



Note from the Principal

This term has already provided new and somewhat unexpected treats which have certainly got 2012 off to a flying start. Please read more below about our first ever Year 7 Concert. The Music Department and Director, Mr. Meehan, deserve enormous credit for having organised such a stupendous event. It was truly inspirational to see and hear virtually the entire Year group in action, with many appearing onstage for the first time and still relatively new to their instruments. Well done one and all. Do read on to find out more about our excellent performance in the U13 Berkshire Cup Final in Rugby against Blue Coat. Well done to all who took part and in particular to coach, Mr. Giubertoni. As if that wasn't enough, it was a real pleasure this week to witness the official opening of the Wolfson Observatory. We are indebted to Professor Richard Crowther, Chief Engineer at the UK Space Agency (and Year 7 parent!), for cutting the ribbon and speaking to assembled guests in the Physics Lecture Theatre. Some of the images captured by the telescope were displayed by Mr. Tucker and his team and were a terrific advert for the new equipment. Well done to him, the Physics Department and all student helpers. I do hope you are benefitting from our new Key Stage Curriculum Guide booklets which are being distributed at Parents Evenings this year in response to requests for "roadmaps" for parents. Finally, can I politely request that all parents ensure they have returned the User Agreement (signed!) for the SIMS Learning Gateway online reporting system as soon as possible. Without receiving this we cannot give you access to the system. We wish to move all Reports, apart from End of Year, onto SLG by the end of this year. Best wishes for the Half Term break.

Top Scoring Informathletes

Congratulations to year 13 students, Robin Elliott and Daniel Richman who both scored an amazing 75% in the qualifying round for the British Informatics Olympiad. They are among only 15 students who have qualified for the UK final of the competition.

The competition is open to all students in full-time, pre-university education in mainland Britain, and involves solving problems against the clock, using nothing more than pen, paper and a computer.

Robin and Dan will compete in the UK final of the competition, which will be held over 3 days at Trinity College Cambridge in April. We wish them the best of luck, and a big thanks to Mr Mogridge and Mr Walder who supported their participation in the competition.



Year 7 Concert triumph



Big School was packed with hundreds of proud parents on February 1st, as year 7 boys performed an ambitious programme of music with great gusto and volume. This included pieces especially composed by Director of Music, Mr Meehan. Each class performed a piece on violin, and there were several fine solo performances.

The final piece was a rousing performance of Carey Blyton's children's opera "Dracula". It featured a very shy Dracula, an exuberant Professor Van Helsing (surely a role model for mad scientists everywhere!), and an amazingly omnivorous character called Redbeard who is very fond of spiders for his breakfast! Roy Wang provided deft piano accompaniment throughout. The whole evening was proof of Mr Meehan's belief that "it is possible for everyone to enjoy playing music and singing"!

Mr Meehan is keen to produce a DVD of the event, so he would like to hear from any parents who took video footage or still photos of the event and are willing to share it with other parents. Please contact development@reading-school.co.uk, if you are able to help.



Berkshire Cup Triumph

The U13 rugby team won a resounding victory in the final of the Berkshire Cup on January 25th. They beat Reading Blue Coat School by 22 -7 in a very exciting and competitive match at Newbury Rugby Club. This game was always set to be a very exciting, physical and competitive match. Reading school had lost to Blue Coat in a friendly earlier in the season, but did have a few significant players missing. For this reason it was always hoped that, with the return of these players to the team, they would have a very good chance of being able to overcome Reading Blue Coat in the final.

After 3 weeks of training in preparation, the U13's looked organised and ready for the big event, but had not practiced too much contact leading up to this game as the coaches were careful to avoid injuries. This meant that they were expecting to be a little rusty with this aspect of the game and this played a part in the pre-game nerves.

