



TORQUAY GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER: MS S FORSTER | FOUNDED 1915 | ACADEMY TRUST

16th December 2022

Dear Parent/Guardians

It seems hard to believe that this time last year we were still in a period of COVID restrictions. So, it has been lovely to see our students enjoying many of the traditional activities that were once a mainstay of our school and have now put the buzz back into school life.

This week we received the fantastic news that our record-breaking exam results have placed our school within the top 100 schools according to The Times Good School Guide 2023 this week. This 90th place is testament to the hard work of pupils and teachers alike with support of our continued dedicated parents.



We stand out further within the Southwest region, being ranked as 7th locally amongst the state and grammar schools.

NEW LIBRARY

Thursday 15th December 2022 was a special day for students and staff at TGGs as we celebrated the formal opening of the school library. The project to create a brand-new school library has been led by the TGGs Student Council with representatives from students in all year groups supported by the Head of English, Mrs Jo Preston and the newly appointed librarian, Mrs Rebeah Reed.

After months of planning from the student body – including designing a layout for the new library, fundraising for new books, furniture, and digital devices – culminated in the grand opening event, when all the hard work really paid off!

Local artist Becky Bettsworth judged student entries to a competition to design a book cover for your favourite book; Year 7 student Emma Carroll was chosen as the winner. Becky then led a question-and-answer session with students and provided invaluable advice about finding your passion in life and maintaining a resilient attitude when challenges are presented. Becky also donated one of her paintings – Dream Big to be displayed in the library to remind all our students to be aspirational and have self-belief that they can achieve their goals in life.

The opening of the library was commemorated with a Christmas tree of knowledge which was planted by the youngest student in our school, Eleanor Mills in 7J. The tree will be a symbol of growth as it will age with our students and school community, whilst reflecting the school's commitment to its eco-friendly vision.

The ribbon was then cut to officially open the library and students and staff were invited to visit the library, eat mince pies, whilst listening to a selection of festive carols performed by our wonderfully talented school choir and Year 11 pianist Mattie Thomas.

PUBLIC SPEAKING JOY

On a dark and gloomy November night, 6 brave souls sat in various locations across Torquay waiting to take part in the first round of the English-Speaking Union's public speaking competition. Were they nervous? Yes. Were they about to smash it out the park? Also, yes. Competing against a range of other schools, TGGs students had to adopt the positions of chairperson, questioner and speaker - each performing quite distinct roles in the debate.



"A haven of inspired, structured academic provision... supported by a nurturing and enlightened pastoral approach and a wealth of opportunities. Girls leave with the belief that everything is attainable." - GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE 2022



Annemieke Karrssens (Year 11) argued all blood sports amounted to murder, weaving in references to Shakespeare to support her points like a pro. Miranda Hunter (Year 10) made no apologies for her hard-hitting talk on the #metoo movement which gave us all goose bumps. Isabella Passerelli (Year 10) chaired her team with so much charm, she quite literally charmed the judges out of their chairs, whilst Sophia Sutton's (Year 10) smile only made her stinging questions all the more powerful - at one point leaving the other teams flustered and struggling for a response. Eve Buckley (Year 10), with all the grace in the world, grilled her opponent like a smiling assassin. Which only leaves Lucy Mahys (Year 10), whose comic timing and quick-witted comments left us all grinning.

The two TGGs teams came in first and second and have sailed through to the next round.

LEST WE FORGET

On November 11th, the Project Choir spent a day visiting Care Homes in the local area, singing WWII songs such as We'll Meet Again and White Cliffs of Dover to the residents. It was an emotional and rewarding day bringing smiles and tears to all involved.



NETBALL SUCCESS

On Tuesday 22nd November U16 netball team travelled to Exeter University to compete in the Devon County School Netball Tournament.

The team started off strong with a 17-1 win over Uffculme. The team showed incredible movement and clever, imaginative play. The second game was against Maynard which was tougher but TGGs won 8-5 and there was some excellent movement inside the D. The next game was against Chumleigh and was a 9-3 win with some good feeding and elevation and excellent movement throughout the court. This meant we had won our pool and we were through to the playoffs. In the semi-final we met Blundells. Everyone had their game face on for this match. Passes were accurate with everyone driving into spaces. TGGs won 21-1.

TGGs were now into the final where they met Newton Abbot College. The team worked hard and there were lots of great interceptions, but we fought hard and managed to come out on top winning 17-11 which means TGGs are **DEVON NETBALL CHAMPIONS**. The U16's will represent Devon in the Southwest Regional Netball Tournament in January.

