

# Reading School Erleigh Road, Reading, RG15LW.

School Newsletter Issue 5

28th March 2012

### Note from the Principal

Dear Parents,

With the end of term fast approaching I thought this would be a good time to bring you up to date with developments in School this term. Although work on the Refectory has been delayed we are very close to completion and will be open for business early next term. I am grateful to all students and staff for their patience over the last two terms. Having now been inside the building with several colleagues I can assure everybody that it will definitely be worth the wait! We are in the process of having the area around the new building resurfaced and the kitchen is currently being installed.



Students working on Feasibility Study with Architect

Still more pleasing is the progress we have made on Feasibility Studies regarding development of our Sport and Science facilities. The architects appointed to undertake this work have now fed back to a wide range of students and staff and produced some inspirational ideas. There are very exciting times ahead.

It has been a pleasure to see so many of you at recent events in school, in particular the Big Band night, hosted by Mr. Simon Ward (Year 8 parent and Chair of the Boarding Parents' Association) and Mr. Richard Meehan (Director of Music). This was an exceptional night's entertainment. I am also grateful to the Sixth Form Management Team and to Mr. Harris and Mrs. Smith in particular for their leadership of the UCAS Information Evening recently. I have had very positive feedback.

Good luck to colleagues involved in the Comenius Exchange with our partner school in Denmark - we are looking forward to hosting 25 Danish Year 9 students next term. The theme of the exchange is more than fitting, given all the developments afoot: A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body.

Theek,

## Success at Chipping Norton Youth Jazz Band Challenge

On Friday 9th March a group of 17 boys from Years 8-13, travelled to take part in the Chipping Norton Youth Jazz Band Challenge. This is the first time we had entered this competition, which is now in its fourth year. This competition marked the start of 100<sup>th</sup> Chipping Norton Festival, and we were privileged to be spoken to by Blur bassist Alex James at the start of the evening.

Competition came from Oxfordshire County Youth Band and last year's winners, King Eddie's Revival Big Band. The band did the school proud. Each individual performed to the best of his ability, in spite of the large range of levels of skill and age within the band. Harry Davidson, Doug Boddington, and Eshaan Shivarani kept the motor running on bass drums and piano respectively, and fine solos from Richard Parkinson, Andrew Matthews and Stanley Glendinning left the audience in no doubt as to the breadth of talent in the band.

At the end of the evening Reading School were crowned the winners, thanks in no small measure to the sheer energy and joy of the players. We were praised by the adjudicator Keith Allen for the discipline of our ensemble, and our ability to work equally well in a number of different styles We will now be returning to Chipping Norton in September to take part in the town's jazz festival.

R Meehan





## **Student Achievements**

#### Drama Department A Level achievement

Reading School drama department is celebrating the excellent grades achieved by their A level Theatre Studies students for their practical exam, performed to a packed house in the Drama Studio on 8<sup>th</sup> March. The AS level students performed extracts from Patrick Marber's 'Dealer's Choice', Jez Butterworth's 'Mojo' and Stephen Berkoff's 'Dahling You were Marvellous' and the A2 students devised a highly effective comedy, 'Justin Time', based on the premise of a time traveller desperate to get back to



the present day for the birth of his first child. All thirteen students, including one who designed the set for 'Dealer's Choice', scored over 90% with five students gaining full marks.

'We were absolutely delighted by the high standards the boys achieved, a justifiable reward for the hard work and many hours that went into developing such excellent performances and set design. Well done!'

Ms Capon and Mrs Fooks

#### Individual Achievements

Well done to Alexander Johnston who won the first runner up prize in the Chinese Speaking Competition held by the British Council on Friday 10th February. This is a fantastic achievement. Further details can be found at: <u>http://www.britishcouncil.org/schoolpartnerships-chinese-speaking-competition.htm</u>.

