

# A year in the life of our **Sixth Form**



**Tonbridge Grammar School**

Be the **very best** you can be





## WELCOME

We're incredibly proud of our IB Diploma students' exceptional exam results that are consistently above both the UK and world average, but this is only part of the TGS story.

Each and every student is provided with a tailored programme of guidance and support to ensure their post TGS destination is the very best fit for them.

This publication offers a glimpse into a 'year in the life of our Sixth Form', which includes real world experiences to help inform future choices, a comprehensive programme of UCAS support, inspirational visits from alumni and destination specific support (including Medsoc for aspiring medics and Oxbridge application support).

I hope that it illustrates how much students enjoy their time with us, the wide range of co-curricular opportunities on offer and how they feel supported in our kind and nurturing environment.

However, it is no substitute for visiting us in person, and I warmly welcome you to one of our Open Events to meet our students, staff and the wider school community.

- Rosemary Joyce, Head Teacher



Welcome on behalf of the sixth form students. Having just finished Year 12, this year has been my best so far!

Throughout the year, the immeasurable support and guidance provided by both teachers and other members of staff has enabled me to enjoy my studies and life outside of the classroom. You will see from this magazine that TGS offers such a wide range of opportunities beyond the curriculum that are not only enriching and rewarding but provide us with important skills which could not be obtained within a classroom environment. I have been able to participate in a wide range of activities from organising a maths challenge in Holland to attaining 1st in the county with my Netball team.

I hope you are able to come and meet some current sixth formers at one of our open events, we'd love to tell you more about our experiences at TGS!

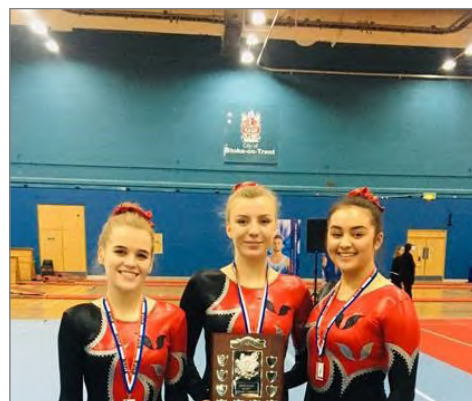
- Millie, Head Student (Years 10 & 11)





## 4th place nationally for Under 19 Gymnastics Trio

Annabelle and Liv, who have represented TGS in gymnastics for the last 7 years, along with Rebecca who has competed for 5 years were delighted to be placed 4th nationally in the Gymnastics Milano Trio National Finals.



## Amelia makes history with top Scott Prize win

Congratulations to Year 12 student Amelia who received the 2018 Joe Scott Prize for History. The prize is awarded to the candidate who scores the highest marks in the Schools History Project OCR B (SHP) History GCSE paper.



## D-Day beaches, chateaux and crêpes

Students enjoyed a week in Normandy, immersing themselves in French culture and history. The visit included a weekend exploring local sights with host families, experiencing lessons in a French school, visiting the D-Day beaches and Mont-Saint Michel... and not forgetting a delicious visit to a crêperie!



Emily and Victoria commented

**“The exchange has been really beneficial. It has helped us to understand French culture and history and we were able to improve our language skills... I know everyone has come away with fond memories and, for some, friends for life”.**



## Foundation Day... a much-anticipated day for the whole school community

Bringing current and former students together to celebrate the year, Foundation Day provided a platform for students to showcase performances and work plus the opportunity to attend interactive workshops and listen to inspirational speakers.



## Motet Choir reaches the Songs of Praise Young Choir of the Year Semi-Final.

The Motet Choir made the final five out of hundreds of choirs from all over the country, appearing on BBC1 in May. Their rendition of ‘The Storm is Passing Over’ featured solos from Amy in Year 12 and Leia in Year 10.

Judge Carrie Grant commented *“They absolutely shone, I thought this performance had real heart, real soul. I thought you were all completely, universally engaged, which was lovely to watch”.*



## “A cold, invigorating, informative and thoroughly enjoyable weekend”.

An intrepid group enjoyed their Silver Duke of Edinburgh training despite the unseasonably cold and wet weather.

Molly, Year 12, commented *“It was such a good weekend. Everyone got on well and the routes were really pretty! The only low point was my tent was very cold at night but that was down to our sleeping bags”.*



## Real world ready students

TGS students are fully prepared for the next stage of their career and life journey. There are countless opportunities for students to learn from leaders in industry.



