writing with Year 11 girls.

Staff from **KPMG** have been mentoring some Year 11 students to help them with the transition from school. They will also be providing a guest speaker on Finance for the Year 10 Business Studies class.



Graham Simms, who is now retired from **Proctor and Gamble**, gave a very interesting and stimulating talk on innovation to Year 10 science students.

Rotary Club

Reading Girls' School recently attended a Technology Challenge, which was organised by the **Reading Maiden Erlegh Rotary Club** and held at The REME Museum at Arborfield Garrison.

Teams had to design and make an implement which, from two metres away, could move a piece of radioactive material (played by a tennis ball!). They had to produce a portfolio of ideas and designs, and then make it from a selection of kit they were given. The KS3 competition just had to lift the ball from a box on its side to a target 1 metre away. The KS4 competition had to lift the ball through the top of the box, so the implement needed to reach in and grasp the ball and be operated with a trigger mechanism. Judges were on hand throughout the day to watch the teams at work and ask about their ideas, and the devices were tried out at the end of the day.

Our Year 8 team in the KS3 competition did well and kept to a very simple idea, a bit like a giant pair of scissors with scoops on the end. The Year 10 team had an excellent idea but, no matter what they tried, they couldn't get the mechanism to work. After the testing session they had great delight in breaking the device up, and were then completely surprised to be told that they had won the KS4 competition! The inventiveness of their idea and the quality of their conversations had won the day.

National Grid

On Thursday 1 May ten students from Year 10 visited the **National Grid** offices in Wokingham as they were holding an open day. One of the topics covered in physics this year is about the National Grid.

First we received a very interesting welcome talk about the National Grid, they asked us questions to see if we had any idea of what the National Grid is and why it is so important. Later on we were split into two groups, one group were shown the main control room for electricity to England, Scotland and Wales, while the other group did activities of making small models of windmills, then we switched over.

At the end of the day we were split into three groups and were given a challenging task to come up with a suitable place for a wind farm and substation on an island. We gave smart ideas and my group were the winners. The day ended with a talk about careers at the National Grid, and we were given some souvenirs.

The information we gathered was very helpful towards our current topics and may be of use in the future. I understand the importance of saving electricity in order to save the natural resources.

By Neyma Siddiqui 10A

IT is not just for geeks!

10G and 10U IT groups have had a careers related workshop with staff from **Dell**. The IT industry is one of the most fast growing and exciting, particularly in the Thames Valley area, but women still only make up 20% of the workers in IT.

Steve and Liliana from Dell told the students about the company and their own jobs and career backgrounds. Both had changed the type of job they do several times so wanted students to know that jobs they choose now aren't necessarily for life. They talked about the range of jobs in IT – including graphics, games design, HR, finance, marketing, sales and so on, as well as computing and technical jobs – and the advantages of working in an industry with good rewards, creativity, flexibility

and opportunities for travel. Students also discussed in groups the careers they are interested in pursuing, and the personality traits that will help them and the traits that would hinder them in any career. They also shared some interesting facts about how social media has changed our lives.



Food Revolution Day

Friday 16 May saw the Science Department run the Food Revolution Day challenge. Hundreds of thousands of teachers and students around the world took part cooking along with Jamie Oliver to make a delicious Rainbow Salad Wrap. Promoting healthy eating to students is a priority so Reading Girls' School took part and the students loved the experience and had a lot of fun.



Travel and Tourism Trip to Brighton

On Thursday 15 May, the Post-16 BTEC students visited Brighton to carry out some research on the appeal of Brighton as a seaside destination for young people. This is to be used for their coursework when completing Unit 6: UK Tourism Destinations. For some students this was their first visit to Brighton and for one their first trip to the UK seaside. Students enjoyed exploring the Pier, strolling along the beach and soaking up the atmosphere in The Lanes, all in the glorious sunshine.



We had our first alumni event recently. Three former students visited with a facilitator from **Future First**, to lead an assembly with Year 10s about making the most of work experience. The girls have recently completed their applications for work experience, and will be completing this in September. After the assembly around 30 girls took

part in a follow-up workshop, they split into groups and completed activities led by the alumni. We

had great feedback from the girls who took part, it was a real confidence booster, meeting girls who had been through Reading Girls' School and were now out in the real world, Cynthia is at university in Plymouth, Nasreen works in the legal department of a transport company and Kitty is an events manager for a large venue. We look forward to welcoming more former students in to school in the near future. If you would like to get involved you will find more information on our website.



