

150th



Founded 1125

Friday 3 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Via Redingensis Developing Academic Excellence and Building Good Men in 2020

Lenin once stated that 'There are decades where nothing happens and weeks where decades happen.' Even if we may disagree with his views on some matters I think that he got it right in this case.

As we reach the end of our Lent Term, it is undoubtedly fair to say our reality is very different from what we had anticipated for 2020. The scheduled events to celebrate marking the school's 150th Anniversary, which we were so fondly arranging have now been postponed and instead we have been left to deal with fear, uncertainty and change as we navigate uncharted waters.

I want to start by thanking our pupils, for their sustained resilience and adaptability demonstrated as we have shifted to remote learning. In addition, teachers should be congratulated for their determination to continue to deliver academic excellence and our associate staff, for their unwavering administrative and student support.

Furthermore, the Reading School Community including parents, Old Redingensis, Governors and the Reading Foundation have provided exceptional support in a myriad of ways over the last weeks. There has been a genuine outpouring of offers of support which makes me immensely proud to be a part of the Reading School Community.

I particularly would like to express my respect for Year 11 and Year 13 students who have had to deal with the abrupt change regarding examinations. I commend you on the resilience shown at this challenging time and assure you that as soon as we have further news from the Department for Education we will be working on detailed plans regarding your recommended grades. You should know your teachers and the school will continue to support you, as best we can. Like you, we only want the best. Whilst we are saddened that at this stage it seems we will not be able to say our farewells face-to-face, rest assured we will celebrate with you in December when you will all be invited to Senior Prize Giving.

I have always considered the Alumni Network central to the life, culture and ethos of Reading School, as we are steeped in so many traditions and this has become more apparent over recent years as the Society Office and the Old Redingensis Association have arranged numerous reunion events. I feel this even more keenly now, as I have had the opportunity to speak with or meet those OR's based in New Zealand, Canada and the USA as well as those based nearer to home. The more I hear back from former students, the stronger is the sense that you never really leave Reading School, as you continue to feel a part of this family.

In difficult times it is vital that we build character and resilience. In my office I have a print of one of my cartoon heroes, Alf Tupper. Alf was known as the 'Tough of the Track.' He trained on fish and chips and always managed to win despite the odds stacked against him. 'Got to keep going' was one of his mantras. I think that we may be able to learn from his attitude of persistence.



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THE VALUE OF HOPE

Although the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes we must all recognise that previous instances of health crises provide us with opportunities for learning. In 249 AD the Plague of Cyprian broke out and lasted until 271 AD. St Dionysius of Alexandria wrote the following:

'At the first onset of the disease some pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the road before they were dead and treating unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease, but do what they might they found it difficult to escape.'

Whilst many lacked compassion, others set a remarkable example and I would urge the whole School community to be like those, who at the time, *'Showed unbounded love, and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one other.'* There is an opportunity for us to grow, even in this time of desolation, through kindness, compassion and community-spirit.

All of us can play a part in protecting ourselves and our families, all of us can play a part in acting with integrity and building up our community and all of us can play a part in protecting the NHS and saving lives.



Inspired by the wives of our two Boarding Housemasters, who are two of our NHS heroines, and facilitated by our Chief Operations Officer, Dominic Taylor we are working in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Hospital as is particularly evident on the School Field currently. Here we are visibly putting our core values of integrity and community into action and echoing to some degree the positive sentiments of St. Dionysius. I am inspired by the number of volunteers to support vulnerable members of the Reading School family, past, present and future as well as a commitment to the NHS Volunteer scheme.

Sometimes each of us, in this difficult time must wonder if we have what it takes to keep going. We may not have sufficient in our 'reservoir of hope' if we focus on ourselves as individuals, but undoubtedly if we concentrate on our strength as a community, as the Reading School family, then we still flourish in the future. We should be confident that we have the right attitude and seek to be resilient. This crisis will pass. We will get through it together.

BALANCING CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

The pandemic has resulted in temporary severe dislocations. But our approach to the longer term should be shaped by an emphasis on both change and continuity. For instance, as an organisation, our core values of Excellence, Integrity, Leadership and Community will remain fundamental to informing our actions and our priorities. Indeed, community will come even more to the fore. Another key element of continuity will be our drive to build good men. Whilst our methodology and practice must change 'Developing academic excellence and building good men' remain non-negotiables.