The nerves were apparent in the game up until the first early try from Kene Obienu. This seemed to give the players confidence in their ability, which allowed them to compose themselves and play the game on their terms. Blue Coat had a very obvious plan to throw all of their forwards into every ruck and maul in order to retain possession of the ball. Reading responded by letting them win their own rucks and to rather keep extra players out to defend the next phase of attack. By doing this, it created a lot of pressure on their backs and caused them to make many mistakes which led to us gaining possession of the ball and playing positive territorial rugby through the boot of Ben Loader and the running of Kene Obienu.

Man of the match was Kene Obienu for scoring all four tries. However, this was a great all-round team performance where everyone played their hearts out for each other. They responded tactically to everything they had in front of them showing good team work and passion. Will Taylor nearly out did Kene's match-winning performance by stepping, handing off and beating six of the Blue Coat team to create a scoring opportunity from a loose ball in the middle of the field. His valiant effort was stopped about seven metres from the try line, but the ground he had gained helped to put the team in position for Kene to score a try.

Another notable aspect of the team's performance was the scrum. We won all of our scrums and the pack allowed scrum half, Luca Moffat, to have clean ball which he delivered very well to the fly half. The forwards moved around the park really well, supporting the backs when needed, and competing very well at rucks and mauls.

Well done to ALL of the players who represented this under 13's team along the way in 2012. Special thanks to David Gush (2011-12 Gap Student) and to Mr Guibertoni for all of the time and effort they put into looking after this team.

Mr M Roca

Year 9 Comenius Bilateral Exchange with Denmark

Reading School continues to be committed to its students by offering opportunities to experience different cultures.

We have been very fortunate in securing financial support from Comenius through the British Council and European Union for a 2 year bilateral cultural exchange partnership with Denmark. This will involve 24 Year 9 students visiting Frydenhøj School in Copenhagen and 24 Danish exchange students visiting Reading School, each for a period of ten days.

The theme for the cultural exchange is based on Aristotle's view that, "Education is the process of creating a sound mind in a sound body." The exchange objectives are to develop knowledge and understanding of the importance of a sound mind through intercultural learning, language, drama and the humanities while encouraging a healthy lifestyle through sport and health education.

Look out for more information that will soon be communicated to Year 9 parents and guardians about the exchange.

Mr Norgaard and Mr Nicholas, Geography



Support the 1125 Fund: Saracens v Harlequins 31st March 2012



Saracens Rugby Club have agreed to help the School to raise funds for the 1125 Fund by providing discounted tickets to their match against Harlequins on Saturday March 31st 2012.

As rugby fans will know, Saracens are Rugby Premiership Champions. They will play rivals Harlequins in a top of the table clash at Wembley stadium. This will feature many great players, including England Internationals, Danny Care, Nick Easter and Nick Evans. There will also be a host of musical entertainment from McFly and Rock Choir. Kick-off time is 15h00 with pre match entertainment starting at 14h15.

Discounted lower bowl tickets (£15 for adults, £5 for under-16s) will be available to all students, families, staff and friends of Reading School. In return the school will receive **£5** for each **adult** ticket sold and **£2** for each **under-16** ticket.

If you would like to get the Easter holidays off to a great start, and help the School too, you can book a memorable family day out through www.ticketmaster.co.uk/saracensgroups. The code to obtain your discount is **ReadingSCH**. Please note that the code is case sensitive.

The deadline for buying tickets is **FRIDAY 2nd MARCH**. Tickets will be sent to you direct from Saracens after 10th March.

RSPA Barn Dance – 3rd March 2012

Grab your partners, and your dancing shoes, it's time to dance those winter blues away! Reading School Parents Association are organising a Barn Dance at Big School on Saturday, March 3rd at 7pm. Tickets cost £10 for adults and £7 for children - price includes supper and a live band. There will also be a licensed bar.

There are a LIMITED number of tickets and they are selling out fast, so book early to avoid disappointment. You can buy tickets by sending a cheque, payable to Reading School Parents Association, to the RSPA box in the School Office. Please ensure that you give your name, your son's class, the number of adult and child tickets required, and total payment enclosed. Please also include your email address for acknowledgement and receipt of tickets.

