



# TORQUAY GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER: MS S FORSTER | FOUNDED 1915 | ACADEMY TRUST

19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

I write to you today following our annual Christmas assembly. It is a special time because our whole school comes together as a community to reflect on the year, celebrate the success of student achievements and complete our traditional inauguration of Head Girls. Congratulations to Annemieke Karssens (Head Girl) and Izzy Drewett (Deputy Head Girl).

I am proud that the whole school community took part in a full democratic process. Thank you to our outgoing Head Girls, Megan Beasley (Head Girl) and Ami Halliwell (Deputy Head Girl).

A highlight of the assembly was the House Point reveal led by students house leaders and songs sang together as a community.

Thank you to all parents/carers for your continued support of the school. In my speech to all students at TGGs today I thanked them for their hard work and encouraged them to rest during this school break and come back refreshed and ready for 2024.

I would personally like to thank all our dedicated staff who have organised and supported our vast array of clubs and trips this term. This newsletter reflects some of the amazing opportunities that students have been able to access and some important news and reminders.

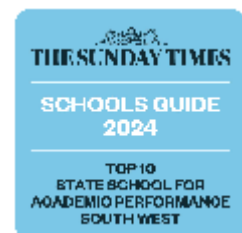
## We are 'Outstanding'

Students, staff and Trustees are celebrating after being graded as **OUTSTANDING** in the recent Ofsted Inspection which took place at the beginning of November, lasting two days. The news comes hard on the heels of the school being ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Devon and 6<sup>th</sup> in the Southwest by the Sunday Times Parent Power Schools Guide in 2023.

In 2022/2023, Ofsted undertook 3,720 graded inspections of state-funded schools and only 7% of these were judged to be Outstanding. This places Torquay Girls' Grammar School currently as the only secondary school to have an Outstanding judgement in the whole of Torbay, Teignbridge, South Hams, Plymouth, West Devon and beyond, up to Exeter.

The school achieved 'Outstanding' across the five main elements of the inspection:

- ✓ Quality of Education
- ✓ Behaviour and Attitudes
- ✓ Personal Development
- ✓ Leadership and Management
- ✓ Sixth Form provision.



## Medical Society (MedSoc)

MedSoc have been very active this past term, with 25 Year 13s applying for Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry and other healthcare courses. Those applicants have now all experienced a multi-mini-interview practice and one-to-one mock interviews.



Equipping students for a future in which they have the academic qualifications, character skills and high self-esteem to make decisions that lead to long, happy and content lives.

Most applicants have now been called to at least one interview and one of our vets is already holding two offers!



Meanwhile the new Year 12s rapidly formed a new MedSoc committee and have been very busy, Chaired by Frankie Opon with Salam Yonis Vice Chair, Mia Choules Vet Chair and Sumaya Salisbury Dental Chair. With meetings nearly every week, highlights have been a debate put on by the Year 13s on NHS strikes, parent Dr Richard Tomlinson speaking about his role as a paediatric consultant, Chloe Jarman from Torbay NHS on Physiotherapy, a Pharmacy workshop from Pathways and Torbay NHS featuring Georgia Sharpe a TGGs alumna, and parent Jim Carter speaking about his work as a Veterinary Ophthalmologist. The biggest audience was for a Vet talk organised by Poppy Bosanko, the outgoing Year 13 Vet Chair which attracted 50 people to hear about the issues involved in dairy farming from Patrick Cock. Encouraging new developments this term has been the formation of Young MedSoc for Year 10 and 11 students, and more collaboration with TBGS MedSoc, with students from TGGs attending a couple of talks there and vice versa.

### **Law Society**

It's been great to welcome LawSoc as a new Sixth Form society, founded and chaired by Eleanor Wang. They have met to discuss current cases and issues in law and had a great attendance at their first speaker meeting, when TGGs parent Tor Butler-Cole spoke to 25 students about "What's great about being a Barrister!" We also welcomed Rachel Hunter who will give a Q&A session on being a barrister and part-time judge. LawSoc are arranging other meetings and would welcome any parents with legal careers to get in touch with Mr Endersby.

We also hope to visit Exeter Courts in the spring.