The Easter holidays ahead of us mark threshold after which we must move into a phase of potentially sustained separation from a school based delivery model. This necessitates delivery in a different space, with some different goals and a variety of methods. When technology is used with authenticity and purpose it can support effective teaching and learning. Our current situation requires us all to contribute to a positive approach using a combination of existing and new thinking.

The world around is changing and we need to work out new rules. Certainly, protecting the 'status quo' is no longer the default position and we are therefore all challenged to consider what comes next. We need to ensure that we built upon the best of historic practice and also show flexibility.

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Our goal remains academic excellence and building good men, through high quality teaching and learning and modelling positive relationships, but we must now adjust the processes we employ to achieve these goals and overcome the problems that we are presented with.

Phase 2 of Reading School's remote learning plan seeks to address the new learning paradigm. It has a greater emphasis on flexibility and, to protect staff and students, must now involve two distinct learning cycles:

Synchronous

Synchronous teaching and learning is characterised by instructor facilitation. It requires all the participants to be virtually present all the time. It is scheduled and can involve timed online tests, virtual classrooms, web conferencing technology and interactive shared whiteboards. Broadly this is the method we have been using for the past two and a half weeks. However, it should not mean that students and teachers on screens simultaneously for 6 hours a day.

It does mean structure and access to teachers at designated times, with students spilling into independent work for defined periods. Our approach is shaped by good practice in synchronous environments. We believe that it is possible to continue to deliver high quality lessons that engage our students using digital pedagogical strategies and we know we have the potential for delivering rich and relevant synchronous learning experiences.

Asynchronous

Asynchronous learning is that which is self-directed and self-paced and does not require all the participants to be virtually present at the same time. It uses message boards, discussion groups and self-paced online work. As Headmaster I have direct experience of asynchronous learning when participating in an International Boys' School Coalition programme. I know it can work, though it requires understanding that learning becomes increasingly asynchronous with activities not necessarily taking place in real time. Afternoons of asynchronous learning give space to all the stakeholders in the school for activities including independent on-line tasks, a focus on personal wellbeing, physical activity, remote clubs & societies and extension activities. As a School we need to embrace the challenge and the opportunity of asynchronicity.

The principles and protocols that underpin this new model should be understood by all so as harness the power of working in partnership with all who make up the Reading School community. The principles are designed to foster staff, students and parents working together in partnership as members of the Reading School community. They are curated to empower staff in managing a different, effective, way of delivering schooling and education. We want to empower our students with confidence, competency and character. Fundamentally we aim in phase 2 of our remote learning to achieve:

Sense Making

Helping students check-in regularly with teachers, reach out for assistance, use resources in creative and sustainable ways. Ensuring staff teach threshold concepts and scaffold learning for synchronised and asynchronous tasks.

Ownership

Where, when and how we learn needs to reflect a positive attitude to learning. It must respect the time scheduled to work together and invite all stakeholders to value these bonds and own their own significance in the on-line learning process. Remote learning is necessarily less didactic and must reflect shared ownership for learning.

Added Value

Crisis presents new horizons on life, and we must not lose sight of the opportunity for new learning, new collaboration, new perspectives and new ways of interacting with each other.

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Self-Regulation

Encouraging increased self-regulation and time management must be a goal of our second phase of remote learning. Helping all stakeholders balance time between on-line and offline relationships and remaining conscious of our wellbeing needs. We must encourage everyone within the community to stay well, to manage emotions, to take regular breaks and balance personal interests with necessary tasks.

Remote Learning does not mean that students and teachers need to be on screens simultaneously for 6 hours a day and must allow for the activities that keep us happy and well. Synchronous learning has a place on an online model. It achieves structure and access to teachers at designated times, with students spilling in to independent work for defined periods. Synchronised learning must not be an impediment to staff that have child-care responsibilities, or to students whose families need their interaction in this challenging time.

Arguably, we are now focused on providing online learning rather than online schooling, and ensuring that all members of the School can return in the future to a third phase – that of re-integration, which will also not look like “normal” school life.

Getting everyone safely to this third phase, where we meet again in the full joy of lively classrooms, excited conversations in the LRC, thoughtful moments in the Chapel, physical challenges on the field, rumbustious house competitions and face to face relationships, is now our number one goal.

Phase two of our remote learning must therefore legitimate patterns which prioritise the sustainability of remote-learning, the well-being of all, and moral leadership which puts people first.