The last date for ticket sales is Tuesday 28th February.

Facebook/twitter/website

Eagle-eyed parents and students will have noticed that we launched a new school website just before Christmas. We are now able to update the school calendar and school news more easily.

We are also now up on Twitter and Facebook, and will shortly have regular posts on LinkedIn. If you want to follow us on any of these social media, just click one the icons at the bottom of the website homepage.

<https://www.facebook.com/ReadingSchoolOfficial>

<https://twitter.com/#!/readingsch>

www.reading-school.co.uk



Young Enterprise – Beat the Teacher Quiz – 24th February 2012

Get your thinking caps on for the knowledge challenge of the year, the Beat the Teachers Quiz on Friday February 24th. This is a one-off opportunity to test your wits against an elite, hand-picked team of staff who teach at the school, in quiz rounds such as sport, entertainment, name the place, general knowledge and much more. With a grand prize for the team that emerges victorious at the end of the evening.



The quiz is being organised by Prophet Enterprises, the year 12 Young Enterprise Group, a team of students representing the school in the national Young Enterprise Competition. They are aiming to use the money raised from the event to provide capital for the production of a cook book for men. They believe that there is a gap in the market for men of all ages to learn how to cook and enhance their cooking ability.

Teams should be of 6-8 members, with pricing of £5 per person. Tickets are to be reserved in advance, by sending a cheque, payable to Reading School, to the development office. Please mark your envelopes "Beat the Teacher Quiz", and indicate how many tickets you need.

Reading School Spring Fayre – 12th May 2012

The days are getting longer and members of the Parents Association are already busy planning its main fundraising event of the year, the Reading School Spring Fayre. The proceeds of this year's Fayre will again go towards the Observatory Garden, which will provide outdoor learning and growing facilities in a formerly neglected area of the school site.

Even though it seems a long way off, they are seeking your help at this early stage to make it resounding success. So, apart from putting the date in your diaries and planning to come along on the day, here are a few ways that you can lend support:

- Did you receive any unwanted gifts over Christmas? If so please put them aside with a big 'Spring Fayre' label. Books, DVDs, games, toys, bottles and general bric-a-brac can all be sold to raise valuable funds.
- If you're of a green-fingered nature, how about planting up a few extra seeds for the plant stall? We can never have too many.
- Are you an entrepreneur with your own business or do you work for a company that would be interested in sponsoring the programme? A copy goes to every boy in the school and to everyone who attends on the day. It's great publicity and a chance to help the school.
- Do you have something to offer for the very popular Silent Auction? There have been some amazing and generous donations in previous years, including services such as garden design, piano lessons, beauty treatments, even a holiday cottage rental!
- Finally, can you help out on the day? Even just one hour helping to run a stall would be really appreciated.

Remember, every pound raised benefits your son's education. Please e-mail Adrian Drew, if you can help with any of the above jinxamd@hotmail.com



Student Achievements

Following the Senior Maths Challenge in November, 10 boys took the next stage (Kangaroo) and 12 took the British Mathematical Olympiad (BMO) Round 1. Of these, Chris Mansfield(Y13) was awarded a merit for his work on the Kangaroo, Robin Elliott(13), Dan Richman(13) and Adam Weller(11) gained distinctions in the Olympiad. Robin and Adam have been invited into the BMO round 2 and Robin, with the 15th best score in Round 1, was awarded a gold medal and took part in a weeks training in Budapest during the Christmas break.

Alexander Johnson has won the regional heat and got into the National Final in the HSBC/British Council Mandarin Chinese Speaking Competition on Friday 10th February. Good luck!