Mrs H Hayes

#### **Biology Olympiad Results**

Congratulations to our Year 13 2012 Biology Olympiad students. There were 6 gold medals which is an excellent achievement and each student entered achieved an award! All of the gold medal winners were eligible for round 2 but only 4 chose to proceed. Of these Robert Starley is through to the third round (the last 16 in the UK). He now has to attend a residential (practical and theory) testing session in the Easter Holidays. 4 students are then selected from the 16 to represent the UK in Singapore. The British Biology Olympiad challenges Britain's most talented students and rewards them for their success. Congratulations to all involved!

| Gold winners:     | Amar Nanda, Robert Starley, Matthew Halligan, Samuel Hutchison, Alexander Breton and |
|-------------------|--|
|                   | Josh Gemill  |
| Bronze winners:   | John Cousins, Tristan Fletcher and Stephen Simkin.                                   |
| Highly Commended: | Ayodeji Ajanaku  |

Mrs MC Maunder

#### **Chemistry Olympiad Results**

Congratulations also all our students who took part in the Chemistry Olympiad. The results were:

6 x Gold

7 x Silver

3 x Bronze

Of the silver, 4 winners are in current Year 12, boding well for next year!

Mr S Longstaff







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## 'The Big Read' 2012

As part of my role as Literacy Across the Curriculum Coordinator, I wanted to raise the profile of reading across the school. It has been demonstrated that pupils who read regularly do better in exams, have more sophisticated vocabulary and better spelling, punctuation and grammar skills (all of which are going to be tested in subjects other than English next year).

I last surveyed the pupils through this project in 2006, so I wanted to get some more recent recommendations and get parents involved in recommending books too.

We are often asked for recommendations at Parents' Evenings and the 6th Form especially seem more reluctant to get reading, though they will often be asked at interview what they are reading, both within and around their chosen subject syllabus.

All pupils were asked to provide a list of books which they particularly enjoyed and I have collated those into the 2012 'Big Read' Book List. It was heartening to see lots of classics, as well as up and coming authors and recent award winners. The list has been emailed home to all parents and it is on Sharepoint under Shared Documents.

A week of quizzes were run to coincide with World Book Day and prizes awarded for the best individual and group scores. The English department has also been taking the younger years to the library, where Ms Kesteven talks to them about new books and what they have been reading, as well as giving them time to enjoy some quiet reading.

Thank you to all the parents who sent in their favourite reads. If any of you didn't get around to it, please feel free to email them to me (charden@reading-school.co.uk). Your selections will be included in the next edition!

Happy Reading

Mrs C. Harden



## Scholarship News

In July 2011, I auditioned for a scholarship with Razzamataz Theatre Schools in TAGE THE STAGE TH conjunction with 'The Stage' performing arts national newspaper. I was one of nine winners and was awarded a year of free tuition at Razzamataz Woodley branch, which teaches the three performing arts; singing, dancing and drama.

> I am now halfway through my scholarship and I have already experienced so much. Through November and December, I performed in South Hill Park's pantomime Cinderella. This was a really good learning path, as I learnt how competitive, yet fun, the industry of performing arts could be, and also how much you have to commit to it!

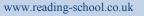
THE STAGE THES I was lucky to experience a professional photo shoot in London which resulted in being on the front cover of The Stage's Christmas edition, in a group scholarship photograph. Recently, The Stage invited all its scholarship winners from 2011 to their annual celebrity party. It was held in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, where 'Shrek' the musical is currently being performed. At the party I was able to converse to the likes of Barbara Windsor, Justin Lee Collins and directors from theatres all over the country.

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In the near future I am hoping to gain a bronze level Arts Award, this is a course you can take, which tests you in several areas of the performing arts.

Overall, I have enjoyed this whole experience and am grateful to Shelley and her team at Razzamataz, for all their help. Next year I hope to continue at Razzamataz and who knows I might end up making a career in the performing arts!

Alex Jenkins (8W)





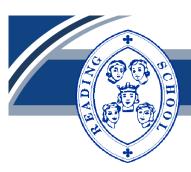


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### News from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC)

Time Travelling Author Materialises in School

Alex Scarrow the well know children's author who has written a series of successful young adult fiction novels visited the School on 10<sup>th</sup> February and gave a talk to all the Year 7's in the Chapel during Period 1. Alex 'entertained' the boys with a talk about his experiences of being an author and describing how he got his ideas for the books.

