

Driving home the safety message



Christie Doran is a rising star in the motor racing world, and so pupils at George Heriot's were happy to defer to her superior driving knowledge when she delivered a safety message during a recent visit.

Christie who is herself only 20 worked with sixth year pupils at the school to explain how her high-level training and knowledge of the importance of car control, can help new road users.

She is an ambassador for Edinburgh-based Good Egg Drivers, a respected, UK-wide safety initiative which has already helped thousands of students become better safer drivers.

One pupil Fiona Brewis, 17, said: "The talk definitely changed my outlook on driving. I haven't sat my test yet and I was shocked by how unaware I was of some of the risks. Some of the statistics for young drivers were really alarming, especially those around impaired driving through drink and drugs.

"The workshop was highly interactive which made it really interesting and engaging; we worked in mixed groups – some people had passed their test and some hadn't – and discussed different hazardous driving situations and other risks we would be facing on the roads.

"I'm really glad Good Egg came to our school as the talk has definitely had a positive impact on me and I am determined to be a cautious and safe driver from now on."



Pupils were particularly surprised at the frequency of young drivers being involved in collisions and discovering that those who recently pass their test can lose their licence again so quickly by acquiring just six penalty points within the first two years of driving.

Ross Keohane, 18, said: "One of the most interesting and probably most shocking things I learned was about the effects of drugs on driving, especially cannabis. Everyone knows not to drink and drive but many people weren't aware of the risks of taking drugs and driving."

Having Scottish Sun rookie racing driver Christie as an ambassador for Good Egg also proved to be a hit among Heriot's pupils.

Sophie Hannigan, 18, said: "The fact that there was a visiting racing driver who knew the importance of taking safety from the race track to the road made the session more interesting. She was great at answering questions."

“Christie is also close to our age, which made the session very relatable and me and my classmates really listened and engaged with her.

“I definitely think I will be a safer driver as a result of this workshop. It has made me much more aware of the risks and also far more cautious about getting lifts from my friends or other young drivers like me who have just passed their test.”

Now Christie is looking forward to future school sessions and urged any aspiring, learner or new drivers to check out the recently relaunched website.

She added: “My work with Good Egg Drivers involves regularly going into schools and colleges to speak with 17 and 18-year-olds. They want clear help and advice.

“That is what the new website delivers and it informs them in a way that young people like myself can relate to.

“I am doing everything I can to promote Good Egg Drivers and get them to visit the website. I have no doubt that it will make better, safer drivers.”

Good Egg Safety is headquartered in Edinburgh and its Good Egg Drivers campaign, aimed at 17-year-olds, and is running special events throughout the UK. The website, www.goodeggdrivers.com offers vital free advice to young drivers and anxious parents including safety tips and information on the potentially disastrous consequences of driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The main aim of the new site is to underline a simple, seven stage process – applying for a provisional; choosing an instructor; the theory test; the practical test; buying the first car; getting insured; keeping their licence. Each section is packed with downloadable guides and resources, which consistently reinforce the principles of safe and responsible driving.

Ann Connor, Head of Year Six at George Heriot's, said: "Good Egg is a really valuable resource and I would highly recommend it to all other schools or colleges with high numbers of novice and learner drivers.

"I am often concerned that the pupils are only focused on passing their test, and forget about road safety and other important aspects. I think they got a huge amount of important, potentially life-saving information out of this experience and it definitely had a positive impact on them.

"There was a good balance between the team from Good Egg talking to the students and group activities, which meant it was highly interactive and kept them interested throughout.

"I'm confident it will encourage our pupils to be safer drivers. Those who we spoke to afterwards certainly made it clear that they had changed any unsafe attitudes towards driving as a result of the session."

Good Egg Drivers is a highly-respected, safe driving initiative which has won backing from Road Safety GB, RoadSafe, Brake, IAM and many other leading road safety organisations and is supported by one of Europe's biggest car retailers, the Arnold Clark Group.