Music Department

This has been another productive term in Music with some really excellent curriculum work being produced. Pupils in Year 7 are now developing their skills in reading music, learning chords and drum-kit patterns to the song 'Walking on Sunshine'. Year 8 girls have this term started to follow the **RockSchool** programme. Year 9 have further developed their skills in performing two well-known songs. All classes have built these songs to performance level and we will be recording their work.

More Year 10 students are involved in the musical life of the school, the most recent venture here are four girls that have now started their own band and are rehearsing regularly. The School Choir continues to rehearse with super success, and other groups have also now started to flourish.



There are new activities in the extra-curricular programme—musicians who wish to rehearse and be mentored in solo or small group performances and students are able to come along to Music Theory Club. Needless to say that our amazing GiG Night is going from strength to strength after school on Fridays and after half term students will be able to come along to watch too.

Duke of Edinburgh News

The Quest for the Bronze Award

The Duke of Edinburgh award is a qualification for young people aged between 14 and 24. It requires students to undertake four different sections in: volunteering, practising a physical sport, learning a new skill and then undertaking an expedition - all over a period of about 6 months. The aim of this is to develop social and teamwork skills whilst building self-esteem and having fun. However, upon completion, you don't actually get to become the genuine Duke of Edinburgh. The challenge requires persistence and commitment and can change the lives of those who participate, introducing them to new experiences and developing talents. Both employees and universities recognise the award which helps young people to become fitter, make a difference to their communities and gain a greater understanding of the natural environment. At Reading Girls' School we are excited to be offering the Bronze award for the very first time.



Adventure! Excitement! Discovery! Fatigue! That's what twelve Year 10 students felt when they undertook their practice Duke of Edinburgh camping expedition over the weekend of the 10/11 May. The group has been in training since January, planning their journey and learning new map, camping and safety skills. It was a joy to witness them putting a tent up for the first time.

The first expedition went incredibly well. Terrible rain was forecast for the weekend but we were greeted with sunshine and smiles at the start of our journey. Once we had started the hike it didn't take long for one of the groups to become slightly lost – but the students managed to get themselves back on track. The walk took the groups from the edge of West Reading up through



Pangbourne and then to Beale Park. There was time to stop for lunch (mostly Pot Noodles) before the heavens then opened and the brave adventurers got to try out their waterproof kit.

Camping overnight was a total success. One group set their tents up with military timing and precision, the other group not so much. Delicious, gourmet standard dinner was made on gas stoves by all the students. There was even time to play some cards and football, before toasting marshmallows and going to sleep.

The second day was another adventure. The intrepid group stumbled upon rare creatures such as horses and cows (and an actual deer) and managed to cross several boggy fields. Some students learnt how to use their compasses properly and danger was averted as one explorer was bravely rescued from some ferocious brambles. Once everyone had made it back to the finish point with muddy boots it was agreed that it was the best weekend ever!

Throughout the two days the girls showed endless teamwork, strength and friendship and were a pleasure to accompany. They helped and encouraged each other at every moment, whilst coping with all the challenges thrown at them. The exciting news is that they get to do it all again over the weekend of the 14/15 June for their final, assessed, expedition. This will be near Bramely and take the girls through the historical site of Roman Silchester. In the meantime the girls will be undertaking



additional bag packing, orienteering and cookery sessions to prepare them for their final adventure – the quest for the Bronze Award is almost complete.

The students: Zobia, Ayesha, Urooj, Mridhu, Aleena, Kanza, Anu, Nimrah, Asya, Charlie, Courtney and Aliyah

The teachers: Mr Boyd, Mrs Cunningham, Miss O'Reilly and Mr Nichols

Here's what some of the girls had to say:

- Charlie – “The practise expedition was a good experience to have. Yes there were challenges to it, yet my team supported me and helped me carry on. After having this experience, I feel I am more confident for the future”.



- Nimrah – “I found it funny that Mrs Cunningham, the geography teacher, led us the wrong way”.
- Asya – “Walking with my group, I had a full sense of determination. Being in such a rural area is like being placed in a whole new world full of rich, green nature”.
- Mridhu – “I liked making food together as a group as it showed good teamwork. We made some delicious pasta, even though it was cold”.
- Aliyah – “I liked evening activities of playing cards and football and having a Eurovision party with little flags. There was a positive atmosphere amongst all the students and with the teachers”.
- Anu – “Walking around 18km in two days was a really good experience. I enjoyed the evening football and learning how to pack a rucksack. Even though we all came back with aching bodies, it was worth it”.
- Urooj and Zobia – “What we enjoyed the most was being surrounded by people we love and finally finishing the first half of the expedition”.