Alex captured the boys imagination with tales of his life including being in a band and designing computer games. He likened the computer games to his *Time Riders* series whereby everything including time travel and re-writing history is possible. His website describes the books characters as people who 'are recruited by an agency that no one knows exists, with only one purpose – to fix broken history'.

Alex's latest book, the fifth instalment of the highly successful, *Time Riders* series called *Gates of Rome* has just been published. There are to be nine in the series and the sixth one sounds even more gripping. Alex confided in the LRC staff the subject of the sixth book, but we are afraid you will have to wait until it is in print!

Alex ran a lively question and answer session including questions such as what was the attraction of the books? Alex replied that they were addictive with loads of action, short chapters and things that we've generally all seen plus it gets children off the X-Box!

Alex also kindly signed posters of his books and the boys were invited to do a review of the visit with a chance of winning one of these posters. Congratulations go to the following:

**Tom Faint (7E)** – 'This visit from Alex was the highlight of my week. It was interesting, funny but most of all really, really enjoyable. I thought *Time Riders* sounded a greatly immersing read and I can't wait to get started on them. I just feel a fool for not reading them before'.



**Alessandro Giacometto (7S)** – 'There was a group of Year 7 Students.... who should have been in Lesson 1. But a mysterious teacher said....'Follow me'. 'These students weren't just 'talked to' – They were inspired!'

**Edmund Wang (7S) –** 'When Alex Scarrow came to school, I was very excited because he was the author of a great book Time Riders! This is a book that involves three people from different times being miraculously saved by an old man. Saved is the wrong word, it should have been recruited....It's a great book and I recommend it'.

Thank you to everyone who helped on the day especially Vijay Gida and Louis Hung (year 12).

#### Berkshire Book Award 2012

The Book Club have been reading the Berkshire Book Award shortlisted titles this term. These books encompassed a range of genres and the boys considered all aspects of the books before deciding on the book they most considered worthy of the award. They voted for *Blood Red Road* by Moira Young. However, their runner up choice, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth* by Jeff Kinney won this year's award.

The boys have greatly enjoyed this reading challenge; it has opened their eyes to books and genres that they might not have necessarily chosen for themselves and they are now looking forward to the Carnegie Book Award which we will start to shadow after the holidays.



Book Club Members with the nominated books

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### News from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) cont...

Charlie Higson puts 'The Fear' into The Berkshire Book Festival!

Seven members of the LRC Book Club were lucky enough to go to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Berkshire Book Festival on 28<sup>th</sup> February held at Highdown School in Emmer Green.

Amin Al-Hussainy (9C), Reece Chen (9C), William Jefferies (9S), Daniel Salter (7S), Ian Scott (7C), Rhim Shah (7S) and Samuel Wood (11C) were among 400 pupils from more than 20 schools who were enthralled by the author Charlie Higson.

Charlie Higson has written two successful series of books; The Young Bond series (five books) which is based on the early life of 'James Bond' and The Enemy Series (currently three books) which is predominately based on zombies!



He talked about his influences and the inspirations for the books. In particular, he talked about zombies and vampires and the origins of the modern day stories and the film spin offs. He judged the audience right when he judged that the girls were keen on vampires thanks to the Twilight series (by Stephanie Meyer) and Robert Pattinson and the boys were keener on blood thirsty traditional zombie stories such as his own Enemy series!

He talked for about an hour followed by a question and answer session in which he admitted to the children that it takes a lot more to scare them these days as it did when he was their age!

The boys were lucky enough to be first in the queue for the book signing and photo session and they wrote afterwards:

'On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012, the Book Club embarked on an adventurous trip into the blood-sucking, zombified world of Charlie Higson. Personally, I thoroughly enjoyed the event and found Charlie Higson a very interesting speaker' **(Samuel Wood 11C)** 

'Charlie Higson should go into comedy! He kept us laughing all the way through, even when answering unprepared questions! We got a good insight and advice into becoming a great author, which I will! Overall 4/5 (Will Jefferies 9S)

Mrs A Jackson

## **Drop-In Clinic**

A reminder about our Drop-in Parent Clinic which are held on the second Tuesday of each month from 4.00pm – 6.00pm in the Principal's Office. The next of these will take place on Tuesday 8th May. This clinic will take the form of a surgery providing information, guidance, advice and support and to answer any questions or concerns you may have. A senior member of staff will be present with Mr Weeds, Principal. School Governors may also be available from time to time. If there is something you want to talk to us about – just come in!

