



# Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



Term 5

[www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk](http://www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk)

May 2016



Please note that although the new school building is progressing well we will be unable to move into the new building for the start of the term in September. This will mean an adjustment to the term dates for the next academic year as the new building will not be released to us until 14<sup>th</sup> September.

School will open for Year 11 only on Tuesday 6 September in the old building until Tuesday 13 September. There will be two Inset days for staff to unpack on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> with Years 7 and 11 coming into the new building on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September. The rest of the school will be in on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September. We apologise for this delayed start but I am sure you will agree it will be well worth the wait.

## March 2016 – May 2016

The construction of the new Reading Girls' School is progressing well and is now heading towards the finishing target of ICT Handover on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



The cladding to the sports hall is complete.



The cills to windows have been installed.



The render panels have commenced (this is just the initial base coat with colour finish application to follow).



Internally the decoration works are progressing well, typical atrium.



A general classroom now finished.



A general classroom now finished with a pre-finished laminated door.

Looking ahead the installation of fixed furniture to the science labs will start soon. First fix to the drama studio equipment starts in June and hard landscaping will also commence in June. These are just a few of the many things coming in the summer months.



*A first group of staff were given a tour of the new building – kitted out in hard hats and high visibility vests! More pics on P6.*

## Year 7 Visit to Ufton Court



From 11-13 May, 32 pupils from Year 7 had the great pleasure of attending a three night residential at Ufton Court Adventure.



On arrival we were sadly greeted by the rain, however, there was no need to worry as our Ufton Court Leader, Neil, had it covered by starting with indoor team building activities. The girls also got to try their hand at starting fires, building shelters and low ropes. Their evenings were kept busy with a drama workshop and a team building parachute game... which dissolved into a water fight, after Mr Boyd smacked himself in the face with a water balloon. Oops!



The girls were in charge of making their beds and keeping their cabins clean, but also had Ufton duties which they had to carry out, such as cleaning and feeding

the animals, setting and preparing meals, cleaning up after food and making their own pizza, which they were able to enjoy outside next to the warmth of the pizza oven.



They worked on many skills which will help develop them as learners, but also as good citizens. Through a mix of activities and life skills the girls worked on their self-esteem, empathy, friendship, and tenacity. This special bunch of girls will be revisiting Ufton Court Adventure every year to continue developing these four objectives.



## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

After spending the last eight months working on their skills, volunteering and attending training sessions after school, on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May, 18 Year 10 students set off for their Duke of Edinburgh practice expedition, joined by four members of staff.



The weather was glorious and they all thoroughly enjoyed a trek around the English countryside. After setting up camp in the evening, the girls cooked themselves very impressive meals with their tangier stoves, then gathered around the campfire to toast marshmallows. The staff were very impressed and proud of the girls' navigation skills and they made it back on the Sunday in record time. Thank you to all of the parents for their support in facilitating the trip with travel and equipment support. The students are now very much ready and looking forward to their next expedition in June.



On Monday 16 May, Mr Boyd and Mrs Angus attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace in celebration of 60 years of the The Duke of Edinburgh's award.

It was an opportunity to celebrate a record number of gold awards being presented and also be presented with the DoE Licensed Organisation Plaque which will be on display at the front of the school shortly.

Mr Boyd and Mrs Angus had the pleasure of meeting Ainsley Harriott and Nick Hewer as well as HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip himself. A great day was had and we look forward to continuing to deliver the DoE award at Reading Girls' School.

## Army Outreach

The Army Outreach and Careers team visited the school on Tuesday 12 April. The day started with a careers talk then all the Year 10 students took part in a series of activities to build their



teamwork, communication, problem solving and creative thinking skills. Fortunately, the sun came out but there was still a lot of mud around! The final activity was the inflatable assault course which the girls loved!



Some Year 11 students visited the **Berkshire**



**Apprenticeship Adventure** to find out more about apprenticeships, how they work and how to apply. They had the chance to talk with employers, training organisations and register for the apprenticeships website.



Year 10 Geography students had a guest speaker from **Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners**, to talk about town planning, including the problems the country is facing about housing and careers in planning.

Students in 10G Science visited



**National Grid** to find out how electricity is produced and supplied. They saw the control centre which monitors supply and demand to ensure that there is electricity when users switch on their kettles, particularly at peak times.