WELLBEING AND WISDOM

In this age, each of us is invited to a new realisation that we do not have all the answers. Therefore, we need to draw on the wisdom of others and show adaptive expertise. We must enable students and staff to be equipped with adaptive expertise in pursuit of high standards, of excellence. We need to respond with rigour and vigour to this challenging context, secure in the knowledge that 2020 marks a turning point, a watershed. We need to be ready to adopt and adapt, nurture and sustain an approach to continuous improvement that is aligned with our core values.

What is clear from the wisdom of others is that wellness and wellbeing of all members of the Reading School family must be central to each decision, particularly around the need to move from an on-school/on campus delivery model, to one that is more embedded in the online and remote blended sphere of learning. The continuous learning model as exemplified by the emerging practice over the last few weeks must also include a commitment to supporting the holistic development of each student, including in partnership with families. We must all redouble our commitment ourselves to strengthening Reading School as a community which is informed by ‘past practice, current experience and the anticipation of future needs.’ (Dr P Cummins The Way: The character of an excellent 21C Education).

LENT TERM ACHIEVEMENTS

We must not forget our achievements during the Lent Term. We have the opportunity to shine in many different ways over the coming months. I have every confidence that if we work together, in partnership, we can survive this crisis and thrive in the future. As a school we have been an integral part of Reading for 900 years. It may seem that we in a dark hour currently but it will pass if we stick to our core values and work to together to stay safe. Then our aim will not only be to save lives but to ensure that they flourish. I am proud to share some of these achievements with you as follows:

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Reading School Boarding Ofsted Inspection 2020 – Outstanding



Ofsted awarded Reading School 'outstanding' in its Boarding Ofsted Inspection of the school in February. Ofsted commented: *"Boarding is integral to the life of the school. The academic and social progress of boarders is exceptional, such that the experience enhances their life opportunities. Leaders and managers draw on a wide range of data to inform safeguarding practice and have the well-being of students central to their decision-making."*

Reading School awarded the 'Get Berkshire Active' Secondary School of the Year Award 2020



Reading School was awarded the Get Berkshire Active Award, for the 'Active Secondary School Award' category after being shortlisted as the final three schools in Berkshire. We offer a diverse range of sporting and co-curricular activities to our students. We are committed to maximising the value of activities beyond the classroom; therefore activities are overseen or led by sports coaches, staff and senior students to enhance leadership skills. Thank you to all key supporters – the Reading School Community.

Mr D McGall (Assistant Headmaster) said:

"Many thanks to Sport England and in particular the Get Berkshire Team for organising the awards evening. It was an inspirational event and brilliant to meet a host of other nominees from diverse fields across Berkshire who share a passion for sport, physical activity and the role it can provide in mental and physical wellbeing. We are very proud that Reading School gained recognition through the award of "The Reading Way" and how sport can indeed play a central part in building good men."

Mr S Allen (Teacher of PE & Housemaster) said:

"It was an honour to be nominated along with some amazing other schools from Berkshire. We have developed our curriculum to try and ensure every student can find a physical activity they can be passionate about and therefore stay fit and healthy for life. I love being part of a team where there are constantly new ideas to improve our department and the opportunities for our students. We are really proud to win the award and grateful to everyone who supports us."



Future Stories

The great work our Future Stories staff and students continued as over 60 Year 12 students volunteer weekly at 10 local primary schools supporting students in the classroom, resulting in over 1000 hours of voluntary work in the local community during the Michaelmas term. These sessions will continue weekly during the Lent Term.

This is in addition to the familiarisation sessions for disadvantaged Year 5 boys and girls that were introduced following the February half term. 40 students from a variety of Primary Schools attended these sessions. Our Sixth Form students and staff volunteers started to roll out fun lessons after school each Tuesday focusing on Maths and English skills. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the course due to school closure but I am grateful to Mr Tom Evans who will be delivering resources to all those boys who attended these sessions.

Our work has not stopped just because of school closures. We are in regular contact with our Future Stories community and are proud that we have been able to deliver food boxes to those in our community that are in most need. We are now thinking creatively of how we can support our families even further over the coming weeks.

