

Gravesend Grammar School for Girls

Newsletter Number 4

April 2004

Dear Parents

Easter is looming and I am pleased to report back on another very successful half term.

Extra-Curricular Activities

This half term has been once again busy with several additional activities organised by the staff. I am sure you will want me to thank those teachers who continue to take on such responsibilities, often in their own time to ensure your daughters have opportunities to broaden their experiences.

French Exchange

Just before half-term a group of 23 girls and 7 boys from Gravesend Grammar School went on an exchange visit to Gray in Eastern France. After a day at the French school, a visit to Dijon the students spent the weekend with their host families enjoying the French lifestyle and practising their French!

The experience was enjoyed by all who took part and considerably improved their spoken French. The French students returned to England just after half term and also had an excellent time sampling the delights of Gravesend!

The staff wish to congratulate the girls for their excellent behaviour on trips as well as with their French host families. Well done!



German Work Experience

During the February half term holidays the following Lower Sixth German students spent a week in Neumunster, Gravesham's twin town: Lynne Cherriman, Flora Death, Petrina Fitzgerald, Paula Nice and Francesca Siddle.

They worked in different educational establishments such as the Music School, Kindergarten and Primary Schools.

Claire Gammon and Katherine Spinks went to Austria for their work experience and found placements in the Hotel Hochfilzer, where they worked at the reception and dealt with administrative tasks.

Everyone agreed that the work experience was an ideal opportunity to increase their language skills and gain further background knowledge, which will help them with their A Level studies.



Spanish Exchange

For the first time in many years, GGSG took part in a Spanish Exchange with the 'Maria Virgen' school in Madrid. 15 Spanish sixth formers and two members of staff came to stay with some of our own sixth form and Year 11's and the experience for all this has been very positive. The Spanish students really enjoyed their stay here and have returned home having seen London, Rochester, Canterbury and most important of all, our local treasure, Bluewater!

Unfortunately the events in Madrid were always present in their minds, although fortunately, none of them had family members hurt in the bombings.

This Easter we are going to visit Madrid ourselves and further our links with these students and get to know their school, as they say it is very different to ours.

I would like to thank those parents who received the Spanish visitors for helping them through a difficult week emotionally whilst at the same time ensuring their stay here was positive.

European Theatre Company

On 18th February, the French Department was delighted to welcome the European Theatre Company in school. All the students in KS3 were able to watch and interact with the actors during their performance of "Le Comte de Monte-Cristo" by Alexander Dumas and all took part in the singing of the famous song "Alouette, gentille alouette".

Thank you to Mrs Heywood for organising such an enjoyable cultural and linguistic event.

Ski Trip

Our students enjoyed once again a very successful ski trip. This year they went to Zillertal, Austria where they spent on average four hours a day skiing and the rest of the time enjoying a variety of activities.

Thank you to Mr McQueen for organising the trip which has become a regular feature of our school calendar.

AS Physicists visit Greenwich

On 4th February, 24 AS Physics students visited the Royal Observatory, Greenwich for an Astrophysics Study Day.

The morning was spent exploring the museum, attending a very entertaining planetarium show and observing the sun through a coronagraph. In the afternoon, Robert Massey gave a lecture on the 'Evolution of Stars' and included some impressive images and computer simulations. This was an excellent reinforcement to the students' optional AS topic and the day was enjoyed by all.



AS Physics students meet Blue Peter astronomer Anton Vamplew at Greenwich. Thank you to Ms Holton for arranging the visit.

Year 7 Astrodome

On Thursday 19th February, the Astrodome visited GGSG. Year 7 students who were studying Space Science enjoyed the hour-long show.

Year 9 Quirks in the Works

On Friday 13th February, Year 9 students enjoyed a performance on Magnetism and Electricity. Actors from the Quantum Theatre performed the cabaret style event.

EPSRC Science Race

Students from Years 7, 8 and 11 took part in this year's EPSRC Science Race. The online race was challenging but very enjoyable, and was organised by the Science officials, Victoria Hoptroff and Samantha Thurman. We were competing with many other schools across the country and hope to find out the results shortly. We hope to beat our score from last year as many more students took part. Thank you to Miss Sivaji for arranging these events

ESU Debate

The second round of this national competition took place in late January at the Judd School. The other teams to progress to this stage were King's School Canterbury, The Judd, and St Bede's School. The GGSG team of Toni Atkinson and Becky Drewry were drawn against Judd and were to propose the motion that "This house would lower the voting age to 16". Both speakers excelled in their delivery and style and were clearly the winners of their debate in both argument and points awarded. The other debate was won by the King's School, who were dominated by a very confident speaker. It was left for the judges to decide which of the two winning teams made it through to the Southern Final and in the end they, somewhat surprisingly, found in favour of King's. The GGSG team has performed admirably this season and should be delighted with the results they have achieved. There will be a final inter-school debate on Monday 5th April, against our friendly rivals, Dartford Girls Grammar School.

