



# Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



**Term 1**

**October 2011**

## 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: Ahmana Khan, Chloe Lunnon, Victoria Parr and Jenny Regi.

Year 8: Precious Abbey, Shamim Imedi and Maryum Khan.

Year 9: Sandra Abone, Ammani Daniel and Allisha Raja.

Year 10: Charisse Chikwiri, Fatoumata Darboe and Emmaculate Mukami.

Year 11: Yvone Matunda and Sanna Shah Nawaz.

Sia Deniche Matturi—Head of Council

Evonnee Bentley-Holder and Noushin Sikdar—Head Girls



The new Student Council met for the first time on Monday 10 October to establish their priorities for the present academic year: their decisions will be reported in future newsletters.

## Fundraising

So far this year we have raised £95 for

Macmillan Cancer Support by joining in with the World's Biggest Coffee Morning held on Friday 30 September. As a charity they have now raised over £3m from events held around the country.

The Year 7 students were invited to



celebrate Roald Dahl Day on 27 September by either dressing up as a character

from one of his many fantastic stories or poems, or wearing his favourite colour yellow. Teachers were also keen to join in the day's activities and they created some interesting costumes. The event



which supports children with neurological diseases.

An amazing £357.07 was raised for **Aspire2**, a Whitley based charity that raises funds for many holiday and after school



activities for families in South Reading. Students were encouraged to come to school in an outfit representing who they 'Aspired2B'. We had some very interesting outfits including midwives, secret agents, footballers, scientists and lawyers. One student came dressed ready for her graduation ceremony—certainly some very aspiring outfits. See details from the Quiz Evening on page 4.



## Recycling

**Mobile phones and ink cartridges**



Throughout the year we are collecting old unwanted mobile phones and empty printer cartridges. The ink cartridges will be refilled and reused. Unwanted old mobile phones are either sent to developing countries, or urban gold mines for the gold that hides inside them.

### Unused books

We are also collecting unwanted books. Any topic or size is welcome. These are sent to schools and libraries in Africa who can make good use of many of them. Books that are tatty or of no use will be pulped to recycle the paper.

### Clothing and fabric



We are asking students to collect any old clothing, fabric, curtains, shoes and bags and place them in the special **Bag2School** bags given

out ready for our collection day – Thursday 3 November. The date is just after half term so if your family is having a clear out over the holiday all unwanted clothes etc are put to good use.

These items will be sent to Eastern Europe for reuse or rag recycling. Not only are we raising money, but we are doing our bit for the environment by ensuring that unwanted items go to good use rather than in the bin. Further bags are available from reception or Mrs Eddy. And to make it all the better, the school gets paid for every phone, cartridge, book or unwanted bag of clothing.

## Headteacher's Message

We began this academic year on a very positive note as yet again Reading Girls' has achieved another record with its GCSE results. **We celebrated our best GCSE results ever** – Year 11 students achieved a brilliant 94.5% 5 A\* to C grades – a 40% rise on the previous two years. Our English and Maths results also showed a 17% rise over the past two years and we achieved 54% A\* to C grades including English and Maths. This continued improved attainment is the result of students, parents and staff working together and I look forward to such collaboration continuing this academic year. As a school we are committed to ensuring all students succeed in both attainment and achievement.

### Are you good at organising events?

#### Are you able to give some of your time to help the school?

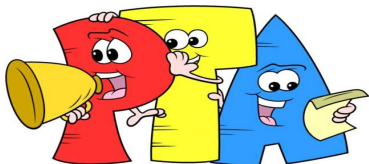
We are looking to set up the RGS Parent Teacher Association.

#### What is a PTA?

A PTA is open to all parents who want to get more involved in the school. They will meet at least once a term and organise fundraising events within the school. The PTA includes representatives from the school's teaching staff and a range of parents throughout the school years. Most PTAs also run social events for parents and students and this gives parents an extra opportunity to meet and 'get to know' each other, this is an especially good idea for Year 7 parents.

#### Does this sound like something you would be interested in?

If you are and can help us out in any way or have any questions, please contact us through our email address [pta@readinggirls.reading.sch.uk](mailto:pta@readinggirls.reading.sch.uk) or write in with your details to Lisa Newman, Parent Governor, c/o Reading Girls' School.