The Future Stories programme embeds the culture of social responsibility at Reading School.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to the following students and teams on their achievements, demonstrating excellence, leadership, collaboration and teamwork:

January

- Reading School proudly hosted the **Geographical Association quiz** for the 12th year running in the suitably distinguished venue of Big School. The quiz format involved a University Challenge style face-to-face quiz for multiple teams of three students, aimed at the Year 8–10 age range, testing the place knowledge of 9 local schools.
- Rishabh R; Vivian V, Ved C, Shaunak Jaya S, Chanuka W, Krish M, Armaan C, Mayank M and Mitansh N participated in the Bezerk Lamda Public Speaking examinations gaining 2 Merits and 6 Distinctions with 1 Distinction in Acting.
- J Song (7C) competed in the National Badminton Tournament gaining three medals.
- Reading School's **Poet Laureate**, Leo O (12PS) shared his poem, 'Frayed' on World Poetry Day. At a time of social distancing, poetry can be effective means of expression that can offer a chance to escape without leaving our homes.
- Peter B (7S) was invited to the Department of Computer Science at the University of Oxford on Saturday 25 January as a finalist in a UK-wide competition – **The UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge**. Peter was among the top 61 highest achieving students to reach the final out of 79,986 participants students entered into the first round for this age group. In the juniors (10-12) age category he achieved a second place medal which was presented at a prize-giving ceremony at Hertford College. There were over 170 Reading School students who made it to the second next round demonstrating our calibre of academic excellence.
- Reading School proudly hosted the **Geographical Association quiz** for the 12th year running in the suitably distinguished venue of Big School. The quiz format involves a University Challenge style face-to-face quiz for multiple teams of three students, aimed at the Year 8–10 age range, testing the place knowledge of 10 local schools. The top 3 teams were; Trinity School in third, Langtree in second and Reading School in first place! Congratulations to the first team winners, Sankhadeep K (8S); Stephen P (9L); Daniel T (9S) and the second team, Armaan C (8W); Morgan K (10W) and James B (9E) who gained sixth place.

February

- Reading School's team, **Black Thunder** travelled to Bristol to compete in the 2019-20 **FIRST® LEGO® League City Shaper England and Wales National Championships**, at the UWE, University of the West of England. Congratulations to the Robotics Team who qualified for the international tournament. Harry J; Sida L; Daniyal V; Rishabh L; Greg C; Asad A; Paarth G; and Sam A-O demonstrated outstanding teamwork, commitment and innovation.
- Two **Reading Rhinos Ultimate** teams representing Reading School participated in National Ultimate Frisbee tournament.
- Audric T (10L), Surya H K (10S), Veer P (10L), Neel D (10L), Rahul G (10L), Siddharth B (10L), Rishi D (10W), Henry B (10E), Prakhar G (10C) and Aazim A (10E) were selected to represent Reading School at the **Maths Feast** and both teams scored high coming in 1st and 3rd place demonstrating excellent teamwork and skills.
- KS3 and KS4 teams competed in the **National Schools Championships Regional Finals**, taking 2nd place overall – congratulations to both teams.
- Maths Feast - On Wednesday, eight year 10 students competed at the Maths Feast organised by the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP). The competition is a fun educational challenge for Year 10 students which tests problem-solving and teamwork skills. Our two teams did very well and were placed 1st and 3rd.
- Congratulations to all the Year 9, 10, 11 students who took part in the Maths Challenge Intermediate