Rotary Youth Speaks Competition

The School's representative at the annual Youth Speaks Competition was Jodie Mosaid. She had been asked to prepare a seven-minute speech on the "Does job satisfaction require a degree?" Jodie worked hard at this task over the preparatory weeks and produced a perceptive and entertaining speech.

On the night of the competition Jodie performed well, her pace and diction were excellent and her delivery was very confident. The standard of competition was high and although Jodie was not placed in the top three, she was awarded a prize and a copy of the Collins' Concise English Dictionary. Such competitions are excellent in nurturing communication skills and the night was a thoroughly enjoyable affair. Our thanks go to the Northfleet and Gravesend Rotary Club for their generous support of this event.

Proshare Competition

Out of the 300 schools which took part in this Amandeep Jaspal, Kim Saunders, Rebecca Simpson and Cathy Li have done particularly well to have reached the National Semi-Final/London Regional Final. This event took place in London on 26th March.

- In round one they had to research and invest £100,000 in a spread of shares. They purchased and traded online.

- For the Quarter-Finals they had to submit a Report on the rationale behind their purchase and trading of shares.
- In the London Regional Finals/National Semi-Final the group delivered a PowerPoint presentation and were given a "challenge" to prepare. Our students were one of the only two girls' teams! Thank you to Mrs McNulty.

Music



Several girls recently took part in the Gravesham Festival of Music with a good deal of success. Anne-Marie Rossiter (Year 7), participated in the Solo Vocal class in which she gained 2nd place with *All My Trials* and gained 1st place in the Songs from Shows class, winning the Simmons Cup with her performance of *Castle on a Cloud* from Les Miserables.

Sophie Matthews (Year 7) was awarded 1st place in her Solo Woodwind class with her performance of Elegy on the oboe and also gained 1st place performing two pieces in a piano class.

Alicia Cole (Year 7) performed in a recorder ensemble and the group were awarded a cup. She was also the youngest player in the Under 14's Recorder Duets class in which her performance was commended.

Flora Death (Lower 6th) gained 1st place for her performance of *Sammartini's Allegro* from Concerto in F Major in the Solo Recorder class and was nominated for the Crook Award for the most promising performer under 18 years old.

Flora and Kirsten King (Lower 6th) gained 1st place in the Recorder Duet class and together with Emily Death (Year 11) took part in the Ensemble class with their Woodwind Trio. Emily also gained 1st place performing a flute piece in the Solo Woodwind class. Well done to each of you!

We have three students to congratulate on their recent examination successes:

Elizabeth Connor Year 8 Piano Grade 3
 Sally Brading Year 10 Piano Grade 4 with merit
 Sarah Gamble Year 10 Piano Grade 3 with merit

At the time of writing most of our ABRSM candidates are awaiting their exams and the results will be published in the next newsletter.

The Spring Concert was a huge success. A very high standard was achieved by all who took part and they deserve to be congratulated.

Sport

Hockey



The U15 team reached the U16 final of the North West Kent Knockout Cup on Tuesday 23rd March. They beat Dartford Technology College 1-0 to become district champions.



Netball

The U13 and U14 teams played in the North West Kent District Tournaments on Saturday 13th March. The U13 team won three games and lost two and came third. The

U14 team won one and lost two and came third. The U12 team played in the Kent Schools Tournament on Wednesday 17th March. They drew two games and lost twice in their section. The U13 team played in the Kent Schools Tournament on Thursday 25th March. They played five matches and were placed 4th in their section. Year 8 won the District League Tournament on 30th March and are the new District Champions after winning both the Semi-Final and the Final. Well done!

Cross Country



Hayley Hickmott represented Kent in the English Schools Championships on Saturday 13th March and was placed in the top half of a large field of over 300 runners.

Emily Mason 8AW and her pony Chester, won two show jumping prizes on Sunday 14th March at the Eaglesfield Equestrian Centre. She won the points league for the winter series and on the Championship Day won both the 2'3" Midi Jumping and the 2'3" - 2'6" Jumping. Well done!

Teacher Achievement



Mr Kimber who teaches Business Studies continues to put us all to shame by his sporting achievements in his advancing years. He recently competed in the World Masters Indoor Championships in Sindelfingen, Stuttgart, Germany and won a silver medal as part of the 4 x 200m relay team, while setting a new club record of 2:33.87 for fifth place in the 800m final. He also timed 69:88 in the heats of the 400m. Congratulations!

School Officials 2004 - 05

I am pleased to announce that Sharonjit Ahluwalia has been elected Head Girl. During her year of office she will be supported by Oneet Sandher and Stephanie Forbes who have been elected Deputy Head Girls. Congratulations.

A number of other officials will also serve the school in their roles with: the School Council, Charities, Publicity, Green Issues, Student Support, KS3 & 4 Co-ordinators, Cultural Issues, Sixth Form Liaison. Their names and photos will soon be displayed in school.

The involvement of senior students in the life of the school is a very important and valuable aspect of our school, which Ofsted praised highly. I thank all the students who have come forward to take on such roles, which I know they will enjoy.

Safety on the Internet

Are you concerned about what your daughter is doing on the Internet? Do you want to know more about how to keep her safe while she is surfing the net?