### **Berlin 2023**

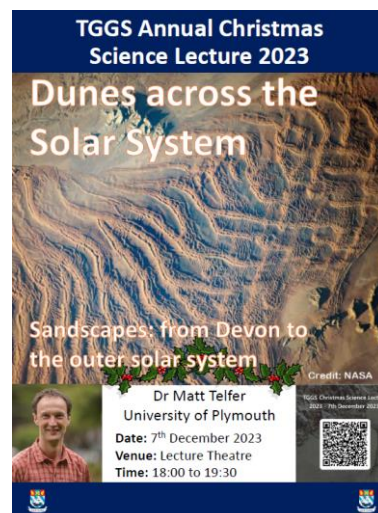
In October, some A level History and German students were lucky enough to go on a five-day trip to Berlin. The first day saw students going on a river cruise, followed by a visit to the Brandenburg gate, then to the site of Hitler's bunker. After that, they visited a Jewish memorial. The second day the group went to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, while this was a very emotional part of the trip, it was undoubtedly educational and a very important place to visit. This was followed by a visit to Wannsee Conference house and then onto the Stasi Museum. The day finished with a trip in the evening to the TV tower to watch the sunset.

The following day, they visited the Berlin wall, Topography of Terror, the Humbolt building for a rooftop view of the city, and then to the DDR museum. The day concluded by watching Barbie in German (or the new Agatha Christie film in English). The penultimate day students visited the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, then on a guided bunker tour. The interactive Spy Museum that afternoon was very fun, and after that they went to the Reichstag, followed by bowling. The last day saw a visit to the Nazi Resistance Museum and compared the Kaiser Wilhelm church with a newly built church. There was also an opportunity to do some shopping in central Berlin, before making their way back home. This was an amazing trip with an excellent balance of interesting history and lot of fun!

### **Christmas Science Lecture 2023**

The Geology Department welcomed Dr Matt Telfer to deliver the 2023 Christmas Science lecture. Dr Telfer is an Associate Professor in Physical Geography at the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (University of Plymouth), and delivered a talk that kept the audience

spellbound with his talk on "Sandscapes: from Devon to the outer solar system" where students and parents found out about how pioneering research by a Devonian explorer in the Sahara in the 1930s has led to the naming of dune-fields on Mars, what an unusual Australian dune-field can tell us about Saturn's moon Titan, and where we find dunes in some unexpected places at the outer reaches of the solar system!



### Careers Department News

Autumn term has been a busy time once more with our Year 10 and Year 12 students starting to look for their work experience placements. We also welcomed in South Devon College and local Employers to run a mock assessment day for Year 10 students, to help them prepare for the challenges that lay ahead. We have maintained our excellent speaker programme and most recently students had the opportunity to hear from Dr Justin Gaydon on the many different opportunities with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

### Charity week

We've enjoyed another hugely successful TGGs Charity Week this autumn term! As usual, each of our five Houses had one lunchtime to raise as much money as possible for their elected charity!

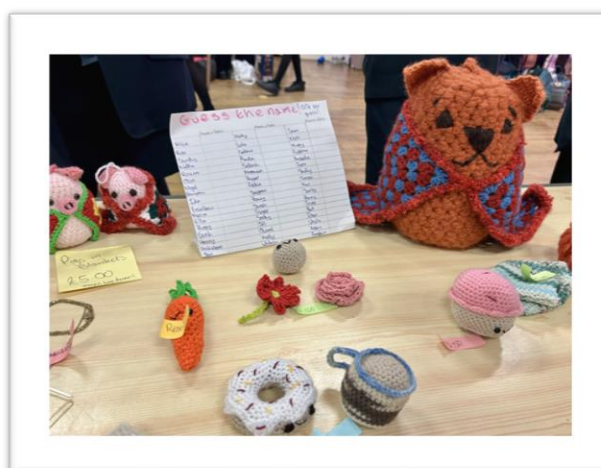
Each House impressed us with their energy, enthusiasm, creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaborative skills as they came together to sell cookies and cupcakes, handmade accessories, Christmas decorations, bookmarks, edible treats, and hand blended smoothies! They also enjoyed games such as 'sponge the teacher' and 'guess the name of the teddy'!