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March

- Year 8 and 9 students won 1st place in the **Magistrates' Court Mock Trial Competition Berkshire** regionals. Thirteen students acted as the prosecution lawyers, defence lawyers, witnesses, ushers, legal advisors and witnesses in a mock trial. Congratulations to Lucca K (9C); Milan G (8E); Adam M (9S); Rohan O (8E); Harry A (9S); Branson R (9S) and Josha G (9C); Jamie R (8E); Parth K (8E); Armaan C (8W); Oliver C (9E), Advay C (9S); and Mitansh N (8E). Unfortunately, the Regional Finals have been cancelled.
- Anirudh G (12BSA), Dev G (12AC), Rahul M (12JP), Sunny K (12VGG) from team Quantum Fund on making it to the 2020 Student Investor Challenge final!
- **2020 British Biology Olympiad** – Year 13 students participating achieved 10 Gold, 13 Silver, and 10 Bronze awards. The following Reading School students achieved:
 - **Gold awards** - (placing them in the top 6% of students who participated): Siddharth S (13FS), Alex S (13TA), Sanchit A (13FEH), Daniel C (13AC), Tom R (13TA), Ali R (13JL), Vasu P (13MJK), Hamzah A (13JL) and Jack D (13DAW).
 - **Silver Awards** - Aryan D (13JP), Asish P (13FEH), Muiyiwa A (13JM), Joel B (13FEH), Nick Y (13JL), Sher G (13SP), Aleksandar S (13AC), Taha H (13MRC), Richard A (13MJK), Navraj K (13FEH) and Nicholas S (13JL).
 - **Bronze awards** - Anthony Z (13F), Benjamin C (13MJK), Shaan M (13MK), Hamza A (13JP), Joshua H (13BSA), Dhruv M (13TA), Liam P (13JP), Daniel M (13AVS), Nikhil P (13JP) and Ian S (13JP).
- Special congratulations to Siddharth S (13FS) who has been selected to attend the **UK Team Selection Final for the International Biology Olympiad 2020** at the University of Warwick, following his achievement in the British Biology Olympiad 2020. This places Siddharth in the top 16 biology students in the country!
- Sida Li (10W) becomes a finalist in the **Big Bang UK Young Scientists and Engineering Competition** for his app.
- Conrad S (Y12) was one of 7 bassoonists to gain a place in the **2020 National Youth Orchestra**. He was awarded **The Joy Day Trophy** for *"most promising young musician."*
- Sida Li (10W) and Luke H (9W) came 4th and 8th place respectively as well as Nicholas L (9W) in the intermediate category of the **TCS Oxford Computing Challenge (TCSOCC)** national finals.
- Samuel A (9W) and Ryan L (8L) gained a place in the finals of the **Raspberry Pi Competition**.
- Our **Junior and Senior Chess Teams** qualified for the national finals.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

There were a number of activities abroad including:

- Years 9, 10 & 12 Spanish exchange to Albacete with Colegio C.E.D.E.S.
- Activities with Lunhua Education to facilitate the setting up of SRS.
- Development of Future Stories International programme with Rain Edge High School, Kenya.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We have introduced an extensive range of exciting co-curricular activities and PE options:

- After a 6 year absence we are so pleased to finally have swimming back on the curriculum currently offered to Year 9.
- Chess: Junior Competition (Year 7-8) led by our Chess Captains.
- Junior Competition Colts competitions (Year 9-11) led by our Chess Captains
- Congratulations to the students who participated in National Badminton Competition (County Match)
- Year 10 IBM Smarter School workshop
- A delegation of 8 Reading School students from Years 12 and 13 visited the Royal Alexandra and Albert School for a pupil-led Model United Nations Conference. Abel F (13BSA), Saaketh N (12MK), Arlan A (12JM), Himesh P (12AVS), Daniel C (SP), Ruilang Q (12SP), Rohan C (12HYA/IS) and Marcel Y (12FEH) took part in the organised debates and panel discussions on global challenges and politics.
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MUSIC

Reading School welcomed rhythms from Africa, South America, Israel/Palestine, and India in musical workshops delivered by BeatGoesOnUK. GCSE Music students attended workshops that explored rhythms from all four corners of the world with guest musicians and percussionists Oliver Tunmer, Yaron Engler, Johnny Kalsi, and Lucky Moyo.

DRAMA

The Reading School Drama Department presented 'The 39 Steps' which sold out in two days, led by Mr B Sandiford (Head of Drama). This was an excellent performance by the students involved, showcasing their creative flare as well as collaboration skills as the play was directed and performed by Year 11 drama students.

SPORT

Please see the PE twitter page for photos of the full breadth and depth of activity on offer this term.

Cross Country

The Berkshire cross country competition was held at Newbury show ground with hundreds of competitors taking part from across the county. We had runners in every age group and the following boys finished in the top 16, qualifying for the National competition.

Junior
J Titmas

Intermediate
A Gupta
J Atwal

Senior
H Fieldsend

J Atwal in Year 11 has entered this competition every year for 5 years and finished in the top 16 this year for the first time. A great example of hard work and dedication.

Lent term Football Review

During the Lent Term (up to and including 12 March) the Reading School Football Teams from Year 7 through to the 1st XI played a total of 54 fixtures in a range of competitions. The overall performance figures show that the boys won 34 of those games, they drew 3 and lost 17.