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# Able Child Africa

I am running the London Marathon on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012 for AbleChildAfrica (www.ablechildafrica.org) a charity I have worked with for a number of years. I have been privileged enough to visit Kenya and Tanzania and have been humbled yet uplifted by many of the children I met there. On my return I felt compelled to do something to help underprivileged children in Africa and discovered AbleChildAfrica and the special work they carry out.

Since then the charity has become very close to my heart site. Some walked, some ran, some crawled, others made and this will the third time I have run London Marathon for them.

AbleChildAfrica is a small charity who support disabled children and disadvantaged young people in Africa. It is estimated that 1 in 10 children in Africa, that's up to 52 million children, are living with disability. Of these children it is feared that only 2% finish primary education, even fewer attend secondary school and as a result the vast majority are excluded from their communities. Later in life these children and young people face huge problems obtaining employment or welfare support and as a result are forced to live in poverty and often homeless in some of the most deprived communities in the world.

If you would like to sponsor me and help support disabled and disadvantaged children in Africa I have a Just Giving page set up http://www.justgiving.com/Ben -Coggan.

As in previous years I will be running the Marathon in fancy dress. This year I am running with my twin brother and his fiancé and we will be dressed as characters from the Wizard of Oz, so look out for Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion and the Tin Man making their way around the streets of the capital!

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for any support you can give me.

Mr B Coggan

## **Sport Relief**



On 23rd March 2012 Reading School joined thousands of people around the country to raise money for Sport In wonderfully Relief. sunny conditions staff and boys took part in a 1 mile Fun Run around the school

the task even harder by tying themselves together or carrying each other but everyone who took part raised money for children and underprivileged people in this

country and around the world. In addition to supporting Sport Relief a contribution of the money raised will go to A ble C hild A frica (www.ablechildafrica.org).



Mr Coggan would like to

thank all the boys and staff who took part in the nonuniform day and the Fun Run as well as all the parents who have donated so generously. The current total standing at £1,700 with some sponsorship still to be returned.



Work Experience

A plea to all parents for help with work experience placements. We are very short this year. If you or your workplace can offer work experience placements for one week during the first weeks of July, particularly in the areas of medicine, finance, graphic design, journalism, law, business/marketing, IT or engineering, please contact Mrs Chhokar: jchhokar@reading-school.co.uk.





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### News from the Sports Department

Lacrosse continues to grow from strength to strength. In the last few years we have had boys represent their countries internationally, but now we now have enough students to form a Reading School team both at U18 level and U16 level. We have had a number of fixtures against Lacrosse clubs, have entered 6 a side tournaments, the National Championships in blisteringly cold conditions and have fixtures against TASIS, Shiplake and Bluecoat coming up in the future. We are hoping to take a team on tour to Belgium in the future to help progress the future of Lacrosse at Reading School.

There is a Colt's Lacrosse camp being run for beginners and intermediate players. If you are interested in your son attending, please contact Mr. Roca for further details.

<u>Football:</u> The Football season has been very successful. Over 70 competitive fixtures played, and close to 200 students representing the school. The highlights of the season were U15's reaching the Quarter Finals of the County Cup and the 2nd XI winning the league. I would like to thank the hard work of Mr. Bellinger for organising the season and to the football coaches for their commitment to the students development and preparing the teams.

Players of the Season:

U12: Joe Wilson U15: Peter Hutton 1st XI: John Crawford U13: Jonny Halburt U16: Chimdi Obienu U14: David Jordan 2nd XI: Josh Billings

<u>Individual Achievements:</u> Congratulations to Roy Zhang (10S) who won second place in the boys singles in the 2012 Berkshire Closed Under-15 Badminton Tournament on Saturday 11th February 2012.