## Barristers for the day!

Students took part in a Bar Mock Trial at Maidstone Crown Court, giving them an unparalleled insight into the justice system.

In the words of Year 12 student Georgia it was “an incredible opportunity to discover the way in which the courtroom works.” Jaya found it to be “an incredibly enriching experience as it allowed me to explore the role of a barrister in a friendly yet serious environment.”

## Careers Fair

The IBarn was packed with representatives from over 50 industries providing students with the opportunity to explore post-TGS pathways, obtain hints and tips about how to secure relevant work experience and choose appropriate further education courses and programmes.

This event is part of a comprehensive programme of careers guidance that supports students whether they choose university, gap year or employment after TGS. Alumni also regularly visit the school to speak to current students about their careers.

**“I learnt a great deal from every single person I spoke to both about the field I wish to go into and also other opportunities that I had never thought of, but am now definitely considering.”**

Student



## First hand learning from the world of industry

Psychology students visited UCL's Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging where they saw an MRI scan (on a pineapple!), learnt how to analyse the image and had the opportunity to view one of the very few MEG scanners in the country.

They met a group of engineers, chemists, clinicians and psychologists who spoke about their research. Students were able to question them about their field of work and their route into the profession.

One student said: “I found the trip so interesting and I'm grateful we were able to see and learn about what we saw, as it has widened my knowledge of what psychology involves.”



## Medsoc

Medsoc is designed to support, inspire and challenge aspiring medics, dentists and vets during their journey from TGS to medical school.

Weekly meetings include talks from doctors and medical students. Speakers from universities regularly attend and provide briefings on applying to medical school, entry tests, interview skills and entry requirements.

Alumna Dr Pearson (2004-2011), Senior House Officer in Gastroenterology, recently visited Medsoc members. Lucy and Ellie commented “At TGS we have multiple students who are aspiring to go into the medical industry. We learnt about many aspects of Harriette's life as a doctor and what it has taken for her to get this far. She discussed her experience in the sixth form at TGS and how the IB prepared her for university life”.



## A day at the 'United Nations' for aspiring diplomats

Year 12 students Amelia and Emily had the opportunity to become diplomats for the day at the 2018 Model United Nations Competition in Tunbridge Wells. They were awarded 'Highly Commended' for work in the 'Refugees and Migrants' category for India and 'Best Delegate on the International Security Committee' for Israel.

**“The school teaches so much about opportunities that are open to the students both whilst at school and when the students move on to university and beyond.”**

Parent





## Enhancing personal and interpersonal development through experiential learning

Students have been engaged in a diverse range of activities, many of which have been specifically designed to closely align with their interests and future career plans, enhancing their personal development and supporting Higher Education applications.

Activities have included:

- Hiking across vast parts of The Peak District as part of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- Organising a skydive for B-EAT raising in excess of £1700.
- Raising awareness of the need to support our local community through a week of assemblies focusing on the work of Nourish Food Bank based in Tunbridge Wells, leading to a whole school food bank collection.



**TGS has served my daughter well by enabling her to reach her full potential both academically and socially, including provision of pastoral care and additional support and guidance by Curriculum Directors and subject teachers.**

Year 13 Parent

A variety of sport coaching ranging from swimming through to Pétanque, including competing at the European Championships.



Lots of charity runs, including the annual 'Run or Dye' held at Penshurst Place. An opportunity to race 5K, or get really messy by throwing the dye!

The majority of students have engaged in community projects such as West Kent College Prep 4 Life department, working with students with learning difficulties and The Scotts Project Trust, a residential and day care unit for adults with profound learning difficulties.



Students have spent time at a whole host of local primary schools offering their time to enrich the lives of younger children and just about every charity shop in a 10-mile radius has had the help from at least one of our students weekly!