Notably, it has been the lower years that have excelled with the Year 8 team boasting a 100% win record and reaching the County Cup Quarter-Finals. The Year 7s lost just one game - boasting 22 different goal-scorers – and not conceding a single goal since the 10th February. Both teams were on course to participate in the Reading Schools League Finals when the season was suspended.

OXBRIDGE AND MEDICINE OFFERS

Academic excellence is part of our mission, along with the aspiration to build good men. We are delighted to report that this year 23 students have been offered places at Oxbridge colleges for a wide range of highly competitive courses. I would like to congratulate everyone that went through the rigorous admissions process from application, to admissions tests, through to interviews.

In addition, congratulations to the 19 Medical and 3 Dentistry applicants that were put through their paces in the application process for one of the most ferociously competitive courses. The decision to embark on a career in medicine isn't one to be taken lightly. Reading School is proud that we have many students that apply to read medicine related degrees every year.

Congratulations also to Joel C and Ayush T who have both secured Graduate Apprenticeships with PwC and BDO, accountancy firms who run a highly competitive application and interview process.

Mrs J Pickering (Teacher of Biology and Lead on Medicine Interviews) and the whole Sixth Form team led by Mr A Lloyd, Assistant Headteacher, devote an enormous amount of time over and above their normal day; to ensure our all our students have the best chances of success.

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INSPIRE LECTURES

Three inspire lectures took place covering Health Economics, Physics and Meningitis Awareness from leading professionals or Old Redingensians with in-depth specialist subject knowledge.

- Dr Steve Dayman MBE, an instrumental figure in raising awareness of Meningitis, volunteered his time to talk to our students and staff about why research and growing awareness is so important. This was arranged by Charity Prefect, Ben C (Y13).
- Tads Ciecierski-Holmes (OR 2009 - 2017) returned to Reading School to talk to students about his studies in Health Economics.
- Adam Wright (OR 2003-2010) returned to Reading School to give an Inspire Lecture on the physics behind solar cells.

Unfortunately, we have had to postpone the lectures that were due to take place at the end of this term and the Summer term. We aim to move towards possibly delivering these lectures via an online mode. Please support us in encouraging your son(s) to attend these lectures, which provide an invaluable insight into career paths and specific subject areas. If you would like to deliver a workshop or Inspire Lecture in a specific industry or share your career pathway beyond Reading School, please do get in contact with Mrs J Chhokar or Miss P Hutchinson in the Society Office at events@reading-school.co.uk. There is particular interest in medicine, scientific research, finance industries, computer science, engineering, languages and the creative arts.

GUEST INSPIRE LECTURES

By Friday 24 April, we are hoping to publish an aspirational list of 160 potential titles for extension lectures, in order to supplement the curriculum and stretch students' perspectives. Our Heads of Department are working on a list of ten topics per subject, and we would invite any parents with an academic specialism or research background to look closely at the list. Similarly, if any parents have connections via professional networks that might yield guest lecturers for this series we would be delighted to receive your help. More details will follow on Friday 24 April.

PREPARATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE LIFE

Our Year 13 students are now, broadly at the end of their supervised study courses. We are asking all recent Alumni, if they can help us:

- to signpost recommended reading lists to all our current students;
- to contribute to an online discussion forums that are university and course specific; and
- to provide advice on particular modules, choices, and adjustments to university life.

We are hoping to create a programme of 30 lectures tailored as an introduction to undergraduate study to run from week commencing Monday 27 April to Monday 6th July.

ALUMNI NEWS

- Former School Captain, Neil Shabong (OR 2009-2016), undertook a 10-week volunteering placement in Tanzania, as part of the International Citizen Service (ICS).
- Jonathan Davies (OR 2007-2013) competed in the men's senior British Athletics 3000m, earning a gold medal and his first British title in the British Indoor Athletics' Championships 2020.
- Matthew Wadsworth (OR 2011-2018) took part in the 138th Varsity chess match (Oxford vs Cambridge), leading his team to a worthy win with a score of 5.5 to Cambridge University: 2.5 to Oxford University. The match took place in the Royal Automobile Club and has been played annually since 1873.
- Jack Lawrence, Nathan Galpin, Will Clennell and Dominic Cooke (OR 2011-2018) defeated Oxford opponents in Varsity Bridge match. They played alongside 4 other enthusiastic undergraduates at the Cambridge vs Oxford Varsity bridge match held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, London. Congratulations to Jack, Nathan, Will and Dominic who won by 36.25 IMPs.
- Award-winning Science editor and author Tom Whipple (OR 2000-2007) returns to Reading School to launch his new book 'Get Ahead in Physics from Newtons Law to Levitating Frogs'.

