



### Note from the Principal

Dear Parents,

You will all be aware by now, I am sure, of the intention of a group of local parents to petition eligible primary school parents about the future of selection in Reading. It goes without saying that both Reading and Kendrick Schools are totally wedded to the selective ethos. We are outstanding schools for good reasons: we have excellent teachers who specialise in teaching gifted students and together they achieve phenomenal results. Sadly, a local issue driven by the self-interest of a few has assumed national significance. Both grammar schools have joined the debate mainly to ensure that as many of the parents who are eligible to participate in the petition process are able to take part. If you happen to be a parent at one of our feeder schools, this means you! Do let us know if you have not received anything from your primary Headteacher about how to access the Electoral List. Ideological arguments about the virtues or otherwise of grammar school education have surfaced again for the first time in many years. This issue began with the local politics of Wokingham's catchment boundaries and has escalated into a debate about selection generally. If you are as concerned as we are, do write to your local MP to voice your opinion. It is important that the government gets to hear the voice of parents.

On a lighter note, I am pleased to announce that following the submission of tenders a building contractor has been appointed to take on the building of the Refectory from the beginning of July. Everyone will benefit from the new build, especially our students and staff. Thank you to all parents who have donated and supported. We do still have a very small shortfall which it would be wonderful to clear before work starts in a month's time! Do contact [development@readingschool.reading.sch.uk](mailto:development@readingschool.reading.sch.uk) for more information.

Parents will be interested to learn that we are being visited by an OFSTED Inspector this week who will be looking at our English Department. We look forward to sharing the outcomes with you in the near future.

And finally, very best of luck to all exam candidates this summer.

### Year 10 Geography Visit to Slapton Sands



The last week of April saw the current year 10 geographers embarking on a three day fieldwork trip to Slapton Sands in South Devon, as part of their GCSE controlled assessment. A combination of glorious weather, excellent

staff from the field study centre and some of the finest Devon ice cream resulted in a fantastic experience for both staff and students.

Below is an account of the trip written by Oliver Ekins in 10S:

"We arrived at Reading train station in time for the 9:30 train to Totnes and then a coach to the field centre. When we got there, we went to our rooms and then had a debrief about what we were going to be doing during our stay. We then promptly went down to the beach for 3 hours in order to study the shingle bar, its landforms and the 4 key concepts shaping Start Bay.

The next day we left the field centre early in order to collect our data for our controlled assessment (e.g. finding the cross-section

of the beach at a certain point), and arrived back at 6:00pm absolutely exhausted. After that, we had a well-earned dinner before having more lessons, which was crazy! Although it was very tiring, I really enjoyed the day because we were being really productive, which was helped by being by the sea, where the sea breeze was very refreshing. After lessons, we had time to relax where we could play football, table tennis, snooker or watch TV in the TV room.

The next day was time to go home, but not before we did another 4 hours of work writing our introduction and method table for our controlled assessment. We left around 2:00pm on the coach heading for Totnes station and home.

All in all, I really enjoyed the trip, especially the field centre, even though we had to do lots of work. I would recommend the area due to the beach's amazing scenery and the field study centre because of its very good facilities."

Mr Nicholas and Oliver Ekins (10S)



## Year 10 Raise the Roof for Cancer Research



On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April Big School was taken over by Year 10 in a spectacular display of their musical talent. Chris Poon and Ben Doyle planned and organised the evening, and worked tirelessly to raise money and promote the event. The evening itself was a great success, with breath-taking performances from Josh Waites and Sam Chapman amongst a whole host of students taking part.

The evening raised over £1300 for Cancer Research, making it one of the most successful charity events of the school year!

Miss S Drummond

### Student Achievements

Congratulations to the following students on some wonderful achievements this term:

**Sporting Achievements:** Johnny Davies was selected to represent England in Athletics; Steven Popplestone and Richard Lee have represented Wales men's team in a recent Lacrosse tournament and Reading School had their first ever Lacrosse fixture against Shiplake last week and beat them 9-0! Richard and Steven are preparing for the World Lacrosse Championships to be held in Finland in July 2012. The Cricket first team have won their first 7 matches against Bluecoat, Pangbourne, Windsor, Eton, Aylesbury and Shiplake. Special mention to an unbeaten century by Stuart Parsons against Shiplake.