The Open Evening on Monday 3 October for prospective Year 7 students in September 2012 was a great event – the numbers of students from the school who gave up their time to help particular subject areas and the running of the evening was inspiring. I am very proud of the students and received many positive comments from prospective parents regarding their mature and polite behaviour; they surely are the best ambassadors of the school.

The school, parents and students are in a collaborative partnership and with us all working together the students will make greater progress. Thus I would ask you to support us in ensuring your daughters come to school each day on time and ready for learning, bringing in the correct equipment, wearing the correct uniform and abiding by the code of conduct. The students are extremely smart in their uniforms and I am proud of their appearance. However, may I re-iterate that facial piercings are not allowed and may I ask you to support this rule by encouraging your daughter not to do this.

Our budget is linked to certain percentages. One way we can increase



money coming into the school and buy resources for your daughters is if we can increase the number of parents claiming Free School Meals. If you are on Income Support or Child Benefits, you are eligible to claim a free school meal for your daughter. However, if you are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, you are **not** entitled. Please telephone the school on 0118 986 1336 where we will be happy to advise you.

**Students are to return to school on Monday 31 October at 8.40 am** and go straight to their tutor bases.

I am particularly grateful for the support I have received from parents and members of the local community. I look forward to meeting you and your family during the course of this year.

*St Augustus*



### 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 2011/12 are as follows:

Mid term break Monday 24 to Friday 28 October  
Christmas break Monday 19 December to Monday 2 January 2012  
Mid term break Monday 13 to Friday 17 February  
Easter break Monday 2 to Friday 13 April  
Mid term break Monday 4 to Friday 8 June



## Author Visit



Local author, Mary Hooper, visited Reading Girls' School on the afternoon of Friday 23 September. She talked to

Year 8 and Year 9 students about her books, including the recently published 'Velvet'.

Mary Hooper has written contemporary fiction for all ages, but is perhaps best known for her historical novels. In 2010, 'At the Sign of the Sugared Plum' was selected for the Booked Up scheme. In 2011, 'Fallen Grace' was nominated for the Carnegie Medal and three regional awards.

This was an exciting opportunity for the girls to hear a local author talk about her life and work. Mary's books were also on sale, so students had the chance to buy copies signed by the author.



## Murder Mystery in the History Department

During the school's recent open evening, the History Department put on a 'murder mystery experience'. Students and parents were invited to solve the mystery of why the Tollund Man (a 4th Century BC Danish corpse found in 1950) was killed. Was it murder, suicide or sacrifice?

A skeleton was laid out in the centre of the room with pieces of evidence spread out around it. With excellent assistance from Anu Acharya, Ayesha Khan, Sahara Pandit, Rafia Butt, Yasmin Dickinson and Lois Maxwell, the visitors examined the body and studied the clues. They tightened a noose and iron neck rings, handled a wooden spring goddess and



dipped their hands in soup to find out the answers. All this whilst becoming increasingly frightened as the spooky music and

smoke made the classroom into an exact replica of the eerie Danish bog. The visitors did a brilliant job of cracking the mystery and hopefully the history department will find more dead bodies to investigate next year.

## Careers Fair

On Thursday 29 September, three coaches of Year 9 students left Reading Girls' School to drive to the Berkshire Conference Centre in the Madejski Stadium complex where the Reading Futures Fair was being held.

The girls are looking at careers as part of their Year 9 coursework prior to choosing their options. The Futures fair gave them a chance to talk to employers and further education providers to find out more about a wide range of careers and the qualifications that are needed.

There were over 80 stands to look at and the wide variety of employers ranged from the army, police and ambulance service, through accountants, banks and IT providers, to shops, engineers, and the local paper.

The event was organised by Central Berkshire Education Business Partnership (CBEBP) and funded by First Great Western, Network Rail, PepsiCo Ltd, and Tesco. We are extremely grateful for their generosity and support.

## Business Class

An exciting new development that Reading Girls' School is involved with is the *Business Class* initiative. Developed by *Business in the Community* as part of their programme to inspire companies to improve their corporate social responsibility, this project encourages companies to engage with secondary schools for a minimum period of three years. It is being implemented locally with the help of CBEBP. As well as working on employability, enterprise and curriculum topics, companies will also be working with management. Reading Girls' School has been linked to the accounting firm KPMG, and we look forward to working with them.



