

## Dear Parent/Guardian

Sadly, early next term we have to say goodbye to Mrs Collie who has worked in our Administrative Support Team since 2017, providing excellent support to parents (including prospective parents) and staff. We are most grateful to her for all her efforts and enthusiasm, and wish her well for the future. I should like to say a huge thank you to all those parents who returned the Kirkland Rowell questionnaire by the deadline last Tuesday. They have now been sent off, along with questionnaires completed by almost all pupils and many staff; we will share with you the findings and follow up actions, once these are returned to us next term. We are most grateful to you for your help in improving the school.

## Parking and Dropping off Pupils – Mrs Wybar

We have recently again received complaints from local residents about inconsiderate parking and parents dropping off pupils, especially in the Culverden Avenue/ Whitefield Road/ Beltring Road area. They describe cars mounting the pavement or pulling over erratically causing danger to pedestrians, as well as people just stopping at a junction to allow pupils out of the vehicle, thus creating a traffic jam.

Please may I particularly ask parents not to drop off or pick up on Culverden Avenue. As you are aware, this has been a problem for some time now, and yesterday afternoon there were eight cars waiting there, all with engines running. It is a very narrow, congested road, and there is significant building work taking place in Culverden Avenue, which makes matters even more difficult for the residents. **Please avoid this road.** May I finally ask parents not to drive cars down Southfield Road to drop off or collect from school. Please do not park in the turning area by the flats outside school as this causes congestion and could be dangerous for our pupils. The roads surrounding the school are a residential area with large numbers of schoolchildren on foot. If it is necessary to give your child a lift, please could she be dropped off further from the school, in order to avoid this congestion and ensure everyone's safety. Thank you.

## Teacher Training Opportunities at TWGGGS - Miss Smith

We have some exciting vacancies for trainee teachers for the 2019-20 academic year. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who has been considering training or re-training as a teacher and would like to do so in a supportive and high achieving academic environment. We have been using Kent and Medway training for the last 3 years to train teachers through the School Direct programme and there are bursaries available for a number of subjects to support you financially whilst you train. TWGGGS has training vacancies in English, Biology, Chemistry, Economics and Maths available for the coming year to anyone who has a relevant degree at 2:2 level or higher. The application process for School Direct is through UCAS and more information about eligibility, bursaries to train and applications can be obtained from Miss Smith by emailing [itt@twggs.kent.sch.uk](mailto:itt@twggs.kent.sch.uk) or by visiting <http://www.kaizentsa.org/221/initial-teacher-training>. Please feel free to pass this information on to any friends or family who you also think may be interested in our training vacancies.

## Year 8 Ski Trip 2019 – Orla Leech 8G

I went on the 2019 ski trip to Kitzbühel, Austria, having never skied on snow before. It changed my life. The whole experience was amazing, and I would do it again in a heartbeat; I was sad to come home (sorry Mum!). Even the coach drive, which was expected to be horrific, turned out to be a great bonding experience, despite most of us getting little to no sleep. The moment we got there, everyone was too excited to rest. We had a whole week of skiing ahead of us with no worry of parents!

The conditions on the mountains were clear and perfect every day. The only downfall with the weather was that for some of us, it was TOO warm. Every day we bonded over a bowlful of chips on the slopes, basking in the sunshine. By the end of the holiday, most of us were a little sick of chips, but not me! After skiing each day, we all took part in some fun activities, one of which included three Austrian people aggressively taking off their hats and slamming benches down on the floor. We all took part in this weird and wonderful tradition. Since being back, I have not really missed the teachers thumping on our door in the morning, and the soup in the evening, most of which was delicious apart from one, not saying which... (EGG SOUP!) But I will never forget flying down those slopes with my friends; it was one of the best experiences of my life!

## Sixth Form trip to Russia, February 2019 - Miss Sowerby

On a cold morning in February, 44 sixth formers and 4 staff met at 4.30 am: destination Russia. The first 2 days of the trip were spent exploring Moscow, where highlights included Red Square, the Kremlin and St Basil's Cathedral which looks like something from a fairy tale. Russia's capital still has many buildings and monuments from the communist era and the girls were able to further their knowledge of how Stalin tried to instil socialism into the people through constructions such as the Moscow metro with its unique and palatial stations. We were also able to view the city by night, an experience made even more special by the fact that the Muscovites appeared still to be celebrating Christmas! Red Square looked very beautiful bedecked with Christmas trees and coloured lights, and the pupils were eager consumers of the entertainments offered by the Square's fun fair, including toffee apples and the children's merry-go-round.