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BOOK WEEK 2020

The 2020 Book Week was spectacular with a range of author talks, book signings and workshops, kindly sponsored by the Old Redingensians Association, with whole school student participation

- We commenced the week an author talk and book signing by Chris Bradford, author of the Young Samurai series and the Bodyguard series, delivered to Year 7 and Year 8. He had a captivating display of samurai swordsmanship and showed off some bodyguard techniques! 180 books sold.
- Polar traveller, author, and media personality, Alex Hibbert, spoke to all Year 8 and Year 10 on day two of Book Week, about his experiences; including survival in extreme environments, testing new equipment, problem-solving and team-work. His photographic collection has been published in every corner of the globe and he has been a BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year finalist three times - this passion for the natural world leading to a degree in biology from Oxford University.
- Our very own Reading School author, Matthew C, delivered a fantastic lunch time talk on self-publishing having published Thorne's Conquest. Completely impressed with the drive and commitment Matthew has displayed here. A young author in the making!
- Author Professor Nicolas Tredell fascinated our English A level students with his impressive insight into The Great Gatsby. Thank you to Mrs Hall for arranging this.
- Award-winning historical fiction author Paul Dowsell inspired Year 9 GCSE history students on day three of Book Week 2020. Paul takes his inspiration from history and uses historical research in his books. Auslander won the 2019 Trinity Schools Book Award and the 2011 Hamelin Associazione Culturale Book Prize and won or was shortlisted for 19 other UK and international book awards over 2009 and 2012.
- Alex Baker from Igniting Writing, ran one of his creative writing activities on day four at Reading School. He came to ignite writing! Alex led a science fiction themed creative writing workshop open to all years after school on day four of Book Week 2020.
- Local children's author and Reading School parent, Holly Webb joined pupils for an informal lunch-time talk on World Book Day. Holly has written over 100 books and worked as a book editor for Scholastic before becoming a best-selling author.
- Our 7th annual Book Week concluded with award-winning author, Sarah Govett returning by popular demand to speak to all Year 10 students. Sarah is a University of Oxford graduate and author of the critically acclaimed dystopian trilogy, The Territory. The Guardian's children's book critic referred to this novel as "the 1984 of our time". It was also included in the Telegraph's Best YA Books of the Year and won the Trinity Schools Book Award 2018.
- In addition to the above the following also took place:
The Scholastic Book Fair; Readathon; Drop Everything and Read.



Arguably now is the opportunity to read more, for pleasure as well as directly for study purposes. Please see our Reading School Twitter feed for further details.

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Reading School is an Exempt Charity under Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993, and is recognised as charitable by HM Customs and Excise, ref. no. XT35863.

Registered address as above, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 7475515.

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INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS

There was a host of successful exchanges with our partnership schools abroad including:

- Years 9, 10 & 12 Spanish exchange to Albacete with Colegio C.E.D.E.S.
- Year 12 History Berlin trip led by Miss Stratford (Teacher of History)
- Year 7 and 8 Finland - for the first time ever, we extended our educational visits to include two groups of Year 7 and 8, to experience the arctic expedition to Finland. You only had to see the photos and smiles on our social media displaying how our pupils embarked on some life skills. Using collaboration, resilience and team work this outstanding destination offered the opportunity to try activities like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing whilst they discovered Finland's geography, nature and traditional way of life.

PHILANTHROPY

This term, the Reading School community supported the school's charities via pupil led initiatives such as Sure 24, Nakuru Kenya. However, as the reality of Covid-19 has quickly evolved we have shifted our attention to those we can help closer to home in the current pandemic. On Tuesday 17th March, just as Covid-19 was unfolding, with support from Assistant Headteacher Mr McGall, Mr Evans and the School Captain, Hugo Rompani, during a Year 9 PSHE class distributed over [1000 postcards](#) to the entire Reading School student body as part of our 'Words for Wellbeing' initiative. Having discussed the need for solidarity and communication in a period of isolation and anxiety, they invited all students to write and send postcards to the oldest members of their family, or vulnerable neighbours of the wider community. Many chose to write to the local care homes that they or their peers ordinarily visit as part of the school's inter-generational project, while others took the postcard home to post through a neighbour's door. The cost of postage has been covered by the generous support of the Reading Foundation.

