



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

12 FEBRUARY 2021

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# Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

## Feast of Saint Valentine

Knowing more about cultural traditions helps to nurture our cultural capital. In the Christian calendar we are approaching Lent, the period of 40 days before Easter, the most important feast in the year. But before Lent commences with Ash Wednesday we are offered the Feast of St Valentine. The Feast of St Valentine was established by Pope Gelasius I in 496 AD, to be celebrated on 14 February in honour of Saint Valentine of Rome, who died on 14 February 269AD. The custom of sending greeting cards, known as valentines, offering confectionary and presenting flowers developed initially in early modern England and spread throughout the English-speaking world during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst in Mexico, St Valentine's Day is also known as Día del Amor y la Amistad, Day of Love and Friendship.

In 1868 Cadbury, the chocolate company, created Fancy Boxes in the shape of a heart for Valentine's Day. I would encourage members of the Reading School Community to refresh in a positive manner the Valentine's Day traditions. Perhaps to focus on the charity aspect in the tradition of the 'day of love and friendship.' Or for our students perhaps you could show your appreciation of your family by offering to help around the house including, but not limited to, St Valentine's Day. Whilst romantic football fans may wish to look at [.@TRICKETTengland](#), for the special Valentine's Day version of the Diego Armando Maradona socks, in pink with a heart instead of a football on the design.

## Parental Survey

We were delighted to receive an overwhelmingly positive and extensive response from parents to the Online Learning survey and have acted swiftly to ensure our Pastoral teams act upon year-group specific concerns, Academic teams factor parent feedback into their planned delivery and we share your delightful praise with our staff. Our Senior Leadership Team have put together a set of responses to '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)', that we hope will allay some common concerns and give you a flavour of how the School continues to improve its provision in response to these challenging times. Parents are a crucial member of the Reading School community and our staff know from their experience of home-schooling their own children how difficult it can be. We thank you for your invaluable support and care.

## Reading Way Afternoons

As part of KS3 Science Challenges, well done to all those who have been getting out and enjoying the snow and sunshine and looking for signs of spring. Click the '[Signs of Spring](#)' to see a collection of some of the great photography shared with us bringing positivity and appreciation of nature. We challenge you to spot signs of spring on your walks over the half term and share them with us at [communications@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communications@reading-school.co.uk). Thank you to all the staff and students for their photo contributions over the last week.

## Deci-Tour de France 2021

Well done to all those that are taking part in the various Strava Challenges, in particular congratulations to last week's leaders in the Deci-Tour de France led by Mr P Stromdale.

I encourage you all to participate in one of the challenges that have been set on Teams.

## Last Week's Leaders

	Distance		Longest Ride		Climbing	
	 Seth Payne	223.9 km	 Seth Payne	110.9 km	 Seth Payne	2,297 m
	 James Brown	161.8 km	 James Brown	72.8 km	 James Brown	2,277 m
	 John Spence	136.7 km	 Oliver Clement	66.5 km	 John Spence	1,032 m

## Berkshire Schools Virtual Cross-Country Championships

I encourage those that wish to participate in the Virtual Cross Country Championships to sign up to the competition [here](#). The competition window for this event is Saturday 6th to Sunday 28th February 2021. There are certificates for the top 3 athletes in each age group plus top 3 teams (4 athletes from the same school in the same age group) plus winners' medals. It would be great to see as many entries as possible from Berkshire Schools pupils years 7 - 13.

## LGBT History Month

This week we have been marking LGBT History Month sharing a colourful display of books and resources to explore and understand stories from individuals who have overcome adversity and set examples for a more inclusive future. Books are also available via vlebooks too. In addition, various stories and information have been shared via Teams.

## Vacancies

Please find below current vacancies. If you know anyone who might be interested, please forward to them:

[Biology Teacher](#) deadline 19 February.

[Economics Teacher](#) deadline 19 February

[Chemistry Advert](#) and [Chemistry Details of the Post](#) deadline 5 March.

In addition, please find links below to vacancies at Kendrick School:

[School and Pastoral Administrator](#) deadline 26 February.

## Gratitude and Hope

Thank you for all your work and support over this Half Term , since 7 January.

Parents all deserve gratitude for their commitment, as do our staff and of course our students.

I hope that all our families are able to enjoy the February Half Term.

I hope that our students can read for pleasure, listen to music and inspiring podcasts and ensure they exercise as much as they can.