After an exciting overnight rail journey, we arrived at our second destination: St Petersburg. Most of the girls seemed to prefer Russia's beautiful second city to Moscow, perhaps due to its more European appearance, its attractive 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of which are painted in different colours such as blue and yellow, and its stunning location on the Gulf of Finland. St Petersburg is known for its opulent palaces and we were privileged to visit 3 of these: the Winter Palace, winter-time residence of the Tsars and home of the world famous Hermitage Art Gallery and Museum; the stunning Catherine Palace with its gold-encrusted rooms, and the Yusupov Palace, scene of the infamous murder of Rasputin in 1916. Unfortunately, the latest attempt to storm the Winter Palace was not a success. Although Miss Sowerby and Mr Walker did their best to instil some revolutionary spirit into the TWGGS Red Guard, their efforts were rendered ineffective by the defectors who had gone to watch the ballet instead! One comrade also pointed out that, next time, it might be more effective to use the side entrance.

Many thanks to all who participated for making this visit so successful and enjoyable. We hope that the girls appreciated seeing the places we refer to so often in lessons in the flesh and that, as a result, they have extended and enriched their understanding of Russian history and culture, to the benefit of their A Level studies.

### **ESU (English Speaking Union) Public Speaking Competition - Mrs Johnstone**

TWGGS debaters have once again excelled at the prestigious English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition. Two teams went to Lingfield College in February for a hotly-contested local round, facing eleven other teams all wanting to win through to the regional round. The Y10 team of Anna Bowring 10W, Millie Hammond 10T and Lucy Mercer 10T performed extremely well, with Lucy presenting a really interesting talk on the power of words, and the ways in which some words have changed over time. However, it was the Y9 team, the youngest at the competition, with Amelia Aves 9I, as chairperson, Rosie Henning Brodersen, 9I as questioner, and Mia Thomas Giles, 9W as speaker, who were judged to have won their room, and went through to the first round final against an older team from Bennett Memorial. Mia's speech was about whether aid or trade was the best way to support developing countries, and she also faced fierce questioning from the Bennett questioner and audience members. Impressively, she had only taken on the role the day before the competition, due to a team mate's unavailability. Rosie showed great ability to think on her feet, coming up with some searching questions for her opponent's speech on education in developing countries; and Amelia showed real poise and calm, managing the discussion and summing up the event fluently and with some humour. As she said, the competition showed that young people can be much better at listening properly to each other than some of our politicians today!

In March, the Y9 team attended the regional round, in the very splendid surroundings of the ESU headquarters in Mayfair, competing against five other local round winners. Once again, they were the youngest team present, and although they did not win overall, acquitted themselves extremely well. When the results were announced, we were thrilled that once again, Mia had been adjudged best speaker for her well-structured and well-researched speech on how schools can support pupils with mental health problems, and for her confident and detailed responses to questions.

### **Exercise Siberian Tiger Cub – Crowborough Training Camp – Cadet Harriet Cruse 9W**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March, over a hundred cadets from the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) went on our first (of many) CCF camps. I was very nervous as I didn't know what to expect, but at the same time I was also intrigued to find out what the weekend ahead of me was all about. Prior to the weekend I had attended all the training on Mondays after school. We had covered some of the basics, and I was keen to build on this training, especially the weapon training, which I particularly enjoy. On arrival at Crowborough Training Camp, we were assigned into our respective sections; shortly after this, we were shown to our accommodation (billet). Whilst unpacking, LCpl Rachel McGee 11W asked three of us to come and assist her in completing her assessed drill test. I was not confident at my ability to perform foot drill to the correct standard, having only had a few lessons, but fortunately Maj Reynolds wasn't assessing me; she was assessing LCpl McGee's instructions to us as a squad, which she passed with flying colours.

Throughout the weekend we had several rifle lessons, using the L98A2 Cadet GP Rifle. I enjoyed these very much, and it was good to learn a new skill (I had previously done some target shooting with different rifles). During these lessons we learnt the basics of the rifle, including how to 'strip and assemble', safety precautions, stoppages that can occur when firing, and how to ensure the rifle is working correctly. All of this was in preparation for the Weapon Handling Test being held on the following morning (which I passed first time, to my relief). We had a lesson on building bashas (sleeping shelters), which was very useful as we are sleeping under them on our DofE expedition in June. We were taught how to pack a rucksack correctly, some basic First Aid, including fractures, dislocations, sprains and strains, burns and how to place a casualty in the recovery position, the treatment of shock and hypothermia. The weekend was a great success, and I enjoyed it more than I had anticipated. The food wasn't as bad as rumoured, the beds weren't as lumpy as advertised, the training wasn't too arduous, and the early starts you got used to. The company was great, and I had fun, I'm very much looking forward to all the camps and various events in the coming months.