## Recent events with businesses and employers ...

Staff from **Symantec** visited the school to run



**Symantec**

internet safety workshops for the students in Year 7 to 10. This made them consider their digital footprint and many have updated their friends and security settings as a result.

## OLSWANG

Four students in Year 11 had extra

work experience during a holiday with **Olswang LLP**. This included workshops and a visit to a court and gave them a valuable insight into how a large firm operates.

**Interserve**, the builders of our new school visited



the Year 11 assembly to talk about the wide range of careers in the construction industry - including HR, accounting and project management, as well as architects, engineers and builders! Two of their young apprentices came along to tell the girls how an apprenticeship works and give tips about finding a job.



**St John Ambulance**

**St John Ambulance** ran a first aid training day for the Year 10 students taking GCSE PE and those involved in the The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme

Year 10 GCSE IT students had a guest speaker from



**BT** to talk to them about the development of telephones and the internet, IP addresses, and how life will be affected by the development of the *Internet of Things*.

## Magistrates Court Mock Trial

So many students wanted to take part in the Magistrates' Court Mock Trial Competition this year that we entered two teams!

This prestigious competition has students taking the part of lawyers, witnesses, magistrates and court officials in a specially prepared court case. Tina Heaford, a local magistrate, works with our students to help them understand the complexities of the case and our legal system. Both teams worked very hard and did extremely well in the Berkshire heats, and the competition

judges commented on their good performance.

Sadly we didn't get through to the next stage but the students should be very proud of their hard work and commitment.



## Young Enterprise Day

The Year 10 Business Studies students were fortunate recently to experience a Young Enterprise Day to help with their course. This was funded by Visa, who also provided volunteers for the day and gift bags for all the students who took part.



The activity was a Small Business Challenge based on 'learning by doing'. The students worked in teams to select a business to buy and develop. They developed and applied key business concepts such as developing products and marketing, including designing a company t-shirt for employees.

The day also provided an awareness of key business skills and attitudes needed for employment, self-employment and further education; namely teamwork, communication, organisation, confidence, resilience, financial capability, problem solving and initiative.

We are grateful to Visa and Young Enterprise for providing this opportunity for a motivational, inspiring and enriching learning experience for the students.



## Connect - with Reading University Students Union



A group of Year 10 students are working on a project with students from the University of Reading. The picture shows them doing an 'ice-breaker' activity to get to know one another. This involved completing a quiz and if they got a question right they could have a piece of chocolate - if they could cut it with a knife and fork while wearing rubber gloves!

## Transitions with CBEBP

A group of Year 10 students have been attending a transitions programme run by Central Berkshire Education Business Partnership. This aims to ease the transition to whatever they choose to do after GCSEs, whether it is sixth form, college or an apprenticeship, by building their confidence, teamwork and communication skills, as well as their awareness of the world beyond school. The programme was funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

As well as attending sessions in school, the students also had a day at Verizon on CV writing and interview skills. This included having a mock interview with a business volunteer! The girls were all very nervous about this but managed to overcome their nerves and all did well.



They also had a day of games and activities at Path Hill Outdoors with students from another school. This included building their own shelter and fire to cook their lunch of burgers followed by toasted marshmallows.



## STEM Gold Certificate

The school runs a lot of activities to encourage students to study sciences, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and to consider a career in those subjects. One in five jobs in the UK is in a STEM, and there is a shortage of people to fill the vacancies, so it is definitely worth students considering in the future!



We have recently been recognised for this work by STEM Surrey and Berkshire. They are based at the University of Reading and liaise between schools and STEM businesses and ambassadors on careers and projects. Dr Debi Linton visited the school to present the school with a Gold Certificate.

## The Next Big Thing

On Friday 29 April a group of Year 10 girls went to a competition called "The Next Big Thing", which was held at the Siemens UK headquarters at Frimley. In this annual competition, the group had to design a new innovation to improve healthcare.

Previous to this, the girls had prepared a presentation and display since the launch of the competition on 22 January 2016, working closely with their mentors who were part of Siemens staff. The girls selected helping the NHS with their portable device Tête Tec, which detected brain activity to help predict an epileptic seizure.