I hope everyone can spend more time showing gratitude to their family and less time on computer screens, Teams and Zoom

I wish you all a safe and restful Half Term.

**Mr AM Robson**  
**Headmaster**

# Excellence

## All Years – Lent Term 2021

Please click the [‘At A Glance’](#) document which outlines the timetable for all years during the Lent Term.

## All Years – Reports and Parents’ Evenings

In order to provide enough time for teachers to mark the Year 11 & 13 interim assessments, and publish reports to parents ahead of Parents' Evenings, please see the following amendments. Please see the calendar on the School website for further updates, where dates regarding other year groups will be updated in due course. Thank you for your patience as we continue to adapt to changing circumstances.

	<b>Report Publication</b>	<b>Parents' Evening</b>
Year 11	w/c 1st March	11th March
Year 12	Before Easter	25th February
Year 13	w/c 8th March	25th March
Year 8	Before Easter	-

## Year 8 only

Please see link to the outline information concerning the GCSE options process. We urge all Year 8s to focus on continuing to set themselves high standards in all subjects, as they are still only 4 terms into their time at Reading School, and Year 8 is a crucial year for setting solid foundations for what is to come. Please contact your son's form tutor if you have any queries which are not answered in the guide.

[Year 8 Options Guide](#)

## Competitions

### Next Generation Economics Competition

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) invites UK students in **Year 10 to Year 13** or equivalent to write about big economic challenges by 25 April 2021. Thank you to Mr D Mead (OR 2015) for sharing this opportunity with us.

Write about the biggest economic challenges facing your generation between 15 February and 25 April 2021 to enter our Next Generation Economics Competition. You could win £250.

Click the link here for more details: [Next Generation Economics Competition](#)

We strongly encourage participation from **Year 10 to Year 13 economics students**.

### 2021 TSL Sustainability Challenge

#### Theme: Protecting biodiversity

The Sustainability Challenge provides a platform for voices to be heard and recognises and rewards the sustainability ideas, actions, and leadership of participants of all ages.

The overall winner will be awarded the 2021 Challenge Trophy and a cash prize of £500 or equivalent. The winning entry for each age category will receive a special e-medal and gift.

The winners will be announced on 1 May 2021, as part of the lead-up to the next Conference of Parties (COP 15) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The winning videos will be sent to UN Secretary General António Guterres and other leaders in the international community.

- 28 February 2021 Deadline for Challenge video entries
- 9 April 2021 Top entry winners from each age category notified.

Click the link for entry details and more information: [Sustainability Challenge - Trust for Sustainable Living](#)

We encourage **participation from Biology and Geography students**.

### Historical Fiction Competition 2021

[The Historical Association](#) historical fiction competition has gone from strength to strength. Pupils can set their stories in any period or place in the past, so the story can fit in with and extend any historical topic you may be studying. Click here for more details: [The Historical Association](#). A recommended minimum story length of 400 words with a maximum word length of 3500 words.

Deadline: Friday 28 May 2021

Prize winners will be notified in writing in September/October 2021. All queries should be addressed to Olivia Dent on [olivia.dent@history.org.uk](mailto:olivia.dent@history.org.uk)

The results of the competition will be posted on the Historical Association website: [www.history.org.uk](http://www.history.org.uk)

We encourage participation from **Year 7 to Year 13 History students**.

### The Big Bang Competition

[The Big Bang Competition 2021](#) – showcase your STEM projects. This will take place online this year. The Competition is open to all year groups 7 to 13. They can enter any project work they have completed, be it at school or through a STEM club or at home! Deadline: March 2021.

## Book Week 2021

Author, Chris Bradford, will be giving a virtual talk to pupils at Reading School on **Friday 26th of February at 2.30pm**. To book click here: <http://bit.ly/ChrisBradfordTalk2021>. Chris will be talking about his brand-new book, The Soul Hunters. **Parental consent is required for this event, please see the [letter attached](#) and complete the consent form no later than Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February.**