### **Exercise Sharpe's Attack – LCpl Emily Blackwell 11W**

TWGGS CCF spent a weekend in March in the Brecon Beacons to undergo extensive field craft training and exercises alongside Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, who excel in those areas. The sections were a mix of cadets from both schools and excellent integration between the two. The weekend consisted of casualty evacuations, platoon attacks, the setting up and occupation of harbour areas, woodblock clearances and, as a highlight for many, FIBUA (fighting in built up areas) where we

were lucky enough to have access to a training village to carry out a dawn attack. The exercise 'Sharp's Attack' was undoubtedly both mentally and physically challenging but overall exceedingly rewarding with most, if not all, returning on Sunday with a feeling of accomplishment. It also displayed the leadership skills of all the respective ICs and 2ICs within both the sections and the platoons throughout the weekend, showing quick thinking in the field and the planning and organisation to get us through the exercise.

### **SE Brigade Military Skills Competition Part 1 – RSM Amira Carew U6T**

I was part of the TWGGS CCF Team 1 for the Brigade Military Skills Competition held in Folkestone on 22- 23 March. The team comprised of SSM Elena Trebino U6G, Sgt Tabby Gardiner L6G, Sgt Tabby Preston L6I, Sgt Martha Rigby L6W, Cpl Rachel McGee 11W, Cpl Tamara King 11W, Cadet Freya Ridge 10T and me (RSM Carew). The TWGGS team 1 had a great weekend where we knew everyone would be gunning for us as we have won this competition for the past couple of years. The element of surprise was gone. We began our competition with a leaderless command task. One of our members, Cdt. Ridge, brilliantly showcased the trust we have as a team, by balancing on a plank several metres above the ground only held steady by Sgt. Gardiner, Cpl. McGee and myself. I was amazed at her courage and steadiness. Our shooting was fairly ordinary as we are not a school that gets a lot of practice. Most other schools have armories and shoot regularly; we only do this a couple of times per year. The obstacle course went well as there were points given for how precisely and safely we crossed each obstacle – that was great fun. The section attack was straightforward and we did really well on the first aid stand. Our navigation was adequate but our range cards need to improve. Our best stand was the patrol lane where much of our hard work and rehearsals came into play because the confidence, competence and communication we showed allowed us to complete the task to a standard above anyone else. From the aggression needed in fire and movement to the delicacy of shooting, TWGGS demonstrated the full spectrum of military skills. Every member had a great weekend; we impressed, learnt and behaved in all ways as a real example of what a CCF can be, yet we still have much more to give..... we have unfinished business - Look out Cambrian!

### **SE Brigade Military Skills Competition Part 2 – Cpl Anna Smith 11S**

Last weekend we went on the Military Skills competition in Folkestone, having only been told that we were going to attend the competition two days prior to the event! It was a great training experience and so much fun to take part in: I am glad we took on this challenge. We began on the TIBUA stand (Training in Built Up Areas), despite this not being scored; we had practised the skills needed at school and we raided three buildings, using blank rounds, to retrieve a casualty in the third house. We also completed an obstacle course, took part in section attacks, live fired on the range and also improved our skills on the DCCT range (a giant computer game where you fire at a screen - a bit like a movie). We also practised first aid in scenarios and did a couple of observation exercises. Our team was made up of Cadet Lei Matibag 10S, Cadet Amalie Abdali 10T, Cadet Kate De Putter 10G, Cadet Jessica Yuen 10T, Lance Corporal Lauren Grant 11T, Lance Corporal Naomi Rigby 11G, Lance Corporal Emily Naismith 11T and Corporal Anna Smith 11S, and we worked hard as a team to make it to all the stands on time and complete them to the best of our ability. My favourite stand was the Fire Team Fire and Movement in which we were placed 2nd overall. We fired blank rounds and smoke grenades were thrown in behind us; we were training in a wooded area that provided great cover but was also an obstacle in itself to move across. The achievement on this stand showed that our practice beforehand had paid off; we were prepared to take on the challenge. Overall, this competition was a really exciting training experience and something that we can all learn from; we were pleased to be placed 8th overall!

### **Hockey – Miss Parkinson**

Thank you to all pupils who have represented hockey teams over the last two terms, and for those who took part in the annual Beth Freeman mixed years hockey event.

