





# GETTING TO KNOW MR GAITER



## How have you found your first few weeks at TGS?

Really very enjoyable – they've passed so quickly! My new colleagues and pupils are all very supportive and friendly. I've even started finding my way around the building without a ball of string!

I've noticed how nice the school environment is, with a lot less litter and really good cleaning and janitorial teams. The wider teaching and non-teaching staff here are very hard-working and really go the extra mile to support learning here.

Pupils have also been very polite, well-mannered and look after one another – long may that continue!

## Were you nervous about starting here?

I would say more excited than anything else – really looking forward to it! A few nerves are a healthy sign and keep me on my toes!

## Why did you want to go for the role of deputy rector here?

The reputation of The Gordon Schools is so very positive, both in terms of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. I knew that there is a strong leadership team and relished the chance of being a part of that and playing a role in moving things forwards. I was a Deputy for over eight happy years at my previous school (Kemnay Academy) and wanted a wee change – you have to keep learning and challenging yourself throughout life – makes me feel alive! Also, I've lived locally now for over a year and really enjoy what this area has to offer me and my family.

## Why did you originally want to be a teacher?

The reason hasn't changed from back in the day till now – I still want to make a positive difference in the lives of young people and support them to make the most of the opportunities available to them. After all, you'll all be paying tax for my pension in the future!

I'm a Modern Studies teacher and feel that it's really important for everyone to understand their rights as well as their responsibilities in society, too. Everyone has a part to play whether they realise it or not – and part of my job is showing young people how their part can be a great role!

## We've heard you have a big tie collection, but which one is your favourite?

Yes, over 120 at the last count. It's a tribute to my late Dad, who was a great tie man!

Favourites include Pink Panther, Winnie the Pooh and Tigger ones. Also love the ties that tie-in (get it?!) with events like Halloween, Christmas and of course 1<sup>st</sup> of December – which always raises a few eyebrows!

## Do you have any hobbies?

Out of school much of my time is taken up with Hockey – coaching, playing and umpiring it around the North-East and Scotland. I went to watch it in both the Atlanta and London Olympics as well as the recent Commonwealth Games.

I also love quality dog time at the beach or in a forest – with Pug, Lab, Toy Poodles or Dachshunds depending on whose I have!

Thanks for the interview – I look forward to getting to know you all better in the coming weeks, months and years!

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# LESSONS FROM AUSCHWITZ

Sarah Dingwall (S6) shares her experience of the Lessons From Auschwitz project.



Jasmine and I were selected to participate in the Lessons From Auschwitz project with the Holocaust Educational Trust. After attending an orientation seminar, we travelled to Poland with many other school pupils from schools all over Scotland for a day to visit Auschwitz I and Auschwitz Birkenau on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014, where around 1-1.5 million people were mass murdered during World War Two. It was a day full of emotions and there was so much information to take in. The sheer size of these camps and what happened within them was unbelievable.

Before entering the camps, prisoners had to go through a selection process where it was to be decided if they would be sent to the gas chambers or sent to work within the camps. If females were carrying small children then it was almost certain that they would both be sent straight to the gas chambers due to the child being unfit to work. During our visit we walked through one of the gas chambers which had not been destroyed, and this is something that Jasmine and I will never forget.

There were many different jobs to be done within the camps from working in the toilet barracks to working in the kitchen. Many prisoners rebelled against the Nazis and this often ended in them being killed. For example, prisoners who were working on making the sign – ARBEIT MACHT FREI - for the entrance to Auschwitz I put the B upside down. Also, many people who worked in the kitchen would try to steal as much food as possible so that it would make it slightly easier to survive and would give them more energy to work. At Auschwitz I we saw the hair which was cut off of the heads of the females who were brought to the concentration camp, the suitcases, glasses, clothes and all of the luggage which people took with them as they did not know where they were going. We were asked not to concentrate on the huge numbers involved in the Holocaust but to picture each suitcase, piece of clothing and bundle of hair belonging to an individual and imagine the dreams, ambitions and talents which each of these individuals would have had. Although we did not see this due to maintenance work at Auschwitz Birkenau; someone had brought their set of house keys with them to the camp. This made us truly realise that these people had no idea where they were going and thought that they would be returning to their homes in the near future.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was the larger of the two camps. The barracks, which were originally stables, were made for around 52 horses but were used to hold up to 1000 prisoners at the camp and we found this hard to visualize when we were standing in such a small space. Diseases spread extremely quickly due to cramped and hot conditions and many people died as a result.



At the end of our visit, Rabbi Marcus conducted a ceremony after which everyone lit a candle in memory of those who were murdered. The ceremony was extremely memorable for both Jasmine and I. Rabbi Marcus told us about questions which he had been faced with from numerous people since the Holocaust; one of which was "Where was god?" to which he replied "Where was man?" This showed myself and Jasmine why Jewish people were able to keep their faith after the Holocaust, as they believed that it was not god's fault what had happened to them, it was the fault of those who supported and helped Hitler during this period.

This journey was emotional and extremely thought provoking for both Jasmine and myself. The sheer amount of shoes, clothing, glasses, hair and belongings shocked us, knowing that this was only a small percentage of the total number of possessions.

We plan to deliver assemblies to all year groups within the school and these will hopefully inform pupils a bit more about the Holocaust, and also give our personal experiences and feelings throughout our visit.



# OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

As many of you will know two of our pupils were chosen to represent Great Britain for Nordic skiing in the Youth Winter Olympics that have recently taken place. Beth Maclean and Duncan Gibb both took part with Duncan given the honour of being selected as flag bearer and carrying the GB flag in the opening ceremony.



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Well done to Gordon Schools [@duncangibb97](#) from Inch being flag bearer to European Youth Olympics. [bit.ly/EYOfagTGS](#) [@TeamGB](#) [#EYOF15](#)



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Congrats [@duncangibb97](#), our flagbearer for the [#EYOF15](#) Opening Ceremony! He'll be leading the team out later tonight.



**Snowsport Scotland** shared Team GB's photo.

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Duncan Gibb of Huntly Nordic Ski Club was flag-bearer for Team GB this weekend at the opening ceremony for the European Youth Olympic Festival!



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## THE SPORT REPORT

A round up of the TGS sporting achievement and success for this terms newsletter!

### BASKETBALL

The Senior boys basketball team recently played against a team from Hillhead in Glasgow They put up a good fight but were unable to beat this strong team.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

This term will be a busy one in the PE department. There are tournaments and matches on the horizon in Football, Volleyball and Rugby as well as the inter-house and inter-school cross country events that will take place here.

Get ready to take part or support our teams and help them on their way to victory!