Here are the results of our fundraising:

- ✓ Beal raised £305.95 for Cancer Research.
- ✓ Cross raised £330.12 for War Child UK.
- ✓ Jackson raised £336.21 for Save the Children.
- ✓ Robertson raised £383.57 for British Red Cross.
- ✓ Wilkinson raised £341.92 for Mind.

That's a grand total of £1, 697.77 raised by our TGGs students, all through their own initiative and hard work, to be donated to their chosen charities! Well done everyone!



### **Talent Show**

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November we held a Talent Show. We had 27 entries from Years 7, 8, 9 and 11. There was an amazing variety of talents shared with singing, ballet dancing, tap dancing, puppetry, piano playing, singing with sign language, completing a rubbish cube in 4 minutes, gymnastics and arial hoop. Each student was allowed to invite 2 friends to watch the performance and it made for a very encouraging and supportive atmosphere.

The results are as follows:

- Winner of Year 11 – Lucy Gifford – playing piano and singing.
- Winner of Year 9 – Emily Lawton – dancing.
- Winner of Year 8 – Lilian Loveridge - tap dancing.
- Winner of Year 7 – Freya Jones and Elodie Rhodes – Singing, duet.

### **Physical Education**

We have had a successful term in the PE department with clubs running every lunchtime in netball, hockey, football, dance and gymnastics and fixtures every week. The U13 hockey team were 4<sup>th</sup> overall in Devon after playing some tough opposition and they were complimented by the organisers for their 'team spirit'. Our U16 hockey team played against 7 other schools and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in Devon after some great defensive play.

We competed against Exeter School in the annual swimming gala and won the majority of races. Yasmin Yellend broke their breaststroke record for U15 age group. The U13s beat Exeter girls, Exeter boy's and TBGS boys relay teams!

U13 football team have qualified for the Devon finals at Coach Road in March. Our U15s performed well in the national cup before exiting the tournament in the 4<sup>th</sup> round.

We have participated in the weekly netball Central Venue League this term for all year groups as well as a number of other matches. The teams have been very successful with the U19 team securing 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Devon National Schools Championships. They will now represent Devon at the Southwest Regional Round in February.

The team are a mixture of Year 11, 12 and 13 students:

- Izzy Baker (Captain)
- Evie Lewis
- Amber Dennison
- Claudia Lofthouse
- Zoe Attwood
- Molly Gibbs
- Evie Hesford Thomas
- Izzy Drewett

This term we held our first ever Sports / Physical Activity Awards Evening which was a huge success. Students from all year groups were rewarded for their commitment and / or achievement in all activities. The final award was for Outstanding Commitment and Achievement in a number of activities and was awarded to Isabel Baker who has represented the school in hockey, football, rounders, athletics, cross country and at a national standard in netball and swimming. Congratulations to Isabel.

### **Morwellham Quay**

On the first challenge day this academic year (2023-2024), the Year 8's enjoyed a fun filled trip to Morwellham Quay. This trip was organised by Miss Medhurst and the History department and allowed Year 8's to learn about life in Victorian England. The trip included many fun and exciting activities - including dressing up, going on the mine train and walking around the village, which contained perfect replicas of the houses that people used to live in. One of everyone's favourite activities was a Victorian style lesson and we are so glad we I don't live back then!



All in all, it was an exceptionally interesting trip, and everyone learned a lot. Most importantly though the trip was brilliant fun and many core memories were made. Everyone is now excited to learn more about the Victorian times and are looking forward to more amazing trips in the future!

### **Carol Service**

Students have been working hard rehearsing for the annual Carol Service which took place on Tuesday 12th December. Well done to everyone involved - it was a fantastically festive evening!

We welcomed students from Curledge Street Academy to preview some of our Carol Service choir pieces and to participate in a singing workshop with our Year 7 Choir, led by Mattie Thomas and Amabelle Krok Alabado in Year 12 and they were amazing!

### **Music Performances**

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the TGGs Reeds Ensemble took part in 'Waiting in wonder' at The Avenue Church in Newton Abbot.

The group performed brilliantly, with Crystal Prince-Every in Year 10 deserving a special mention leading the performance with a solo verse of Gabriel's Message played from the gallery.