### Book Festival Writing Competition

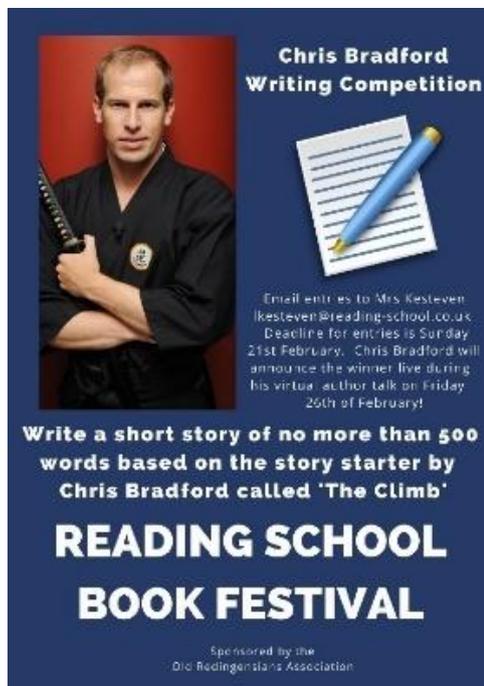
Write a short story of no more than 500 words based on this story starter by Chris Bradford

#### The Climb

Jason could feel his fingertips slipping off the slick rock. Every muscle tense in his arms, he desperately tried to pull himself up. But he had no strength left after the two-hour climb. 'Hold on! I'm coming!' cried Layla, scrambling across the cliff face. Jason saw the panic in her eyes. They both knew she was never going to reach him in time. His left hand lost its purchase on the rock and he dangled like a leaf in the wind. Glancing down at blackness beneath him, Jason wondered if all the sacrifice had been worth it. Henry dead. Jayde missing. Arthur killed. And now it was his turn...

Email entries to Mrs Kesteven [kesteven@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:kesteven@reading-school.co.uk)

Deadline for entries: **Sunday 21st February**. The winner will be announced live on 26th of February!



Chris Bradford  
Writing Competition

Write a short story of no more than 500 words based on the story starter by Chris Bradford called 'The Climb'

**READING SCHOOL  
BOOK FESTIVAL**

Sponsored by the  
Oic Readingers Association

Enter entries to Mrs Kesteven  
[kesteven@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:kesteven@reading-school.co.uk)  
Deadline for entries is Sunday  
21st February. Chris Bradford will  
announce the winner live during  
his virtual author talk on Friday  
26th of February!

### Reading School's Read for Good Readathon 2021



Reading School has a tradition of running an annual sponsored read for Book Week and we are delighted to announce that this year the 'Read for Good Readathon' will run from **15th February to 15th March**. It is open to all years and those in Years 7, 8 and 9 can also try their brand new digital '[Track My Read](#)' feature.

The Read for Good Readathon helps to raise money for children in hospital. The school also benefits by receiving vouchers for new books. This is a great activity for those who love reading and those who are looking for some extra motivation.

Please click the [Readathon Parent letter](#) for more information. Read for Good have produced a short film which you can access [here](#).

There is also a Team that pupils can join to find out more. The 'Read for Good Readathon Team' code is se870gc.



A new LRC record was set this week when a total of 20 Teams made up of 55 pupils took part in our annual Harry Potter Book Night Quiz.

This year's quiz was put together by previous winners Sidh G., Sid D. and Samuel J. Pupil Librarians Matthew C. and Rajan D, led by Head Pupil Librarian Matthew G worked hard behind the scenes providing technical support and enabling the smooth running of quiz.

After a tense set of three tie-breaker questions between Team Dhruv and Team Siddharth, Team Dhruv prevailed to become Harry Potter Quiz Winners 2021! Congratulations from us all.

# Integrity

## Safeguarding and Wellbeing

We very much hope you have a safe and restful half term break and use it to recharge.

Please see below guidance during remote learning.

- [Remote Safeguarding for Students](#) and [Remote Safeguarding for Parents](#)
- [CEOP](#) - Worth being aware that this is where you can refer concerns over online communications or sexual abuse.
- [Childline](#) offers 1:1 support and a guide to staying safe online for adults and children.

## Children's Mental Health Awareness

Our Prefect Senior Leadership Team, Led by School Captain, Dan N, acting as role models to support the junior pupils, have created a '[RS Mental Health 2021](#)' short film offering suggestions on how to cope during this difficult time. We have had lots of positive feedback from students and staff on the incredibly honest contributions from our inspiring prefect team.

If you are concerned about a student, talk to their tutor, Head of House, Mr D McGall (Assistant Head) or Mrs L Ayres (Assistant Head).

In addition, the '[Safeguarding signposting for Students](#)' provides routes of support throughout half term. Anthony Renshaw (Global Health Advisor) shared [Tips for remote working and homeschooling](#).