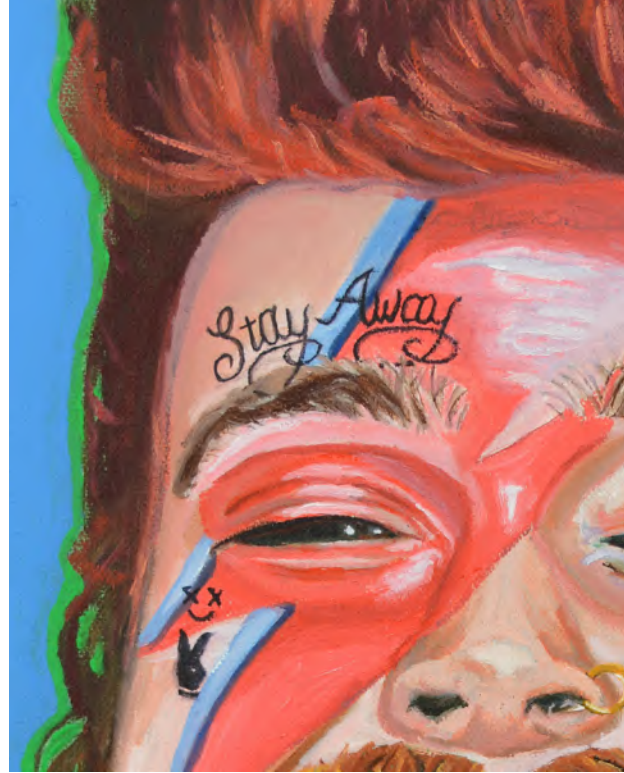
**It's a fantastic school and I am delighted and grateful the girls can attend. I always recommend the school to anyone who asks me.**

Year 12 Parent



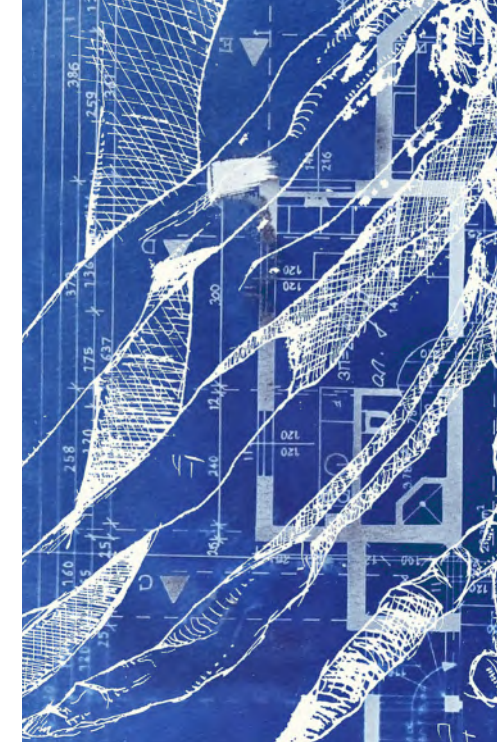
Not forgetting our annual visit to Malawi where our students engage in a humanitarian project helping to educate and build a better future for the children of Malawi. This year they raised a whopping £21,000 for Joshua Orphan and Community Care. Two teams spent the summer assisting local builders to create a brand-new Child Based Community Centre.





IB Visual Arts Students' work was showcased in an exhibition at Royal Victoria Place in Tunbridge Wells during March and April.

The Visitors Book showed just how much visitors had enjoyed the students' art work, with responses and reactions from visitors from Sevenoaks to Italy, Tunbridge Wells to Los Angeles!



**"The work is amazing, we would buy several pieces. The standard is so high the concepts work so well. Inspirational. Well done all of you".**

**"I am so impressed and inspired by the creativity and messages on display".**



**"Beautiful, creative and inspiring works. I'm so impressed by the knowledge, understanding and the different materials used".**



**"A total feast for the eyes and the mind".**



## 100 Years Later

Francesca, Year 12

We stand with fists raised  
Feet march to the drum  
Single entity, single aim  
So we protest as one  
We fight for our rights  
And our right to vote  
So our sisters beside us can feel strong on their own  
Yet 100 years later I still walk in fear  
Down a badly lit street  
Music removed from my ears  
Snapped twigs make me flinch  
And quicken my pace  
Cos the dark conceals figures  
Who make the blood leave my face  
These figures I fear, above everything else  
Though I know no one's willing to listen or help  
Like they don't want to hear about the wage gap,  
or silent abuse  
Because we should be seen and not heard,  
not be bossy, or prude  
But not be flirty or in-opinionated,  
and we may never ask why  
We must just sit in this box made for us by the guys  
And conform to the impossible and ignore the unjust  
Unlike our sisters in the past who still kick up dust  
My sisters screamed justice 'til their lungs gave out  
And left history's ears ringing with shouts  
And I know they'd be pleased with all the progress they made  
Until they delved deeper and realised  
It didn't all change.



Congratulations to Francesca (Year 12) and Emma (Year 9) for winning the Tunbridge Wells Soroptimist District's Barbara Bradford Poetry Award!