The Home Office has published a booklet "KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE ON THE INTERNET" which provides guidance to parents about what to use the Internet for and how to protect children from predatory individuals and unsuitable material. It is written in laymen's terms and provides a range of additional website addresses for help and advice. The booklet can be viewed as a pdf file on www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.htm

Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

We are now required to have such a policy. It is available to any parent who requests it. Please contact Mrs Hooper, Main School Office if you require a copy.

Attendance

Some of you will now be aware that we have appointed Mrs Theobald as Attendance Officer. Her role is to ensure the school keeps accurate records of student attendance. She is issuing requests for absence notes and makes telephone contact with parents as required. Whilst she has settled quickly into her new role, there may have been 'teething problems' such as requests for information already received. I apologise for this and ask you to bear with us until the new system is fully established.

Reception

Those of you who have visited the school recently will have met our new receptionist Mrs Brogan, who job shares with Mrs Campbell. We welcome her into the school and wish her a happy time with us.

Summer Uniform

Please be reminded that no trousers should be worn after the Easter break. KS3 students are allowed to wear short socks and KS4 can wear skin coloured tights. I would also ask you to check whether your daughter has outgrown her kilt. Some are looking short and yet the girls have not rolled them up. We hope to build up a stock of second-hand kilts so please pass them on to the P.A. via the School Office. Thank you.

May I ask you to remind your daughters who are in the Sixth Form that the Dress Code must be followed. That includes: no trainers or jeans, no crop tops and no stiletto heels. Thank you.

Governor Elections

Later this term the School will be holding elections for Parent Governors. Details of these were handed out on Friday to all students. There will be two vacancies and I hope you will consider standing. It is very interesting working 'behind the scenes'. There will be a committee meeting each half term. Meetings are held in the School usually at 5.15 pm. If you would like more information please contact Mrs Pam Bates, Clerk to the Governors, at the School. The closing date for nominations is 28th April 2004.

Changes to Nu Venture buses

Please note that there will be changes to school buses **305 and 20** from **MONDAY 5 APRIL**. Students travelling on these routes should have been given a leaflet with details of these changes. If they have not, please contact Nu Venture on 01622 882288.

Students travelling on the 305 route need to give back their old bus passes and collect replacements from the School Office.

Memories from a student who joined our school in 1939

I started at the Old County School in September 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War, having "passed the scholarship" from Whitehill School the previous Spring. In fact I had no lessons until late October that year when, with the 2nd evacuation party from the school, I was sent to Sudbury in Suffolk. Nothing much happened during the phoney war and I returned to Gravesend along with most of the other evacuees before Christmas.

A few classes started in the New Year and with more and more staff and pupils returning, school was nearly back to normal by the Summer of 1940 and the Battle of Britain. Jane White, the august Headmistress, retired that year and was replaced by Miss C A Richards.

A few surface air raid shelters were built, diminishing the number of tennis courts. These were only sufficient for the juniors who were allowed to take 'non-rations', boiled sweets in Oxo tins, to the shelters during the frequent air raids. Gradually normal school life resumed although we girls of the 1940's missed out on school sports days, speech days and similar events. Existence was enlivened by the arrival of small boys, shepherded by Miss Dawson, from the boys' school, when a corner of their building was destroyed by bombs. They took up residence in the Annexe.

Despite daylight raids we were allowed theatre trips to London and I can remember John Gielgud, Lawrence Olivier and others in "Oedipus" and "The Critic" at the New Theatre. Greek literature was introduced by the Rev. David Christie-Murray to the Lower Sixth. He was a gorgeous creature, with dark curling hair (alas married) and caused many a heart to stir amongst both staff and girls. Yes, indeed, wartime had its compensation!

With the coming of peace in 1945, the sports trophies were dug up from the playing fields along with the phosphorous and other dangerous chemicals which had been buried at the outset of war. Protective netting was ripped from the school windows and gradually we settled down to the years of Sir Stafford Cripps and austerity Britain.

PAT RUDLING.

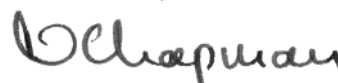
Arrangements for the last day of term

The last day of term is Thursday 8th April. Girls will be able to leave school at 12.45 after registration. However the Nu Venture bus company cannot provide an earlier coach and so if you are unable to make other arrangements for your daughter's transport home she may stay in school.

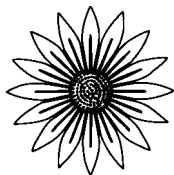
Should you wish your daughter to remain in school until 3.40 on that day, please inform her Head of Year so that we can make provision for her.

The new term starts on Monday 26th April for staff but **TUESDAY 27TH APRIL** for students. May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a happy Easter.

Yours sincerely



Mrs N Chapman
Headteacher



Gravesend Grammar School for Girls

Please return to your daughter's form tutor by Tuesday 27th April.

I acknowledge receipt of the following:

The Newsletter, Issue 4
Governor Election Information Sheet

Daughter's name _____

Form _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