Community links



The Chemistry department have had some year 5 students from local primary schools coming in on Tuesdays doing taster sessions in our labs. Each week they tackle a different topic, from acids and bases, to properties of metals, to geology and forensic science. These sessions, run by Mr Wheal, have been for gifted and talented students to encourage an interest in science, and also form part of our commitment to community outreach as a school with specialists in science status. Year 12 students have also been helping to run the sessions acting as "expert guides"



Green Space in Reading School

The Observatory Garden is being transformed from wilderness to green space offering an area in which green-fingered students can grow their own plants, enjoy a lesson in the outdoor classroom and rest and reflect in a tranquil area. The Parents Association have been exceptionally generous in financially supporting this vision. This will help us gain Green Flag sustainable school status.

The first Gardening Day took place on Sunday 29 January. Parents, pupils, their siblings and staff, led by Mr and Mrs Berney, worked tirelessly removing several saplings as well as weeds and overgrown vegetation. Five raised beds were built so that the Gardening Club can begin growing vegetables this spring. They also erected a section of trellis fencing, which will screen off the planned outdoor classroom in a corner of the plot, and planted a selection of early and hardy spring flowers.

The Gardening Club is being launched and is open to all students who are interested in developing the vision. This includes weaving trellis fencing, planning types of plants to be grown and tending the variety of herbs, fruit and vegetable plants. We are looking for people with a green-fingered passion!

We need your help. We would be grateful for any gardening equipment from rakes, spades, hoses, canes, watering cans, pots and hand tools to larger pieces such as wheelbarrows. We are also looking for any bulbs, seeds or seedlings and manure. If you are able to donate please hand to the Reception.

Two more Gardening Days are taking place to continue the work and we would appreciate any help. These days are Sunday 26 February and Sunday 11 March. If you would like to come along and help, please contact the Miss Greaney in the Development Office or by email development@reading-school.co.uk.

Jan Norgaard, Head of Geography



Reading School looks to the stars

The Reading School Observatory was officially opened on Monday, February 6th, and is now home to the School Astronomy Club run by Mr Tucker and Mrs Brierley. The club is currently open to Year thirteen, however after half term it will be extended to Years ten, eleven and twelve as well.

The fully functional and professional observatory is equipped with a wide variety of telescopes consisting of one refractor telescope allowing users to view objects such as our moon and planets that are close, small or relatively dim; one reflecting telescope which is used to view objects that are very far away for example galaxies and nebulae, which are clouds of gas in space. There are also six other telescopes used for general viewing of the night sky.



Andromeda, taken with a school telescope



Professor Crowther, who opened the observatory, with Mr Weeds, Mr Tucker and some of the Year Thirteen students who have been helping set up the observatory equipment

The building of the observatory was possible as a result of a substantial grant from the Wolfson Foundation. Mr Tucker explained that the observatory provided an opportunity to make Science and Physics more than just about working towards exams. Already, there have been amazing pictures taken with one of the telescopes such as the Andromeda galaxy which is approximately 2.5 million light years away (see picture above).

However the building project was not all plain sailing as vital parts for the observatory that had been ordered were lost in France during the French strikes delaying the completion of the project for seven months.

Looking into the future for the observatory, Mr Tucker explained that eventually the dome will be robotic which will provide the advantage that it can be controlled remotely by a computer from elsewhere on the school site.

Mr Tucker is currently hosting more photos from the observatory on his website at <http://www.t2landscapes.co.uk/p402120570>.

For further information about the Astronomy Club, please contact Mr Tucker or Mrs Brierley.

James Foran, 10S

Apollo 9 Astronaut – message of support

The official opening the Reading School Observatory on February 6th brought a letter of support from Apollo 9 astronaut, Rusty Schweickart.

Mr Schweickart, who spent over 10 days in space as lunar module pilot for Apollo 9 in 1969 says: "I am very pleased to hear of this development and its potential use for detecting and tracking Near Earth Objects. This is an issue that my fellow astronauts and cosmonauts in the Association of Space Explorers consider of prime importance and we welcome the contribution that your facility might make."