Congratulations to Jonathan Davies who has achieved the following outstanding results this term:

7th January: Berkshire Cross-Country Championships: Newbury Showground: Finished 1st

15th January: McCain UK Cross Challenge: Cardiff: Finished 1st

22nd January: EAA Cross Country Permit: Elgoibar, Spain: Finished 5th

First (non-Schools) international run (for England). Objective was to gain some international experience so finishing 5th was an unexpected bonus particularly as he was second placed in the England squad – most of whom were older; more experienced and had run for England before.

28th January: South of England Cross Country Championships: Brighton: Finished 1st

4th February: South East Schools Inter Counties: Basildon: Finished 1st

25th February: English National Cross Country Championships: Parliament Hill, London: Finished 6th

Most disappointing result of the season as this was a championship that Jonny really wanted to win for himself and Reading Athletic Club. He led for most of the race but misjudged the tactics and finished sixth. Despite the disappointment, this was a great learning experience; still a good result for Reading and showed he can dig deep when needed.

10th March: McCain UK Cross Challenge/UK Inter Counties: Cofton Park, Birmingham: Finished 1st

Jonny was very pleased to come back 2 weeks after the Nationals and win convincingly. It confirmed he was back on form and no lasting effects from Parliament Hill. This is a UK race (including Scotland, Wales and Ireland) and was televised on Sky.

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<u>17th March</u>: English Schools AA Cross Country Championships: Taunton: <u>Finished 1st</u> A great end to the 2011/2012 Cross Country season and, as Jonny has just moved to the bottom end of the Seniors age group, not a race that he was necessarily expecting to win. He ran very well and finished 1st beating many older athletes, some of whom are regular international runners.

Mr A Beckey



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## German Double Club

20 year 8 students have been acquiring German language skills and practising in the classroom and on the football pitch with great enthusiasm. The club is still running on Thursdays after school for year 7 students but in the future, the German department and Mr Bywater may make it available to other years. For anybody who would like to see some of the activities, do have a look on the following website <u>http://www.ukgermanconnection.org/doubleclub</u> Gut gespielt, Team!

Ms A Von Widdern

### CCF Activities – Lent Term

This term has been a busy one for members of the CCF. Routine Thursday afternoon activity has continued unabated with Year 10 recruits in both the Army and the RAF Sections working towards the completion of their basic proficiency training. All the Army recruits have successfully completed their skill at arms tests and have had the opportunity to use the No.8 rifle on the School Range . In addition, some took advantage of the visit to Ash Ranges on Sunday 11th March to fire the A2 Cadet GP rifle for the first time. The RAF section has had a busy flying programme including two visits to RAF Benson with 6 AEF and an outing to the Volunteer Gliding School at Abingdon. The biggest event of the term was the contingent Field Day which took place on Thursday 15th March at the School of Electronic and Aeronautical Engineering at Arborfield, hosted by 11 Training Battalion, REME. Here, cadets from both sections were given an insight into life in the REME as well as the practicalities involved in looking after and operating the Army's helicopters and armoured vehicles. Everyone also took part in a variety of command tasks and a mock field gun competition. A large number of cadets have applied for places on courses run specifically for cadets by the three armed services over the Easter and summer holidays. Not to be outdone, Wing Commander Walter and Captain Hurst attended and successfully completed the new 'Skill At Arms Instructors' course at the

Cadet Training Centre, Frimley Park during February half term. Plans are well in hand for both Army and RAF Section summer camps at Catterick and RAF Shawbury respectively which will take place during the penultimate week of the Summer Term (7<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> July).

Mr P Hurst

## **Student Information**

We have noticed recently that some of the information we hold on our student records are different from those being given on the paperwork for trips. Please you ensure that the office is sent up to date contact numbers and medical/ dietary requirements for your son to ensure our records are kept up to date? Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

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# **Young Enterprise**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, Prophet Enterprise competing in a national competition called Young Enterprise, hosted a quiz night for students and parents in order to raise money for our company. Our aim was also to ensure people had a great time and proceeded in making the event a huge success.

There were 10 teams competing against an elite team of teachers with the aim of beating the teachers. On the night the teachers and Universally Challenged tied on points meaning that the quiz went to a tie break.



Universally Challenged won on the second tie break question meaning they were victorious and have rightfully earned the title of Teacher Beaters.

We would like to thank all of those who came along to support us and to have a great time. We would also like to thank the teachers who competed for giving up their free time in order to support us.