## B&E Events In Brief

- **Whitley Arts Festival** is being held in October, and Ed Harcourt from Hogarth Productions joined a Year 8 assembly to tell students about some of the art projects. He also got them to create their own based on one of the pieces that is being displayed on the Whitley Art Trail by Martin Creed, a Turner Prize winner.
- A representative from **Wings of Hope** joined a joint Year 10 and Year 11 Assembly to tell students about their Achievement Award. Some teams have now registered to take part in their 'FUNdraising' competition.
- Amanda Holland from **HistoryPin** visited a Year 10 History class to demonstrate [historypin.com](http://historypin.com) to the girls. She will be visiting them again to help uploading their family's photos to the website.

### Coming soon:

- Staff from **BG Group** will be guest speakers for Year 10 Chemistry students.
- Year 11 students will be having advice from business people about **CV writing**, application forms and interview skills to help them prepare for the future.
- Staff from **PriceWaterhouseCoopers** will be working with the Science Ambassadors and the Science Enterprise Group on an Eco-schools project.
- We will be taking a group of Year 8 students to visit the offices of Microsoft for the **Digirlz** event.
- **Verizon** will be running a website design course for 8G ICT.
- **Global Enterprise Week** runs from 14 to 18 November and events will be taking place in school.
- The **Young Chamber** at Reading Girls' School is currently recruiting new members to be involved in organising business projects and events in school. They also have the opportunity to attend Young Chamber Forums at the offices of Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce.

## Olympic Enterprise Day

At the end of the summer term, some of our students enjoyed a PE Enterprise Day themed around the Olympics.



Working in groups, they were given a venue to market as a training camp for visiting Olympic teams. They had to research the venue, transport, facilities and produce some marketing. Then they were told which teams were looking for a venue, decide which one to pitch to and write a presentation to tempt them to their venue. Winning teams had to present their ideas and were challenged by the judges. The students all did very well in a stimulating day.

## Quiz Evening



The **Aspire2** theme continued after school on Friday 30 September when Reading Girls' School hosted a quiz evening, organised by Sheila Tibbenham. Over 120 staff, parents and local service providers made up 16 teams. Chris Bloomfield was an excellent quiz master, we feasted on sausages or spring rolls and chips and many raffle prizes were donated by local businesses. It was a hard fought battle!

The winning team (above) were the **Universally Challenged** team. Reading Girls' staff organised three teams; the Office Angels who came 6<sup>th</sup>, Angus's Army were 7<sup>th</sup> and the Infamous Five were 13<sup>th</sup>—around £500 was raised by

this event for Aspire2. Thank you to everyone who joined in.

Further planned fundraising activities include:

- ◆ December 2011—Children's Christmas party
- ◆ 21 January & Easter 2012—Aspire2 Bingo and open mike evening for local residents in the community hall
- ◆ July 2012—Community Fun Day
- ◆ Sept 2012—Aspire 2B and Quiz night
- ◆ November 2012—Bingo and open mike evening.

If you would like any further information please contact Sheila Tibbenham.

[www.whitleyexcellencecluster.org.uk](http://www.whitleyexcellencecluster.org.uk)

### Get On Line

Using the internet is easier than you think. Spend an hour with us and we'll show you how to start using the internet. Join other beginners at our free event: 3.30-4.30 pm on Friday 4 November in Reading College at Reading Girls' School.

### Free School Meal entitlement:

Consists of a savoury item main meal, sandwich, baguette, pasta pot or salad pot plus a pudding—dessert of the day or small fruit salad  
*Drinks, cakes, doughnuts or biscuits are NOT included.*

# Bonfire Feast

**Hot Dog in a Roll with Onions**  
(Chicken Sausage)  
or  
**Sausage in a Roll with Onions**  
(Quorn Sausage)  
or  
**Jacket Potato with Cheese & Beans**  
or Salad

*served with*  
**Baked Jacket Wedges with BBQ Dip**  
**Cheesy Coleslaw & Chilli Beans**

*followed by*  
**Orange Fire Cracker Pudding with Custard**  
or  
**Baked Pineapple Rings**  
£2.39

**Homemade Toffee Apples 75p**

## Thursday 3rd November 2011

EAT  
LEARN  
LIVE

Reading Borough Council School Meals Service working in partnership with Chartwells