The two were presented with a certificate and a cheque for their wonderful poems about the Suffragette Movement!

**“DT is hugely relevant to things I see in the news about the environment and industry. I can easily link it to my higher subjects of Psychology and Biology through fields such as consumer product design and biotechnology”.**

Emma, Year 12



## Design Technology

Year 12 have enjoyed producing design prototypes of a chair based on the aesthetic qualities of existing brands.



**“I have really enjoyed DT this year, especially because of the design and marketing element of the course. I find it really interesting and useful, particularly because I want to study business and marketing at university”.**

Lucy, Year 12

**“And if ever there was a place where you could have an amazing two years, make friendships that will last forever, push yourself to your academic limit, whilst still hanging on to your sanity, this is it”.**

Jasmine, Year 13

## The most important date in history

Liam, Year 12

There are many dates that could be said to be the most important in the history of the world.

Thermopylae, the founding of the Roman Empire, the battle of Hastings, the Spanish Armada, Waterloo, Trafalgar, the Somme, D-Day, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brexit. Each and every one of these had effects that have reverberated down the years and still affect us to this day. From the founding of democratic countries to the founding of empires; from avoiding total war to winning total war - these events are all greatly significant in world history.

But we must consider what world history really is? What is its significance? These events affect us today, but what can they teach us? Is that not the essence of history - to apply the lessons of the past to the challenges of the future? It is not simply our job to chronicle and list dates and numbers from the past, but to analyse them and understand the meaning behind them. We don't learn about World Wars and Cold Wars for the fun of it: we learn about them to avoid them ever happening again. We don't learn about the founding of democracy and autocracy to amuse ourselves: we learn about them to ensure the spread of the former and avoid the latter.

The most important date in history is tomorrow: the future, not looking back at the great deeds of man, but looking forwards to what we might build on those achievements, and where we are going next. Humankind's greatest achievements are not that we invented freedom, fought oppressors and struggled for our rights. Nor are our greatest achievements fighting for individual national gain, or building empires. Despite the fact that our history is littered with injustice and hatred, the greatest achievement of mankind is our ability to accept one and reject the other. Our ability to create a better future than anyone before us could have possibly hoped for is our greatest achievement as a species. You can't put a date on that, you cannot pinpoint it. This ideal is represented by our eternal hope, using the lessons that we learn in history to craft a better future, tomorrow.



## Congratulations to our 2019 leavers on their IB Diploma results!

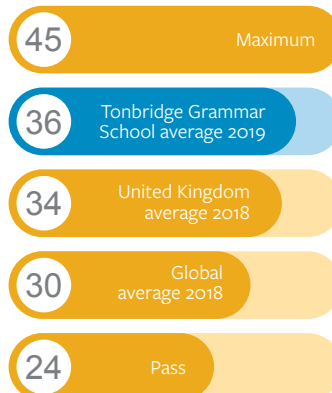
This outstanding set of results continues the school's strong record of achievement since having moved to an exclusively IB Diploma sixth form seven years ago.

**36%** of students are celebrating point scores of 39 and above (equivalent to in excess of 4 A\* at A Level) and **72%** of this year's Diploma graduates achieved points totals that put them in the highest echelons of UK academic achievement (3A\* at A Level).

One student achieved the maximum IB point score of 45, 2 students scored an impressive 44 points, 3 gained 43 points and 9 students were awarded 42 points.

We always look forward to hearing about students' post-TGS journeys.