## Safer Internet Day

This week was Safer Internet Day which took place on **Tuesday 9th February**. There have been discussions during form time and guidance provided to students on how to be safer online encouraging students to be three things whilst online: [Safe, Kind and Thoughtful](#).

Additional resources:

- Article for parents - [Thinkuknow - Are you worried about something that has happened online?](#)
- [Staying safe online | Childline](#)
- [Safer Internet Day 2021 | Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Safer Internet Parents & Carers](#)

## Health and support

Please see Berkshire Healthcare's [School Nursing Newsletter](#) (February edition) for Secondary Schools. This covers recent information and signposting from:

- Mental Health and looking after yourself.
- Check to see if your Immunisations are up to date?
- Vitamin D: Are you getting enough?
- School Nurse Support Line

## Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

[Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity](#) are kindly offering places on courses to help parents from lower-income families. The courses help parents of children with dyslexia to support them at home with reading, spelling, maths and study skills. There are six online 1.5-hour sessions with support slides and recordings available if the parent cannot attend live. This is especially helpful while lots of children are doing their lessons at home. One of the courses starts on 22 February and there is another course scheduled for May.

Click [here](#) for course and details.

# Leadership

## Debating Society

The committee will host a debate every Wednesday at 2.30pm via Microsoft Teams. Over the forthcoming weeks, the motions include:

- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February - THS the censorship of music lyrics (Drill music etc.) - [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March – Motion to be confirmed – Joint Debate with Queen Anne’s School - [Click here to join the meeting](#)

All students are encouraged to participate in Debating Society gaining broad, multi-faceted knowledge, increasing confidence, poise and self-esteem and improving critical thinking skills.

## Work Experience opportunities

Students are reminded that when applying for virtual work placements to please ensure you inform your tutor of the details of the opportunity you are applying for, in advance. So, tutors are aware that a personal reference may be required.

- [Springpod Medicine Virtual Work Experience](#) - February 2021
- [HSBC work experience programme](#). A great opportunity deadline **21 February 2021**.
- [Virtual Work Experience](#) and Exploring the Veterinary Profession from University of Nottingham via Future Learn.

Virtual Work Experience opportunities available via **Speakers for School** for students aged 14-19 years old include:

- [Haworth Tompkins Architecture Insight Evening](#) - keen to find out more about a career in architecture on 2 March 2021. Deadline: 15 February 2021
- [VWEX: Construct your Career with Kier](#) - interested in design, finance, Health & Safety, Sustainability, Planning or Community Engagement. Dates: 1 – 5 March 2021. Deadline: 17 February 2021
- [East West Railway Company - Building a New Railway](#) - interested in Technology, Engineering, Planning, Business Studies, Design and/or Customer Services. Dates: 6 - 9 April 2021. Deadline: 28 February 2021.
- [Green Skills in the Construction and Engineering Industry](#) - interested in the ‘green’ plans for the construction and engineering industry. Dates: 6 - 9 April 2021. Deadline 7 March 2021
- [Anglian Water ‘App in a Day’ Insight Day](#) - Year 10 students interested in a career in creative design, IT and innovation. Date: 7 April 2021. Application Deadline: 8 March 2021
- [Anglian Water ‘App in a Day’ Insight Day](#) - Year 12 students interested in a career in creative design, IT and innovation. Date: 9 April 2021. Application Deadline: 10 March 2021
- [Engineering Green Skills Insight Day - Sir Robert McAlpine](#)- 14-19 year olds interested in sustainability and the engineering sector. Date: 9 April 2021. Deadline: 12 March 2021
- [Architecture + Design Work Placement – Carmody Groarke](#) 16-19 year olds who are keen to gain insight into architecture and design. Dates: 12 – 16 April. Deadline: 12 March 2021
- [Green Careers in the Build Environment – Morgan Sindall](#) 16 – 19 year olds interested in a career in environmentally friendly engineering. 6 – 9 April 2021. Deadline: 15 March 2021
- [Build Yourself with Wates – Sustainability Insight Day](#) 16 – 19 year olds interested in a career in engineering and sustainability. Date: 6 April 2021, 10am – 3pm. Deadline: 6 March 2021
- [Santander and sustainability](#) 14 – 19 year olds interested in financial inclusion and the environment. Date: 8 April 2021, 10am – 3pm. Application Deadline: 8 March 2021

