



14th February 2025

Dear Parents/Carer

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. As we reach the end of this half term, I would like to thank you for all that you do to support your child in their education at Torquay Girls' Grammar School. Students have worked hard this term and have enjoyed a variety of extra-curricular activities and trips.

We have a wide range of lunchtime clubs ([click here](#)) on offer during the week. Please encourage your daughter to try a new club in the next half term.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION GREAT DEBATE 2025

Two sixth form students, Evie Hesford Thomas and Isabella Passarelli, entered the Historical Association Great Debate this year held at Devonport High School for Girls. The focus of their presentations was how their local history tells a global story. Evie gave an excellent talk on the history of Newton Abbot and how the reading of William III's proclamation at the Clock Tower went on to have a global impact on the US constitution, the French Revolution and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Isabella's talk was on the role of Torquay in the D-Day landings and how this impacted not only the locals, but also the outcome of WWII.

Isabella proceeded to win the Devon heat and went forward to the semi-final which was held online on Tuesday 4th February. Her presentation was outstanding yet again and she has won a prized place in the UK final of the competition to be held at Windsor Castle at the end of March. We wish her every success in the competition.



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

On Monday 27th January, it was Holocaust Memorial Day. Some of Year 9 were lucky enough to have the opportunity to partake in a webinar hosted by Tom Palmer – author of several books about children who have experienced trauma during and after the Holocaust.

In the talk, he was joined by Alfred Garwood nee Garfinkel (a holocaust survivor who had to change his surname when he moved to the UK in order to be allowed into medical school) who explained about his life during WWII. His experiences were moving, inspiring and made students reflect on the hardships and brutalities faced by those alive at that time. He shared how unfair the times after the war were and how difficult it was to adjust to life in London. One story was how he had to learn to speak English in three different ways when he came to Britain. As well as conversing with his family in English, mingled with Yiddish and Dutch, he needed to speak with a more upper-class accent when he was at the grammar school, whereas when he was in the East End (where his family were living) he had to adopt a cockney way of speaking. Our students shared that they were so grateful to have the opportunity to take part in the webinar, and they were exceptional ambassadors of the school.



Outstanding in all areas:
Leadership and management
The quality of education
Behaviour and attitudes
Personal development
Sixth-form provision

YEAR 8 READING RESEARCH PROJECT

TGGS is one of the 20 schools across the UK taking part in a research trial with Year 8 students. The purpose of the study is to explore the extent to which social reading environments impact on students' enjoyment of reading. Selected students have met in the school library in small groups over the past term to chat and explore new texts in a book club-style format. Over 200 books were donated to us from publishers – these will be added to the library shelves after half-term so that all students can benefit from these lovely new books. One of the students shared their thoughts about the project so far: "Personally, I believe that the book club has really helped me and opened up my options. Since being selected, I have finished two books that I have really enjoyed. The book club happens every week and at the start you have a snack and talk about your books. We then look through other new books to see if we would read them. Authors send us letters that I find quite relatable."

BOOK AWARD JUDGING IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

This term TGGS students have formed one of the judging panels for the Royal Society Young People's Book Prize. The Royal Society is a Fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists, drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine. This award inspires young people to read about science and to judge the six shortlisted books against a set of criteria. The TGGS panel is made up of volunteer judges from Years 7-11 who will shortly be casting their votes to choose the TGGS winner – the national result will be announced in March. One of our Year 11 judges said "It's a great opportunity, not just to learn more about such a wide variety of topics, from the Arctic to outer space, but also to be able to be a part of the judging panel and have my opinion be meaningful on a national scale!"