**Biology Olympiad results:** Congratulations to a number of boys who competed in the Biology Olympiad. The results were as follows: Josh Wade – gold medal and in the top 12 in the UK; James Lamming – gold medal; Tom Wayland, Eddie Romano, Luke Mason, Peilong Dong, Samuel Dyson – silver medal winners and Alok Prasad, Greg Thomas and James Lacy Smith – bronze medal winners.

**Spelling Bee:** 1000 schools took part in a national spelling competition run by the Times on 10<sup>th</sup> May. Our boys did very well in winning all their rounds and the overall local heat with a clear lead of 22 points. They now go on to the semi-finals. Sam Miller won the elimination round and was awarded the Individual Collins prize. A special thank you to Kathryn Terry who has supported us in this activity.

**Music:** congratulations to Harry Davidson who has been offered places at the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music Junior departments.

### Reading School through to National Chess Finals

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April, the Reading School chess team won their quarter final match against Dr Challoner's Grammar School.

After a long journey to Amersham, all of the games were very evenly matched so we had to wait for over an hour before getting the first result: a win for Alfred Wong on board 6. The next match to finish was on board 4, where Robert Starley won on time, his opponent having failed to reach the intermediate time control on move 30. This meant that we needed 1.5 points from the remaining 4 boards, which were all still in unclear positions after almost 2 hours of play.

No-one had ever looked like winning on board 5 so it was not surprising when Ben Vandersluis agreed a draw, setting the top three boards the target of scoring 1 point between them. Despite being slightly better early on, Roy Zhang was now struggling somewhat to salvage any points on board 1 when his opponent, rated no less than 182, blundered a piece in time trouble to incredibly give us the point we needed to win. This took the pressure off of William Foo and Daniel Noel on boards 2 and 3 who both drew after taking almost the full 2.5 hours available for the match.

Therefore, the final score was a 4.5-1.5 win to us so we have now qualified for the finals, at Uppingham School, Rutland on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July, where we will play the semi-final and (hopefully) the final.

By Team Captain Robert Starley



## LRC Book Awards

The Learning Resources Centre (LRC) is pleased to announce the LRC Book Awards!

Prizes will be awarded to pupils at the end of the Summer Term for the following categories:

- The pupil who has borrowed the most books from the LRC between September 2010 and July 2011
- The pupil who has borrowed the most books from the LRC between June 2011 and July 2011
- The form who has collectively borrowed the most books from the LRC between September 2010 and July 2011
- The Pupil Librarian who has made the greatest contribution to the LRC

The LRC issued a whopping 4267 books between September 2010 and April 2011 and from the statistics below it is clear that pupils at Reading School enjoy books and reading.

The top 5 most frequent book borrowers between September 2010 and April 2011 are:

- Jonathan Machin (97 loans)
- Abishek Arul Selvam (92 loans)
- Amin Al-Hussainy (84 loans)
- Benjamin Ratcliffe (83 loans)
- Nikunj Paliwal (75 loans)

Here is a breakdown of how many books were loaned by each form between September 2010 and April 2011:

7C 193	7E 299	7S 275	7W 325
8C 288	8E 267	8S 145	8W 403
9C 129	9E 60	9S 326	9W 295
10C 118	10E 133	10S 65	10W 122

The winners will be announced in the last week of term and prizes will include book tokens.

Mrs Kesteven and the LRC Pupil Librarian Team

## A Series of Geography A-Level Lectures

The Geography Department organised for three external speakers to present to sixth form geographers from local schools on specific AS and A2 topics to help them in the run up to their examinations. About 120 pupils attended the three lectures which were supported by the Royal Geographical Society and the Humanities Specialism.

The British Red Cross Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Advisor, Robert Roots discussed the need to help vulnerable populations prepare for disasters to reduce the risks that they face, focusing a year on from the earthquake in Haiti. Dr Clare, a lecturer in Advanced Manufacturing at the University of Nottingham, investigated the rise of the emerging superpower nations and in what ways western nations can negotiate and maintain their current trading dominance. Peter Durante, a former trader and strategist at Shell, and who now acts as a consultant on energy and environmental issues to industry, government and NGOs worldwide, revealed the current energy dependency of the west and what realistic renewable energy mixes are feasibly and technically available today.