The observatory, which was funded by a grant from The Wolfson Foundation, was opened by Professor Richard Crowther, Chief Engineer at the UK Space Agency, whose son attends the School. It is an important addition to science facilities at Reading School, and will be enable students and staff to view planets, comets, stars, and faint deep sky objects, as well as to do solar observing in real time.

Professor Crowther says: "The observatory demonstrates the school's commitment to supporting its curriculum by encouraging students to apply their learning to real world issues, even if those worlds are quite distant."





Mr Coggan is limbering up!

East Wing Housemaster and PE teacher, Mr Coggan, is getting ready for his sixth London marathon on April 22nd. This year he is raising money for a wonderful charity called AbleChildAfrica, which works in East and Southern Africa with disabled children and young people, and aims to give disabled children the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Mr Coggan says: "Like many in this country, I grew up taking the privilege of education and opportunity for granted. In recent trips to Tanzania and South Africa, I have felt humbled, seeing children with no material wealth strive for just the chance to make a better life for themselves and their families. When I found out about the work of AbleChildAfrica, I knew it was a charity I wanted to support. They provide some of the most disadvantaged children in Africa with the opportunity to attend school and receive support, care and love."



If you would like to sponsor Mr Coggan's marathon run, you can give online at his fundraising page www.justgiving.com/Ben-Coggan. You can also give via 'Just text Giving'.

Sport Relief Day – Friday 23rd March 2012

There will be a non-uniform day and run again this year on Sports Relief Day, Friday 23rd of March. Half of the money raised on the day will go to Sport Relief, and half to support Mr Coggan's chosen charity, AbleChildAfrica.

Further details will be available shortly via the school website, and social media sites, as well as by email to all parents.

Fundraiser Extraordinaire



Well done Sohum Shah, year 10, who raised an amazing £161 for the National Aids Trust on Red Ribbon Day in December. Sohum, with some friends, organised a red-themed uniform day on 1st December to raise awareness of this important health issue. The National Aids Trust provides practical support and resources for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

Sohum says: "National Aids Trust help people not just in the UK, but children and adults throughout the world who need support and resources."

The donations that people have given so generously will go a long way to helping their work.

Wanted – old batteries

Please be aware that we have a collection jar for used batteries in our reception area.

Redlands Globe are a group of people who are keen on keeping our landfills free of batteries and dispose of them in an environmentally friendly way.

If you have any old batteries and wish to dispose of them in this way, please drop them off to reception.





1125 Update

We're counting down the days to completion of the building work on the refectory. We expect the building to be handed over by the builders at the end of March, and we are aiming for it to be in operation early in the Summer term.



Easter GCSE, AS and A2 Courses

For the third year running, Reading School will be hosting Justin Craig Education, the UK's leading provider of group tutoring and revision courses. As a host centre, the school has secured a saving of £100 off your son's first three day course. (This means, they will receive 18 hours of tuition for only £325 (including lunch and dinner)).



Easter courses are being run across 20 centres including Reading, Ascot, Beaconsfield, Wimbledon and Central London.

Key points:

- **Structured Revision** - 18 hours of study over three days
- 30 years proven success maximising grades
- Experienced tutors who are stimulating and fun
- Small informal tutorial groups centred around individual student needs
- Combining the strengths of personal tuition and group work

For more information, please visit www.justincraig.ac.uk or call 0845 06 06 555 to discuss your son's particular needs.

RSPA Clothes Repatriation

The PE Department held a one-off Lost Property Repatriation Event on Saturday 14th January. This was very well attended and gave parents the opportunity to reclaim their unlabelled lost property.

PE staff and volunteers sorted through 25 dustbin liners full of kit. The named items, which filled only three bags, were returned to their owners.

Thank you to all those involved in the RSPA Clothes Repatriation of sports kit to boys and their families earlier in January. There was a lot of kit to sort out and we do not underestimate the size of the task. I have received a lot of extremely positive feedback from parents.