MEDSOC

MedSoc has had a lively half-term, led by Chair Noor and Vice-Chair Kripa. On Tuesday 21st January 36 Year 12's had 2 hours of CPR training from a Plymouth University Hospital outreach team - great for their personal confidence in emergency response, and a valuable insight into different branches of Medicine. On Thursday 23rd January the group also staged a lively debate on AI in Medicine. On Wednesday 5th February a packed meeting of nearly 50 students heard from Laura Tillotson, Senior Orthopaedic Consultant at RD&E about her field and about building a career in surgery. In contrast, on Tuesday 11th February, Drs Michelle Koloh and Shinoy Kurup visited to speak about the rewards and challenge of being a GP.

TGGS HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

All Year 10 and 11 students are always welcome to speaker meetings, and students from Year 9 upwards interested in healthcare are strongly encouraged to attend our Healthcare Conference on Saturday 22nd March - QR code for booking here or see ParentPay. We have 110 students from 13 schools already signed up and booking closes Friday 7th March. With such a large number booked on the Healthcare Conference, we are getting a good picture of student interests and would still be pleased to recruit any parents who work in healthcare to contribute with a carousel stall, especially in the areas of GP Medicine, nursing or midwifery.



LAWSOC

The centrepiece of this half term for LawSoc was staging their Mock Trial, which they prepared over several weeks. Over 20 Year 12's took part as plaintiff, witnesses, lawyers, court officials or jurors. Over two lunchtimes, the evidence was heard, speeches made, and the jury deliberated to reach their verdict of guilty!

In addition, on Friday 7th February, the society welcomed Andrew Perkins and Tamar Hosking, Partner and Trainee Solicitor at Ashfords Solicitors. It was a well-attended meeting with students from Year 10, 11 and 12 hearing about the work of Solicitors and the variety of careers possible in the Law. Well done to Julia and Brina for their leadership on these activities. After half term LawSoc welcomes a judge and Law Clinic workers, and in May they are looking forward to a visit to the Exeter Courts.



POLITICS

The Politics speaker programme, organised by Ambassador Isabella continues to attract very good audiences. This half term we've welcomed Jacob Cousens, who at the age of 21 stood for Labour in Newton Abbot at last July's General Election; he spoke about getting involved in Politics, his political beliefs and what it's like to be a candidate. In contrast, on Friday 24th January students heard from Kevin Foster, former Conservative MP for Torbay until his defeat in July, reflecting on his years in Parliament and his views of the current political situation. A week later, Bonnie, Brina and Eleanor from our Head Girl team had a Zoom meeting with Torbay Lib Dem MP Steve Darling, following up their previous discussions with him about student experience of workplace harassment issues, and sharing the results of a survey they have undertaken. Students from any year are welcome at our speaker meetings. Next half term we are looking forward to welcoming Green and Reform speakers.



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Model UN continues to go from strength to strength in Year 12, with new country representatives added recently and lively debates on the regulation of AI and Media Censorship. Well done to Bonnie for her great leadership on this.

SUCCESS DOTH BLOOM FOR ESU PERFORMING SHAKESPEARE CLUB

Hark, good folk! Tidings most jubilant spring forth from the hallowed halls of the ESU Performing Shakespeare Club, whose endeavours have soared to dizzying heights this past term. The youthful spirits of Year 7 through to Year 10 have delighted the company with their earnest toil, whilst the sixth-form stalwarts have lent most excellent guidance, like seasoned players upon the stage.

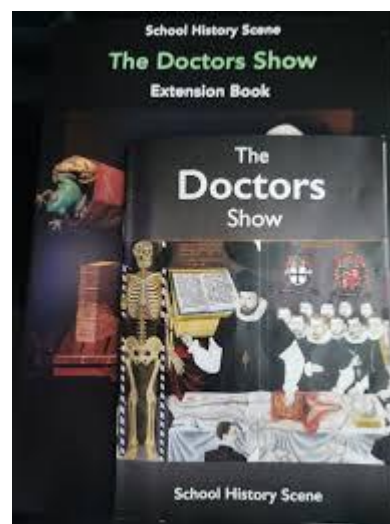
A trumpet flourish rings for Henrietta and Martha Baker, who, with rare artistry, did transport the judges into the moonlit grove of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Their rendering of Act 2, Scene 2, brimming with mischief and love's folly, hath earned them passage to the next round—a victory that doth inspire admiration and cheer. Likewise, Alice Butchart, with fire in her heart and cunning in her tongue, did hold the room spellbound with her stirring recital of *Richard III*'s famed soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent." Her commanding presence did melt even the frostiest hearts, turning the winter of doubt to a summer of triumph. The next round, where we will cross swords against students from other schools, will take place at the start of March.

