

BTA - AUTHOR MEG CLOTHIER INITIATIVE 2014

Oliver Bullough, top Caucasus journalist, recommended Meg to us but it took over a year for her to finally make it to Bristol for World Book Day and International Women's Day. When her historical novel *The Girl King* came out, Meg was pregnant and not available for a UK book signing tour. Eventually given her close connections to Bristol, she was born here, and Taunton where her family live, she agreed to speak at Foyles in Cabot Circus on the 7th March. She also kindly agreed to run a schools workshop during the afternoon.

ASHTON PARK SECONDARY SCHOOL WORKSHOP

From the school newsletter:

“Year 10 and 11 celebrated World Book Day with the unbeatable combination of good company, a visit from published author Meg Clothier, and free biscuits!

Having worked for both the Guardian and Reuters in Moscow, Meg has moved on to penning historical fiction. Her debut novel *'The Girl King'*, published by Century, is described by the Independent as 'glittering' and the follow-up, *'The Empress'*, has been equally well received by critics. Meg tells us that she is now working on a third novel which centres around a male protagonist.

As well as being an accomplished writer, Meg also proved to be a highly



entertaining and inspiring speaker. We were given a masterclass in plot construction, characterisation and use of dialogue - all delivered with great humour, energy and self-effacement. And whilst we were keen to know more about the writer's craft, Meg was just as interested in our own reading and writing habits. It turns out that we have a number of talented would-be authors in our midst, who were given very sage advice on being published and making (or scraping!) a living in the literary world.

Perhaps the most important advice Meg gave us, though, was that we should all 'READ!' (Meg's capitals!). So on that note, we're off to the library . . .

Written by Mrs Catt, acting head of English with thanks to Alix Hughes for his help in organising this wonderful event and to the Bristol Tbilisi Association for their support.”

The students were captivated by Meg's energy and passion for story-telling: a truly rewarding event! Comments from students: 'Can she come again?', 'she was very funny', 'that was interesting', 'inspiring'

MEG CLOTHIER IN CONVERSATION WITH JEAN BURNETT



Novvy Allan brought delicious home made Georgian snacks and Colin Evans sourced bottles of Georgian wine to give the evening event at Foyles Bookshop a real Georgian feel. Jean interviewed Meg in front of an exhibition of photos of Tbilisi and almost twenty people were present including members of the Georgian community in Bristol. Jean is a former member of the BTA executive and current member of Bristol Women's Writers and has visited and written on Georgia. The conversation brought out elements of the historical research and sources and showed how Meg had built on these and added her own elements with artistic licence. Later we were joined by the acting Mayor of Tbilisi and senior officers from Tbilisi City Council. Meg included a couple of atmospheric readings from the novel and answered questions in an engaging and fun way. Most of the books were sold on the night. One of the participants who engaged Meg in conversation afterwards was Rebecca Megson, MA Journalism student at UWE and key contributor to "A Bridge of Friendship", 25 years of the Bristol Tbilisi Twinning.

A big didi madloba to Novvy, Colin and Jean plus Robb at Foyles for the organising of the event. Also thanks to the BTA for the support and especially to Meg.