CHARITY WEEK GENEROURISTY

What a fantastic effort from our creative, enthusiastic, and hardworking students during TGGs Charity Week! Each House spent a lunchtime selling scrumptious homemade cakes, handcrafted accessories, second-hand books and clothes, hand painted paperweights and bookmarks, seeds for planting flowers, pom-pom topped pencils, lucky dips, freshly made smoothies, waffles, pancakes and other edible treats! Putting into practice our TGGs school values of kindness, equality, and collaboration our students and sixth formers raised a grand total of £2,450.02 which will be shared across their chosen charities: Blue Cross (Beal House), Make-A-Wish (Cross House), Cancer Research (Jackson House), Surfers Against Sewage (Robertson House) and Water Aid (Wilkinson House). Well done everyone!

POLITICS ENRICHMENT

Politics students have been very busy this autumn and have benefitted from engaging with a number of local MPs. On 21st October the Year 12 Politics students visited Exeter University for a workshop with Ben Bradshaw, the Labour MP for Exeter and former Cabinet Minister. He gave a fascinating insight into current Politics and his view of the Labour Party's prospects at the next election, and also wowed some of our international students by engaging with them in fluent Italian.

By contrast on 4th November 50 students welcomed Anne Marie Morris, the Conservative MP for Newton Abbot, whose talk focused on the constituency role of an MP and how this can be in tension with their party loyalty – a tension which in her case saw her kicked out of the Conservative Party for several months earlier this year. Both talks featured lively question and answer sessions and following the spring visits by Anthony Mangnall the Totnes MP and Torbay's own MP Kevin Foster mean that we will have heard from the elected representatives for nearly all the student body. By the time you read this, we will also have had a Zoom meeting with Luke Pollard, the Plymouth MP and Labour Armed Forces spokesperson. Our speaker list for later this year includes a Greenpeace representative, the Lib Dem leader of Torbay Council, the Duke of Somerset about his role as a crossbench peer in the House of Lords, and York University's Dr Eva Heims.



BECOMING A BARRISTER

It was great to welcome Bethany Burnard back to TGGs. After finishing her A level studies with us in 2015, Bethany studied Law at university and then went to Bar School to become an advocate. She has just completed her pupillage and became a fully qualified Barrister this October working out of KBG Chambers in Plymouth where she specialises in Family Law. Welcomed by a large audience from Year 10 to Year 13, Bethany explained the role of a Barrister and the career routes involved, as well as the rewards and sometimes challenging demands of the legal profession. We're very grateful to her and to the Bar None organisation for facilitating her visit.

GAN – SCIENCE XMAS LECTURE

On Thursday 15th December, we saw our second annual Christmas Science Lecture, given by Dr Peter Rowley who is a volcanologist at the University of Bristol – on the topic "Can we forecast volcanic eruptions?". The lecture was attended by 70 parents and students. This will be incredibly useful for those studying Geology or Geography (or who intend to do so in the future), or indeed, anyone wanting to understand how science works.

CAROL SERVICE

On the Tuesday 6th December, at St. John's church in Torquay, the extra-curricular musical groups joined forces to present a traditional Christmas Carol service. The choir sang favourites such as O Holy Night and John Rutter's Angels' Carol, the year 7 choir sang and produced a Nativity scene with numbers from the musical of the same name, the orchestra played a medley of carols and 'We're Walking in the Air', whilst the string orchestra gave a moving performance of Carol of the Bells. A few new groups were introduced including Flute Choir, Guitar and Ukulele club, Hand Bells and Staff Choir who each performed respectively: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas, a Jingle Bells medley, and White Christmas. Many other groups were also involved and over all there were nearly 150 students taking part. It was a lovely evening, and everyone involved performed very well. Congratulations!



A CHRISTMAS CAROL – Review by Antonia Parkyn (11W)

At the end of their mock exam period, Year 11 were lucky enough to experience a live performance of Dickens's A Christmas Carol brought to life by the Quantum Theatre Company.

The play was performed by only three actors who effortlessly switched between roles. Their quick costume changes and smooth moving of props and scenery made the production fast paced and easy to follow.

The audience found the production hugely entertaining; the actors added some small but humorous details such as kazoo playing and random carol singing which also contributed to the joyful, festive atmosphere of the play.

Overall, it proved to be a wonderful way to bring the exam text to life and provide Year 11's with a well-deserved post-mock treat.