Reading School distributed food donated by students and staff to ReadiFood, an independent Food Bank providing food parcels to those in severe need in the greater Reading area. We have provided [food parcels](#) to our vulnerable families, families in isolation and families of key workers who have needed support and this will continue every two weeks for as long as we are able to support them. Lunch for the children of critical workers in the NHS was provided earlier this week at St Luke's Church working with Harrisons our caterers. Year 8 student, Aancile A (8C) did the '[Brave the Shave](#)' to fundraise to buy more personal protective equipment (PPE) for NHS staff at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, where his mother is a nurse. Last week marked [National Intergenerational Week](#) and whilst we were limited with celebrating this week in the current Coronavirus crisis, Milan G (8E) shared a very important message about how a regular phone call to grandparents or elderly family or friends can mean so much when faced with isolation.

We are hugely proud to work with the Royal Berkshire Hospital and provide them the space to create the '[NHS Village](#)' providing 40 accommodation units for NHS staff during this critical time. The Governors and the Reading Foundation fully endorse this support. As we begin to reach the Covid peak over the coming weeks, the RBH's requirements will expand and we will continue to ask for volunteers and support, as we come to know the specific and urgent needs of the NHS. Yesterday Reading School was on Sky News and BBC's South Today (11 minutes in) click the link in case you missed it:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000gzkn/south-today-evening-news-02042020>

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READING SCHOOL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We have had lots of positive tweets and support through social media has been immense. I am impressed that we have already reached £5,880.00 (total plus Gift Aid £6,747.50) since launching this campaign last Friday. 58% of the target of £10,000. I also want to thank those that have offered their support in a volunteering capacity. As soon as we are clearer in terms of the extra support that is required we will be contacting you. Until then please remain safe at home. I know this is an extremely challenging time for us all, as we navigate working from home and providing educational support and childcare or elder care for our families. I am deeply touched by the community spirit of Reading School and support offered in different ways.

Please give as little or as much as you can, all donations go some way to supporting those that most need it during this crisis and beyond. See link to Virgin Giving Money [Future Stories Support Fund](#)

For those that wish to volunteer please sign up here:
[Volunteer support form - Covid-19 Crisis](#)

INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION

We have been inspired by pupils and what they have been doing whilst they are in isolation:

- Mehul Garg (Y8) is keeping the community engaged and positive with riddles on [LetsLocalise](#). Click the link to see if you can figure it out!
- Nathan Brown (8E) and his brother Daniel have started a business selling wooden racks click here to see what is on offer at [Brown's Boot Racks](#).

The one positive thing I am hopeful for during this time of isolation is we will build a philanthropic culture has the Reading School community has already demonstrated as being not only generous givers but selfless volunteers. Now is the time to set those examples as our students watch us and how we react.

I am certain Covid-19 will fuel the next wave of innovation and entrepreneurs, as global pandemics change the trajectory of governments, economies and businesses - altering the course of history. I suggest that you share your stories with us at communications@reading-school.co.uk.

Follow us on the following social media channels:

[facebook.com Reading-School](https://www.facebook.com/Reading-School)
[Reading School on Twitter](#)
www.linkedin.com

If we have not responded to a request, please do not be disheartened, be assured we are working our way through and will revert to you at the earliest convenience. We also communicate through the Frequently Asked Questions feature every Friday. Be mindful that I have requested that all teachers and staff take some leave over the Easter break to ensure they are safe and remain well and take care of their families too. I very much hope that when the remarkable accomplishments above are remembered, every member of our community will know that if in times like these providence provides us with opportunities to be our best selves. I hope that every parent, student, staff member and anyone else who belongs to the Reading School community, will embrace the opportunity to refocus on what matters most, and to do what is right.

I hope and pray you all stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

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Contributions on a monthly or annual basis can be made by cheque, standing order, cash or Scopay.
For cash and cheques, click on the link to the [Donation Form](#) and return it to the Society Office
If you would prefer to arrange a standing order through your own online banking our details are:

Bank: Lloyds TSB Account name: Reading School Charitable Fund

Sort Code: 30-67-99 Account No. 40733560

Reference: 365 and your son's name

So we can thank you and confirm payments please click: [365 Building for the Future](#).

If you would like to make your payment via [Scopay](#) please ensure you also complete the gift aid form.

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