Akshay Chawla (12SP)

## Year 10 students celebrate Rugby Success

Congratulations to our Year 10 boys who participated in the Rugby 7's tournament in Hampshire Collegiate School last week. They reached the quarter finals, and played some superb rugby, eventually losing out to the overall winners of the tournament. More than this, they led their own warm ups and managed themselves superbly! Their all round efforts show phenomenal promise for the future. The team was ably led by Zach Stancombe. Thank you to Mr Teixeira and Mr Evans who accompanied the boys to the tournament.



## **Old Redingensian Association Enterprise Awards**

Most students will have learned of the 2012 Enterprise Awards through presentations at recent assemblies, and from posters throughout the School. They aim to encourage boys to pursue projects that they are passionate about and which will increase their skills and experience.

The deadline for applications is fast approaching. All completed applications must be submitted to the Development Office by Monday April 16<sup>th</sup>. Full details of the Awards can be found in the student section on Sharepoint: - <u>http://rgmedia/departments/Enterprise%20Awards%20%20Old%20Redingenians%20Association/Forms/AllItems.aspx</u>

## **Bezerk Productions**

Bezerk Productions have been running an after-school drama club at Reading School for several years. Drama helps boys develop many useful skills, as well as having some great fun. The sessions give boys a chance to work together as a team, to develop leadership skills, and to improve their presentation and communications skills.

Bezerk Productions run a session for year 7 boys each Tuesday afternoon from 3.30pm in the Drama Studio. There are still places available. If your son is interested in attending, he can go along for a trial session any Tuesday after school in the Summer term.

You can find more information at <u>www.bezerkproductions.com</u>, or contact the co-ordinator on 07976 652742.







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### 1125 Update





The end is now in sight in the Refectory build, which makes up Phase 1 of the 1125 Development. Handover from the builders is expected in mid-April.

There will be a short period after handover to allow for snagging, transfer of catering, and for installation of furniture, before the building can be fully operational. The aim is that it will be in use for food service by mid-May.

We are aiming to hold the official opening in late June.

#### Plans for Phase 2

The success of fundraising for phase 1 has meant that we can move on more quickly than anticipated to phase 2 of our long-term strategy to improve facilities at the school. The generosity of parents and alumni enabled us to secure a large grant from the Young People's Learning Agency, which means that we have some funds available to pump-prime the next phase.

A few months ago, the Governors commissioned a firm of architects to carry out a feasibility study to consider the options for improving science and sports facilities. These were the two areas identified as being well below acceptable standards for a school of this size. The process has involved the ideas of students, and staff, and has enabled us to identify several options. These include building a new sports hall on the main school site, improving and expanding the number of science laboratories, and building changing facilities and improving the pitches on Morgan Road.

The Governors face a difficult task in deciding which of these options to focus developing next. They expect to have a clearer picture of the way ahead by early summer.

Ms F Greaney





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Since 2007 Reading School has officially been designated as the landing site for the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance when it needs to transport patients by land ambulance to the hospital's accident and emergency department across the road.



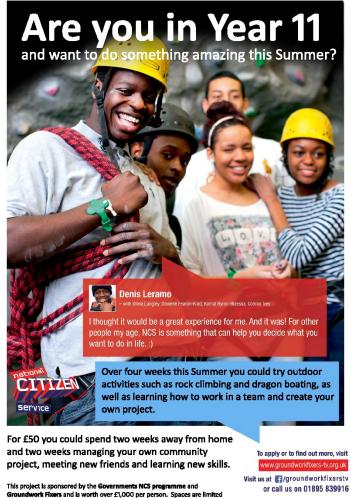
No funding is received from Central Government or the National Lottery. This means every single penny needed is raised by the community and businesses of Berkshire,

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB).

Reading School is assisting with the fundraising by acting as collection point for donations of milk bottle tops. The tops must be washed and free of any paper, labels or foil inserts. It takes 1 tonne of milk bottle tops to raise £25.00 so all donations are gratefully received.

Wanted – Milk Bottle Tops

Further information can be accessed by following the web link <u>http://www.tvacaa.org/</u>





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