Feedback from Reading School geographers and from other schools was hugely positive with a view to continuing hosting external lectures next year.

Mr J Norgaard, Head of Geography

## Reinstatement of traffic lights at Blagrove Street

A petition has been arranged for by Shooesmiths for the re-instatement of the traffic lights/pedestrian crossing along Blagrove Street, near Reading Station. There is a lot of concern that someone will be badly hurt or killed trying to cross the road. If you are interested in signing the petition, please access the link which will take you straight to the petition page: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/epetitions/>. Once there, please scroll down to **Current Petition** and then click the link 'Reinstatement of traffic lights at Blagrove Street/Apex Plaza'.





## *Astronomy at Reading School*

### **An update of Reading School Observatory, and Astronomy at Reading – May 2011**

#### **Progress so far:**

All the parts for the robotic observatory housed in the dome have been delivered. Electrical and internet service cables are in place. We have housed the two telescopes, both for astrophotography rather than for direct viewing, as modern digital cameras easily exceed the human eye. A solar refracting telescope will be used to look at the sun mainly in the Hydrogen Alpha region of the spectrum. The other an Orion 10" Ritchey Chretien Reflector for deep sky objects (*ours was the actual telescope reviewed in the Sky at Night magazine and was thought to be excellent and much coveted, incidentally*).

We have taken delivery of 6 Skywatcher 10" Dobsonian reflectors. We are impressed with them as viewing platforms. They seem fairly robust, although one was delivered out of alignment and needs collimating. The boarders in South House and East Wing plus teaching staff have trialled them for us with a great deal of success. We have been using them to project the sun so we can see sun spots and have shown them to many of the teaching groups already. In fact, we imaged the moon by just attaching a camera using shutter speeds of less than 1/500s, but got a much better image from using the refractor in the observatory. The image shown here on the right can be downloaded from [www.t2landscapes.co.uk](http://www.t2landscapes.co.uk). Look for the school students/pupils gallery and type in the name of the Physics laboratory Bradbury as the password.



#### **Towards the future**

We have a functioning observatory and are now looking to see how we can make the best use of it for everyone. What we still have to do is:

1. Improve the alignment of the main telescopes in the observatory
2. Attach the cameras and get the autofocus working
3. Get hold of the dome motor which was lost in transit and set it up to make a fully automated observatory
4. Start the astronomy groups/clubs, setting up various programmes for events and to decide what to look at.
5. Think what courses, research, external groups we can involve and support.
6. Arrange an official opening.

If there are any of you out there who would like to be involved, participate, or just join the odd observation meeting, please contact the school. If you have a particular expertise or experience in this area, we would love to hear from you. The bigger the group of experienced astronomers and astrophotographers we can muster, the better for all of those concerned.



## **Reminder – Reading School Golf Day**

We are pleased to invite parents to our inaugural Golf Day. We do hope that you will be able to play at Sand Martins Golf Course on 19th September. Please feel free to invite friends, colleagues and clients to what we are sure will be a wonderful day and a great chance to enjoy the company of friends old and new.

All monies raised will be in aid of the School's Development Fund. Sand Martins is a superbly maintained 6232 yard course which opened in 1993. The format will be a 4 ball better ball team stableford (best two scores count) played off 3/4 handicap. There will be a shotgun start with golfers arriving for bacon butties (or a vegetarian alternative) and coffee at 12.00pm. There will be on course competitions to test your mettle with prizes to be won as golfers go round. The overall team prize will be premium golfing clothing/equipment for each team member. Following the golf, there will be a late two course lunch with a raffle and auction. The competition is open to any combination of golfers. The team entry fee is £240 and includes bacon butties before play and lunch after.

If you have any questions or require any entry form, please contact Caroline Beard at [cbeard@readingschool.reading.sch.uk](mailto:cbeard@readingschool.reading.sch.uk) or telephone: 0118 9015600.