### **Festival Success**

City of Plymouth Music festival - Year 7 success!

Florence Hunter - 2 x bronze and 1 trophy + gold for three piano solo performances.

Freya Beard - gold + trophy for piano duet and silver medal for piano solo.

Robyn Davies (R) - silver medal for violin solo.

Sophia Shetliffe played in 5 categories and got 2 first places for piano duets and 2 first places for piano Jazz and Baroque. Sophia is preparing for Practical Musicianship grade 5 exams she is due to take in December.



### **Quantum Theatre**

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, students in Years 10 and 11 were treated to a performance of A Christmas Carol, by Quantum Theatre. This was incredibly beneficial to the study of the original text for English Literature GCSE, as well as providing some relief from mock exams for Year 11.

A Christmas Carol is set in Victorian London, and describes the moral journey of Ebenezer Scrooge, a “clutching, covetous old sinner,” who initially has little regard for the lives of others, least of all those who persist in making him feel welcome. One such character is his nephew, Fred, who is later revealed to feel sorry for his uncle, in all his cold and bitter ways. During the evening of Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his old business partner, Jacob Marley, who is still paying the price of his own misgivings from beyond the grave. Marley warns of the visitations of three other spirits, the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and yet to come. Throughout the story, Scrooge gains an insight into the lives of others, and eventually realises the error of his ways, resolving to be only kind and generous in the future.

The play was a resounding success, clearly communicating the themes of charity, remorse, and social responsibility originally raised by Dickens. The director also sprinkled in humorous and witty lines, which uplifted the audience from the beginning. Although the cast was only three actors strong, swift costume changes and outstanding characterisation made it seem as if they had an army. The leading actor’s interpretation of Scrooge brilliantly portrayed the character’s emotional turbulence and provided the watching Key Stage 4 with a solid understanding of the ideas created in the original novella. Meanwhile, the supporting actors were not only quick in their role transformation, but also creative in their stage illusions – for example, as the first of the three spirits, an actor made an effective exit through the backdrop itself, intriguing the audience. A special mention goes out to the exceptional portrayal of Fezziwig, who adapted to the atmosphere of the room effortlessly, as well as inciting laughter on multiple occasions. The audience warmed to the dancing scene and mirrored the actors’ excitement immediately.

Overall, the performance was thoroughly enjoyed by staff and students alike. As an audience, we were taken on an eye-opening journey with Scrooge himself, and collectively, we look forward to the next opportunity to view such a fantastic show.

### **Ten Tors training**

The first Ten Tors training walk took place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November. After a frosty start, all five groups walked 12-mile circular routes around Fernworthy Forest and welcomed the beautifully clear, sunny conditions. The focus of the walk was to recognise key features and checkpoints in the area, such as Kes, Watern and Sittaford Tors, as well as giving first time Ten Tors participants their first taste of navigating the moors.

One of the highlights was crossing Manga Rails, which proved to be a difficult and deep river crossing following the copious rain we have had recently. As well as working on pinpointing their exact location, everyone had the opportunity to further develop their navigation skills using techniques such as back bearings, aiming off and handrailing.



The second walk, and last walk of the term, was on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December, and the aim was for groups to continue to work on their navigation skills alongside becoming familiar with the routes into and out of Postbridge. The weather was slightly more unpleasant this time as it rained frequently causing many bogs to be extra boggy en route. However, even though everyone experienced the downside of weather on Dartmoor, they were extremely motivated, and slightly competitive, to finish their walk earlier than the other teams!

A reminder that when we return in January 2024, we return on a Week A (to continue our Monday 18<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December which were also Week A).

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 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

Yours faithfully

**Ms Sarah Forster BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH**

Headteacher and Accounting Officer

Torquay Girls' Grammar School

Dates for next term

- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 – First day of Spring Term.
- Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Year 11 –Parents' Evening.
- Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Year 13 Mocks start.
- Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Year 11 Be a 6<sup>th</sup> Former for the day.
- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 – Year 9 Parents' Evening.
- Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Challenge Day 2
- Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Year 9 Options Evening.
- Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 – Year 8 exams begin.
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Mufti Day 3
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Non-Pupil Day
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Half Term.

Academic year 2024-2025 term dates can be found [here](#).