Congratulations go to the following players who have been very successful in hockey this season gaining selection at county, regional and national level: Harriet George 7I Kent U12; Maddie Kilgariff 8W and Isabella James 8S - Kent development squad U13; Isabel Giles 9G, Annabella Curcher 9S and Harriet Sacker 9S - Kent development squad U14; Tilly Strand-Ford 9T - Caterham performance centre, selection for U14 Regional squad; Anneliese Harris 11S - Kent U16 squad and Lauryn Thomas L6I who has been selected to attend a national programme run by England hockey as Lauryn is deemed to have the potential to progress to a level of elite performance. Well done to all.

### **Careers Department – Mrs Vallely**

It has been a busy term for the Careers department: Mrs Bridget Elinson, Independent Careers Advisor, has been coming into school every Tuesday, continuing with the one to one careers interviews with Year 11 pupils, and with some sixth formers. Any pupil who would like to see Mrs Elinson, or to have a chat with me, is very welcome to drop in and/or make an appointment at any time. Mrs Elinson has also continued with the Y7 PSHE sessions introducing the pupils to the skills and aptitudes required in almost all areas of working life, and Y8 PSHE sessions using material from the Barclays Lifeskills website, which encourages the pupils to understand more about themselves through self-development exercises, and teaches them where to look for useful information, and start to think about planning their future. The Y9 PSHE sessions have also continued, introducing the software, FastTomato, which is an excellent resource for researching careers.

The L6 PSHE lessons have included a very enjoyable presentation from William Worthington, from Gapforce, a gap year and travel company based in Wimbledon; a very informative session from Mrs Freeman about plagiarism and how to avoid it; a thought-provoking talk from John Levy, from the Friends of Israel Education Foundation, about the situation in the Middle East; a heart-warming presentation from Brian Fox, from the Anthony Nolan Trust, entitled The Hero Project, about how we can all be lifesavers by donating blood and bone marrow; in addition, the pupils were given a chance to have a short one to one chat with their tutors to catch up with progress and ask any questions. The U6 PSHE sessions have included an excellent talk on the Israel/Palestine conflict from Dr Brian Beeley, a retired Senior Lecturer at the Open University, with a very interesting and varied career behind him; an online session run by Mrs Field about Radicalisation; and two speakers from Citizen's Advice ran their very informative presentation about employment rights & tenancy advice. In addition, all U6th pupils have had a valuable one to one chat with Mrs Field, Head of Sixth Form, to find out how they are faring, and to give any advice and guidance as required.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Brimsted back to school to provide interview practice to any pupils applying to study medicine or to Oxbridge, or both! Pupils find it very helpful indeed to practise, and to receive feedback, and sometimes have further practice, before undergoing the real thing. Pupils have also had the chance to attend an Oxbridge Information Evening at Sevenoaks School; the Oxford and Cambridge Student Conference in Epsom; and an event organized at Tunbridge Wells Hospital entitled A Career in Medicine.

We were pleased to provide some extra events to mark National Careers Week (NCW) March 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2019: the lunchtime talk on the Monday entitled 'Women in Engineering' was given by Emily Short and Wendy Gillies who work for BAM Nuttall. Based in Edenbridge, they were able to tell us about a number of projects in the local area, notably the work on the 150-year-old Sevenoaks railway tunnel which has stopped water flooding the tracks below and causing delays. Two pupils have fed back to me that they are now seriously considering becoming engineers themselves because of their encounters with these employers! On the Tuesday we welcomed Ms Deborah Hargreaves, mother of former TWGGS' pupils, who led an excellent Sixth Form assembly to celebrate International Women's Day on Friday, giving us very good insights into the working world, and women's place within it. The lunchtime talk on the Tuesday was on Marketing and PR, with two speakers from locally based GingerMay who gave an honest and appealing picture of what it is like to work in that field. They are happy to offer work experience, and left their contact details with quite a number of interested pupils. On the Wednesday, we welcomed Dr Garth Jones, Lecturer in Physical & Theoretical Chemistry at the University of East Anglia, to give a guest lecture on careers using chemistry. He gave good insights into what studying chemistry can offer, and a taster of what a university lecture might be like. On the Thursday, Sixth Formers Lily Tait U6I and Hannah Naismith U6S brilliantly ran a whole school assembly on 'Women at Work', and the lunchtime talk followed up with recent old girl, Beth Moffat, and her colleague, Ms Sara Vincente, from Morgan Stanley, talking about the role of women in investment banking. Beth has generously offered to mentor pupils interested in applying for school leavers' programmes and the like. For the last lunchtime talk of the week we welcomed Dr Chris Nicholson, Head of Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex, to give a fascinating guest lecture entitled, "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: 'The monster that is me: psychoanalysis and the split self'". His lecture went down a storm with all present! All the talks were well-attended, particularly the final one, and feedback has been generally very positive.