Verily, this flourishing season doth bring the club great renown. All participants have laboured with love and wit, proving that Shakespeare's words still quicken young minds and bold spirits. Let us raise a toast to their continued success. To the next round, dear players, go with cheer, for "all the world's a stage," and the stage is yours to conquer!

If any young players wish to join us, then the door is open every Friday lunchtime in E3 as the clock striketh 12.35pm.

THE DOCTORS SHOW

Year 11 Historians attended the Barnfield Theatre to watch an exciting play on the History of Medicine. It gave them a detailed run through the centuries where they met many famous individuals including Florence Nightingale, Louis Pasteur and Andreas Vesalius. This was supported by an exam busting workshop where the students took on the role of examiners marking candidate's answers. The trip was very educational and will certainly help them in their revision.



CHALLENGE DAY

On Friday 31st January we held our 2nd Challenge Day of the academic year where each year group participated in activities such as a geography field trip to Plymouth Marine Aquarium, teambuilding, wellbeing, problem solving, bowling and careers events.

Year 7 recently enjoyed a challenge day trip to the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth where they explored the formation of and threats to our coral reefs. Students took part in a climate workshop where they got to classify coral samples amongst other things as well as a guided tour of the aquarium.



The trip will support students learning in geography lessons as well as a number of cross curricular links.

Year 8 spent the day focussing on their wellbeing whilst Year 9 were tasked with building towers and bridges, using pasta, marshmallows, paper and Sellotape capable of withstanding the weight of a

helicopter or mini digger driving across it. They also had fun investigating and making volcanoes which erupted.

Year 10 worked on their problem solving and then enjoyed a trip bowling in Torquay, whilst Year 11 had a trip to Plymouth to turn their attention on their own wellbeing and then some down time bowling.

IMPREZZA UPDATE

We warmly welcomed Catherine Omanyo of Imprezza into our whole school assembly on Thursday 30th January. Catherine was joined by her husband, Daron. Catherine explained how the TGGs and Imprezza partnership began 21 years ago and her journey to where she is now. She described how she could not afford to go to school but achieved an education by sneaking into lessons and persuading a teacher to let her take exams! Catherine founded her own boarding school in 2001, to help fund the education of those less fortunate and TGGs have been fundraising in support ever since.



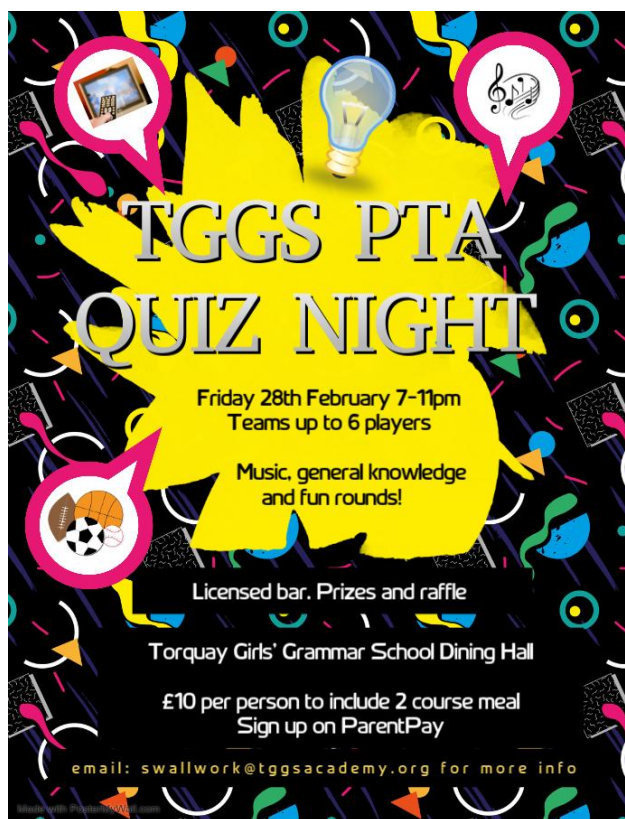
There were a few tears in the hall when Catherine was asked for the honour of naming our new House coming in September, 'Omanyo' House, after such an incredibly inspirational role model to all.