## IB Diploma Point Scores

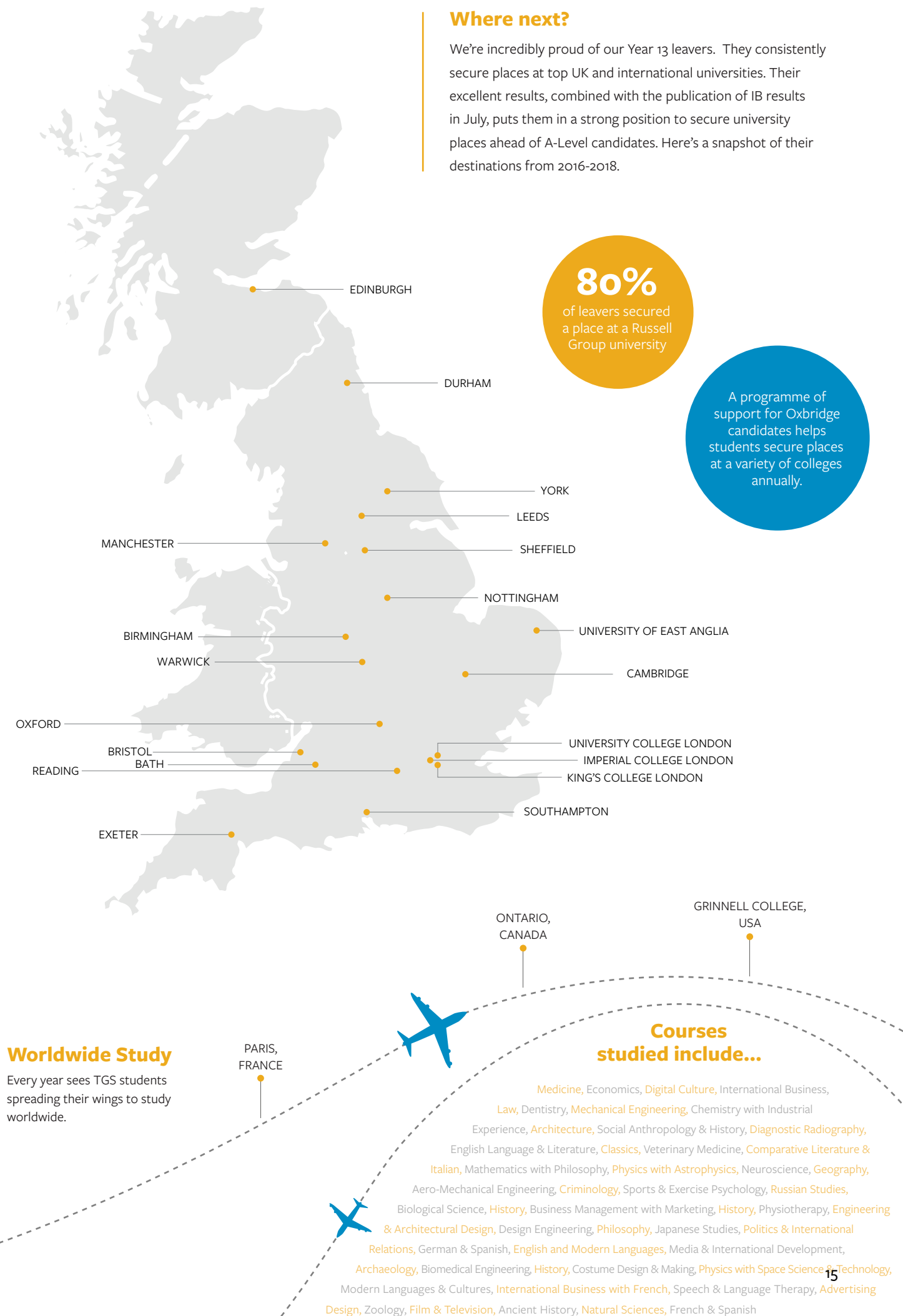


Students all comment on how the IB has prepared them well for university life:

**“I definitely feel the IB put me in a better position than my A-level university friends to tackle the challenges of natural sciences at Cambridge”.**

Izzy, Alumna.

Our Medsoc supports a large number of students' journeys to medical school.... **26** students hold offers for medical school in 2019





## A taste of university life

Actively encouraged to find out more about university life and courses on offer and also to challenge and stretch their learning, students regularly visit universities to attend conferences and listen to a wide variety of talks by visiting lecturers.

## A new view on plastics

Eve won a place at the Women in STEM conference at Cambridge University. She was selected to take part in the end of conference debate. *"I learnt from my experience that it is important never to settle on an opinion: through this conference my perception of plastics was completely altered".*



## A taste of university-level philosophy

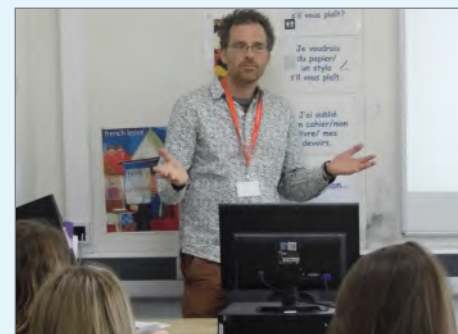
27 philosophy students travelled to Southampton University for a day of lectures on a wide range of philosophical topics. They explored a variety of questions including "What makes you the same person you were yesterday?" and "Can we travel back in time?"