A short time ago I sent out small questionnaire asking the pupils via the tutors what career subjects they would like in the lunchtime talks, and am pleased to say that a good number of them have been covered during NCW. I will work on the others through the year. Upcoming lunchtime talks will focus on creative careers with a presentation about architecture, and setting up your own, ecologically sound, business, from a locally based old girl; portfolios and sketchbooks from a lecturer at UCA; and women in the music scene from a very successful sessions musician. Please do encourage your children to come along to the talks. Looking ahead the next academic year sees the Careers Evenings run jointly by TWGGS, The Skinners' School, and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys. More information will be forthcoming in due course.

### **TWGGS Social Sciences Club**

**Please come and join us every Wednesday lunchtime at 1pm in sixth form block, room H1. Bring your lunch!**

We are Maddie Dry L6G, Tinu Sijuwade L6W, Antonia Stewart L6T and Caroline Gibson L6T- the new L6 prefects for Sociology and Psychology. We have joined together in order to create a fun new social science club for KS3. Sociology and Psychology shape the very nature of our behaviour and can often explain why we make the choices we make and what influences were involved in making those choices. Our social science group is aimed at the younger year groups so they too can get a glimpse of the cool and exciting study of Sociology and Psychology. The club is very interactive, as we mix study and play together in pursuit to explore the academic as well as practical side of social science. The topic of our first session was memory- we played several memory games such as "I went to the shop and bought" where we had to remember every item that each person had said. Later we talked about memory triggers such as certain smells, such as perfume, that remind us of events from the past. We are looking forward to explore many other topics in Sociology and Psychology such as what makes us remember things, how other people can influence our behaviour, why we experience fear and how factors such as gender, class or ethnicity can affect educational achievement.

### **The Carnegie Medal Book Group is Back! – Ms Sanderson**

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Carnegie Medal announced its shortlist for the 2019 reading cycle. It has now been running for over 80 years and is probably one of the most prestigious children's book prizes in the world. We have shadowed the prize for over 16 years and are very excited about this year's reading list. Carnegie always has its finger on the pulse of teen publishing and finds the best, most challenging, and sometimes controversial, authors. The books are not always easy reads but that is why we love them; they stretch our reading ability, encourage heated debate, and show us why books should still be an important part of our lives. If your child has not joined already, please encourage them to do so! The reading group meets every Tuesday lunchtime in the library, and all are welcome to join!

### **Celebrating Reading at the Annual SESTBA Gala – Ms Sanderson**

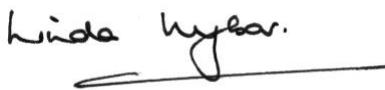
To celebrate the end of this year's SESTBA (South East Themed Book Awards) book group, a group of lucky TWGGS readers joined with over 300 pupils from local schools to celebrate their love of reading at a special gala evening held at Kent College, Pembury. We were very honoured to welcome award winning authors, Sita Brahmachari and Matt Killeen to the event to talk about their writing and what inspires them. It was a packed evening, with a fancy dress competition, a special screening of book trailers filmed by pupils, talks and a Q and A session from the authors, a presentation of prizes for our 'creative response' competition from our sponsors at AXA, a pop-up book shop, pizza, and last but not least the moment we had been waiting for... the announcement of the winners of SESTBA 2019!

Two books tied for first place in the Young Adult category this year, with *Moxie* by Jennifer Mathieu and *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi both receiving an equal number of votes, and we were delighted to discover that *Orphan Monster Spy* by Matt Killeen had won the prize for the best book in the Teen category! Thank you to all the TWGGS readers who voted.

Please visit the SESTBA website [sestba.co.uk](http://sestba.co.uk) for details of the award, special Twitter messages from winners Matt Killeen and Jennifer Mathieu, and (soon to be uploaded) photos of the gala event. We shall begin our reading cycle again in October 2019 so please encourage your child to join in the fun next year!

It only remains for me to wish you a very happy Easter and to remind you and pupils that summer uniform may be worn after the holidays. Please could you check summer dresses in particular to ensure that these are of a suitable, decent length? Thank you.

With best wishes,



Mrs L Wybar, Headteacher