PTA QUIZ AND CURRY NIGHT – FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

Our Quiz and Curry night will be on Friday 28th February at 7pm in the Dining Hall (bar open at 6:30pm). This is always a fabulous night with a range of questions including music, sports and leisure, and general knowledge – not to mention the fun interval round (to be revealed but guaranteed good fun!!).

Tickets are £10 a person with all profits going to the PTA. Included in this are nibbles, a Caribbean curry cooked by our new Catering Manager, Chef Bea, and a dessert. Special dietary restrictions will be catered for on request. There will be a licensed bar serving a selection of alcoholic and soft drinks.

This is open to everyone aged 18+ - teams of up to 6 players. So, grab your friends and family, get yourselves a team name and sign up on ParentPay. Anyone without a ParentPay account can be sent a separate



payment link – please request this by emailing swallowwork@tggsacademy.org. Tables are limited so sign up soon. We guarantee a fun night with great prizes and, of course, the wooden spoon for the losers. You can also win some fabulous raffle prizes including Exeter Chiefs tickets, £50 meal vouchers (and other meal vouchers), days out including Splashdown, Exeter Races, Hollywood Bowl, shiatsu treatment, signed Becky Bettsworth print, edible goodies, gift vouchers and more.

Each member of the winning team will get a Gin Making Experience at the Gin Nest in Torquay. They will learn about the history of gin, methods of distillation and botanicals used and then, using a traditional copper pot still, they will choose their own botanicals and create and label their very own bottle of gin to take away. This is an amazing prize and we are very grateful to the Wine Box for this generous donation. But you have to be in it to win it, so get signed up soon!

BON VOYAGE TO OUR SKIERS

A group of staff and students will be heading out to Wildschönau in the Austrian Alps to enjoy some down time on the slopes this February Half-Term. For many it will be a great opportunity to learn new skills of skiing and having a go at speaking the German language whilst enjoying and emerging themselves in the local culture.



It's looking cold there next week, so wrap up everyone and have a great time.

Yours faithfully



Ms Sarah Forster BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH
Headteacher and Accounting Officer

KEY DATES FOR NEXT HALF TERM:

- Monday 24th February – return from half term.
- Wednesday 26th February – In-Year Admission Tests (2 places available in Year 9).
- Thursday 27th February – Year 9 Parents' Evening (Beal, Cross & Jackson).
- Friday 28th February – PTA Quiz & Curry night.
- Monday 3rd March – National Allocation Day.
- Monday 3rd March – Year 10 exams start.
- Thursday 6th March – Non-School Uniform – World Book Day.
- Thursday 6th March – Year 9 Parents' Evening (Robertson and Wilkinson).
- Sunday 9th March – Year 12 Geography fieldwork trip to Lake District depart.
- Wednesday 19th March – School Tour.
- Thursday 20th March – Gym & Dance Show.
- Saturday 22nd March – Healthcare Conference.
- Tuesday 25th March – Parent/Carer e-safety evening (online).
- Thursday 3rd April – Non-School Uniform – Comic Relief.
- Friday 4th April – last day of Spring term.