## Languages at university

Dr Siobhán McIlvanney, Head of French at King's College London, visited to talk to students about studying languages at university. Emily commented *"It's definitely given me more confidence to do languages at university and encouraged me to apply to King's, something I've been thinking about but not had the confidence to commit to."*



Y11 & 12 linguists enjoyed a visit from Christine Mathias, Senior Lecturer in Latin American History and Toby Green, Senior Lecturer and Admissions Tutor at King's College London, who gave them an insight into studying Spanish and Portuguese at university.



## Environmental responsibility masterclass

Hannah attended a series of lectures and gained an insight into life at Cambridge. She particularly enjoyed the Economics lecture, *"We were encouraged to talk about game theory and how this is represented through different countries' carbon emission taxes, which was something completely new to me".*

## Quidditch and comedy clubs..

Students from Queens College Cambridge visited TGS to provide an insight into the wide variety of subjects on offer, plus the diverse co-curricular activities they are involved in. The comedy scene in Cambridge is apparently great, and who would have thought that they have a Quidditch team?!



## Visits from UCL, Leeds, Oxford, UEA and Manchester

In April and May five universities visited TGS to talk to Year 12 students about university choices and making competitive applications. It was wonderful to welcome back TGS Alumna Alexandra, who is now the Admissions Officer at University of Manchester.



## Latest news from our alumni

**Felicity Aston MBE** (1989-1996) holds the Guinness World record for becoming the first woman to ski alone across Antarctica; a journey of 1,744km that took 59 days. She is one of the very few women to have received this honour and was recently appointed MBE for services to polar exploration.



**“Studying English and Humanities alongside Sciences, meant I knew how to write; something that was perhaps trickier for non IB students. Studying Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is great as it challenges you to always enquire and question why you do things.”**

Siling, Alumna.



Our Alumni team recently caught up with **Leon** (2014-2016), who is now studying Physics (with a Year in Europe) at Imperial College. He reflected on his time at Tonbridge Grammar school *“Changing to TGS was the best decision I made. I look back incredibly well on the school”*.

*“I left my previous school hating French, and reluctantly chose to continue it at sixth form”. He went on to explain that he enjoyed that language element of the IB Diploma so much he is now studying a course where he will be spending a whole year in Grenoble, France, to further his skills. He concludes “Speaking and improving my French is honestly, ignore the cringe, something of which I’m very proud”.*

## Group visit ‘10 to 6’ event

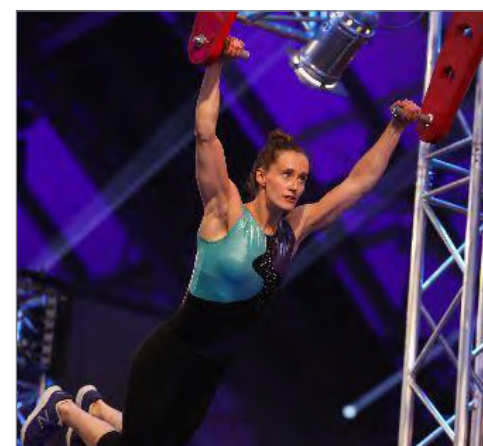
We were delighted to welcome alumni back to this year’s launch of our post 16 careers and support programme who spoke with students about their career paths to date and offered advice and guidance on gaining relevant experience. They also enjoyed catching up with TGS staff and sharing their post TGS stories with them.



**“Studying the IB was one of the best decisions I have made. It taught me how to manage my time effectively, persevere and think critically. When I started at university I was already a step ahead my peers, I knew how to reference and critically analyse, core skills that students often lack, and I was able to juggle multiple modules and demands with ease.”**

Annabelle

From TGS elite gym to the first woman to make it to the eliminator in the 2019 series! It was great to see TGS Alumna **Beth Lodge** (2004-2011), now working for biotechnology firm Oxford Nanopore, on ITV’s *Ninja Warrior*!



TGS welcomed back alumna **Livy** (2008-2015) to speak about her experiences studying and working in the film industry. Part of a series of ongoing talks by inspirational alumni, Livvy explained the route into her current role which will shortly see her begin work on the new *Men in Black* film.

You can read a wide variety of our regularly updated alumni stories at [www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/alumni-stories](http://www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/alumni-stories)





We welcome applications to join our co-educational sixth form.  
For more information please visit **[www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/sixth-form](http://www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/sixth-form)**