When the girls arrived, they set up their display board and prepared their models. After a welcome by a member of the Siemens staff, all the teams attending introduced their ideas in a five minute timed presentation in front of four prominent judges as well as the other competitors and their mentors.

After this, the girls received a tour and demonstration of the equipment that Siemens produce. This included an immunoassay machine that detects the number of thyroids within the blood, 2D and 3D ultrasound scans used for monitoring pregnancies as well as for detecting kidney stones, and the latest programmes used for identifying conditions after having a scan. During this, the girls had a chance to further

their knowledge about the current topic they are studying in Biology which is enzymes.

Next, the group had a question and answer session with the judges, during which time they had a chance to display their work. They also talked with visiting guests about their idea. After a lovely lunch it was finally time to announce the winners, for which there was much anticipation. Our team's work was described as excellent but sadly they were beaten by LVS Ascot.



*Written by Victoria Turchyn, 10R*

## Public Speaking Competition

Year 9 students have the opportunity to take part in a public speaking competition. Preparation will take part in school time over two days as will the school heat. Students will work in teams of three and the two winning teams will go through to a final against other Reading schools, which will be held after school on Tuesday 28 June finishing at 6.30 pm at the offices of Prudential in Reading Town Centre. To apply, complete the registration form and return it to Mr Shea or Mrs Thomson by 9am by Monday 6 June.

## Robotics Club

I'm pleased to announce Robotics Club will start again on the Wednesday after half term in C2. It will run on most Wednesdays and the occasional Thursday after half term; all are welcome however attendance and admittance is dependent on having excellent behaviour in IT and computing lessons with an excellent team playing attitude.

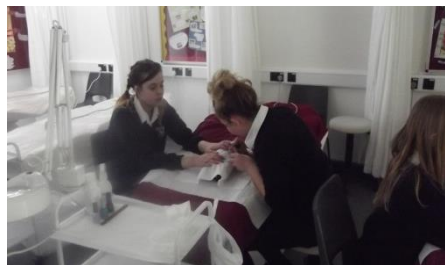
We will be learning how to work as a team, problem solving skills and programming among many other skills that will also be beneficial in other

subject areas eg business studies using Lego Mindstorms software in order to enter the **First Lego League** competition in December. Membership of this club will certainly help you in programming skills and problem solving skills and achieving a higher level in KS3 Computing and GCSE ICT and Computing. It is open to anyone in years 7-10. Any queries or for more information come and see me in C2.

*Mr Oakley - Head of ICT and Computing*

## Manicure Showcase

On Friday 11 March the Year 11 beauty students held a 'manicure showcase' to raise money for Cancer Research and for experience working on real models.



"We felt amazed after we had completed the nails on the girls because it seemed like the girls enjoyed our work, our waiting room was full of clients waiting to get their nails painted."

*By Almas Khan*



I was proud and happy with the event we arranged because it was something we enjoyed doing and it was for cancer research; I hope the clients liked their nails and enjoyed our company. It gave us confidence with meeting new people we didn't know and getting to know what it's like in the real world. It will help us when we do our final manicure assessment and we will be qualified in being a nail technician. We raised approximately £50 for Cancer Research.

*By Eirwen Mutton*

## Headteacher's Message

Following the Ofsted inspection just before Christmas, I thought you would like to know of the progress we have been making at Reading Girls' School to address the issues raised at the inspection.

- **Safeguarding** – external audit has been undertaken and school is fully compliant with DfE regulations - practice of safeguarding is still good as recognised by OFSTED.
- **Teaching and Learning** – all staff have observed and identifying good practice is in place - staff who are not yet good are having support to improve their practice.
- **Core subjects** – English, Maths and Science have been scrutinised.
- **Assessment** – the whole system in the school is being developed to allow both parents and students to understand exactly where they are and the targets they need to reach.
- **Reports to Parents** – a small working party of parents has met and is working with the school to develop a reporting system that meets parent's requirements.
- **Students** – surveys have been issued to students regarding the teaching and learning they receive - we have listened to these surveys and are beginning to address the issues raised.

## Head Girls



The interviews have been held for the new **Head Girls** and I am happy to announce that Francis Emmanuel and Laura Byrne have been duly appointed for the next year. The field was very strong and it was a difficult decision to make. I very much look forward to working with the girls.

*Mrs V Angus – Headteacher*