YEAR 7 CHRISTMAS PARTY

To reward Year 7 at the end of an amazing first term at TGGs, on Wednesday 14th December, the students were all allowed to be off timetable for the afternoon for some festive fun, including a Christmas movie experience, games and treats in the hall! A joyful and festive afternoon was had by all.



YEAR 8 PANTO TRIP – Oh yes it was!!

On the morning of Thursday 15th December, Year 8 jumped onto some coaches and went to the panto to see Aladin at the Princess Theatre in Torquay. After a short delay boarding the bus the singing, clapping and cheering started and lots of fun was had. As expected TGGs won the competition of the school that could make the most noise. After lots of eating of sweets, booing at the villain and throwing toilet rolls across the theatre we returned back to school. As usual their behaviour was impeccable, and the teachers were super impressed by them all. Happy Christmas Year 8!

ROME TRIP

Over the weekend, the Religious Studies Department took 36 students to the bustling streets of Rome. We spent the first evening taking in the beauty of the Spanish Steps.

On the Saturday we set off to explore the Vatican City- the smallest country in the world! Our guide, Sonia, led us through the Vatican Museum and gave us the opportunity to experience the elegance of the Sistine Chapel. We then visited St. Peter's Basilica, which gave us students an in-depth understanding of the history of the Catholic faith. In the afternoon, we headed to the Pantheon to nurture our knowledge of the artist Raphael. After a dinner of Carbonara, we threw a coin into the Trevi fountain while enjoying a traditional gelato!

The next day we learnt about the brutal history of the Colosseum. We then ventured to the Vittorio Emmanuel, known by the locals as the 'wedding cake' of Rome, due to its fancy marble façade. After scaling the building via glass elevator and looking down on Rome, we looked around the Manertime Prison, learning how the justice system has evolved through time.

In the evening, we had a Kosher dinner at a Jewish restaurant located in the historical Jewish Ghetto. This supported our Judaism studies.



On our final day, we visited the Scala Sancta (Holy steps), developing our understanding of the devotion of many Christians. We also visited the catacombs where thousands of Christians were buried up to the 4th century. After a couple more Churches, we headed home, tired but with many happy memories.

IT'S ALL IN THE PREPARATION

This term has also seen a record number of early applicants to university from Year 13 – 17 students applying for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, and 19 students applying for Oxford or Cambridge courses. All of these courses select through a demanding test and interview process, and the students have been preparing through a series of workshops and practice events, as well as with individual mock interviews. Many of these students are already being called to interviews and we are confident that they will be successful in receiving offers. Thanks to all those staff who have volunteered time to support them.

TGGS HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

After a gap of several years, we are excited to be reviving the TGGS Healthcare Conference in the Spring of 2023. This will be aimed at students from Years 9 to 13 who are interested in exploring healthcare careers and will run on Saturday 25th March 2023. We also plan to invite interested students from other local schools. We are already talking to a number of university healthcare schools and other providers in the area, as well as reaching out to our alumnae, and aim to offer a range of talks, interactive workshops and carousel stands that will provide insights into the whole range of healthcare courses and careers. More information about timings and how to book will come out in the new year.

As with previous Conferences, we are hoping that parents working in healthcare might volunteer a couple of hours to share something about their work with the students as part of the carousel – we're not looking for formal presentations, but rather informal chats with small groups of interested students to give them insights into different roles, their rewards and challenges, and a bit about how you might enter that profession. We'd love to hear from Hospital Doctors, Nurses with different specialisms, GPs, Vets and Vet Nurses, Dentists, Psychiatrists, Ophthalmologists, Physiotherapists, Pharmacists, Midwives, Pathologists, Radiographers, Biomedical researchers and many others. If you might be willing to contribute, please do email Mr Endersby at aendersby@tggsacademy.org.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break and look forward to welcoming all our students and staff back on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

Yours faithfully

Ms Sarah Forster BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH
Headteacher and Accounting Officer
Torquay Girls' Grammar School

FINAL WORDS FROM OUR CHRISTMAS POETRY WRITING COMPETITION WINNER.....





Do you recall
At that time of the year
When snow starts to fall
And all children cheer

The white roof tops
And snow-covered roads
Decorated shops
With chocolate on show

The Christmas dinners
Bursting with flavour
Puddings that glimmer
And tastes you must savour

But you look out the window
And the rain starts to fall
Snow is a no show
It's not like Christmas at all

Back to reality
In the wet rainy Britain
Renown for hospitality
And with roasties we are
smitten

It might not be snowing
Like in your snow globe
But the lights same are glowing
Because this is our home.

By: Ella Jones (11B)