- [Being Green Insight Day – Thames Water](#) 14 – 19 year olds interested in financial inclusion and the environment. Date: 7 April 2021, 10am – 1pm. Application Deadline: 7 March 2021
- [Sustainability and achieving Net-Zero by 2030 with SSE](#) 14 – 19 year olds interested in sustainability and city planning. Date: 6 April 2021. Application Deadline: 6 March 2021
- [Green Skills with GTR \(Govia Thameslink Railway\)](#) 14 – 19 year olds interested in climate change and the railway industry. Date: 7 April 2021, 10am – 1pm. Deadline: 6 March 2021

## Apprenticeships

- [PWC Flying Start degree](#). This combines work and university and is an excellent opportunity.
- [UCAS National Apprenticeship Week](#) – Monday 8 Feb to Friday 12 February.
- [Deloitte – Festival of Opportunity](#) explore opportunities from wherever you are, a month-long online festival features a line-up of inspiring, live, [interactive events](#).
- [KPMG apprenticeship programmes](#) - for information and to apply for apprenticeship/school leaver schemes at KPMG in audit and software engineering
- Sign up for the [Pearson College Apprenticeship](#) Discovery day on 18th Feb from 2-3.30pm. Pearson College are one of the key providers of degree apprenticeships

## Careers and additional opportunities

Students are reminded that careers and additional opportunities are posted to Teams. An example of these are set out below:

- [Oxford and Cambridge Virtual Student Conference 2021](#) - live from 23-25 March 2021  
The Oxford and Cambridge Virtual Student Conference are aimed at Year 12 students (or equivalent) who are studying for their A Levels/IB/Scottish Highers (or equivalent) in the UK and are beginning to consider their options for study beyond sixth form.
- Invitation for Parents from InvestIN-Ed click to register: [Success Beyond School](#)  
Free expert advice on guiding your child to a successful career from @InvestIN\_Ed.
  - The Skills Surgery - 24 February 7-8pm
  - The Power of Networks - 3 March 7-8pm
- [Virtual Hospital Work Experience from Education Projects](#) – 15 February 2021 from 10am to 4pm
- [PWC - employability skills toolkit](#) – See learning resources for students aged 13-18, PwC's employability skills toolkit. Covering topics such as technology, wellbeing and how to manage money provides lessons which can be delivered at home with additional guidance from parents and carers provided.
- [University of Leicester](#) - Short introductory videos explaining what studying a wide variety of subjects is like at University of Leicester. This could help with subject choice.
- [Lancaster University-](#) Series of webinars and an essay competition for anyone interested in studying Sport Science.
- [Loughborough University](#) – Engineering experience is an annual residential offering Year 12 students an opportunity to visit and stay overnight at one of the UK's leading universities for engineering.
- [University of Nottingham](#) – Series of webinars on offer from law, veterinary medicine, medicine and engineering from March to May.
- [New College of the Humanities](#) – online taster lectures for a whole range of subjects.
- [World Skills UK – Spotlight Talks](#) – Inspiring Careers excellence - Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 March 2021

- [London Universities Group Roadshow Webinar \(for students outside London\)](#) – 4 March at 6pm
- [R. U. Hacking? 2021 | 24-Hour Student Hackathon](#) - About R. U. Hacking? – 26 & 27 June  
R. U. Hacking? (Reading University Hacking) proudly present our third annual 24-hour Student Hackathon at the University of Reading, welcoming students from all over the UK and EU!  
  
Whether you're completely new to programming or are a seasoned hackathon veteran, you are welcome to join us in this fun and collaborative invention marathon! There are lots of prizes to be won so come along and get involved - beginners welcome!
- [University of Cambridge](#) - to register for what looks like a really interesting talk on History and Conflict in Central Balkans on 18 February at 5pm

# Community

## Motivation Webinar

Elevate's free parent webinars available to be watched at this link: <https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/replay>. You can also download a summary sheet of the main points [here](#).

## Future Webinars by Elevate Coaching

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March:** Preparing for Assessments in Covid

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March:** Managing Technology and Distractions

## Wellbeing

<https://www.reading-school.co.uk/page/?title=Wellbeing&pid=90>

[NHS every mind matters - covid-19 Staying at home tips](#)

[Princes Trust](#) - Supporting young people through COVID-19, pulling together some of the most helpful online resources for teachers and parents on how to support children and young people through this challenging time. Including the 'i am me' app recently listed as a useful resource for young people which is easily accessible.