



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

8th November 2024

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key information</b>	<b>4</b>
All years	4
Reading School Admissions Consultation for 2026 entry	4
Allergy notice for parents/carers and students	4
Staff Wellbeing & Retention – a trial	4
Years 11 – 13 only	5
Maths Support	5
Years 7 & 12 only	5
Portraits and Class Photographs	5
<b>School Community News</b>	<b>6</b>
Parent Governor Election 2024	6
Ballot Arrangements	6
Trips during Reading Week	6
A trip to understand the most basic elements of matter and the forces governing them	6
Upcoming Events	7
ORA Remembrance Service 2024	7
Service of Nine Lessons & Carols	7
German Christmas Market comes to Reading School	8
House Music Competition 2024	9
<b>RSPA</b>	<b>10</b>
Who we are	10
Nominate the RSPA for a chance for us to win £1,000!	10
The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop	10
<b>Michaelmas Term – Week 10</b>	<b>11</b>
CERN Trip 2024	11
Commemoration Service 2024	19
ORA Remembrance Service 2023	27
A trip to Salamanca, Spain	31
Chapel Choir head to Barcelona	39
Reading Week and Half Term Poems from our Poet Laureate, Henry G (10L)	43

# Introduction

Dear students, colleagues, carers and parents,

I think that this second half term of the year is both the hardest and the most important of the year.

Hardest because it is the half term with the highest number of absences, the highest frequency of ill health and, in many years, the greatest volume of negative behaviour points.

Used to routines, with some of our ambitions dented and our stationary creased, this is a point in the year when tiredness or complacency can derail progress, where bad habits can become stubborn character faults, and poor decision making can come back to haunt us! Conversely, it is also the window where the most sustained progress can be made. Given that learning aims and shared expectations are shared with all students from Year 7 onwards, this is a half term where classes that want to, can make exceptional progress as they build on their early foundations.

Indeed, in my first years teaching at Reading School I was often told that half of the year's work should be completed by Christmas. Therefore, this is a season of significance. A period of jeopardy. A window of opportunity.

Allow me for a moment to use an extended metaphor.

Narratologists suggest that most narratives follow a classical story arc, which is like a journey with five key parts: Beginning, Rising Action, Climax, Resolution Phase, and Ending.

First, we meet the main character and learn about their world. Then, a challenge or problem appears, and the character sets out to solve it, facing obstacles along the way (rising action). At the peak of the story (climax), something big happens, like a battle, decision, or twist that changes everything. After that, things start calming down (resolution) as the character responds to, and learns from the preceding action. Finally, the story wraps up with an ending where we see how the character's progress has changed them or their world.

I suspect then, that most of us within the Reading School community will be in the "obstacles along the way" phase of this year's story. Our resolve will be tested. Our journey challenged. Our resilience and patience stretched.

At this point of "rising action", may I once again ask parents not to mount the kerbs outside school where a near miss with a small child was witnessed only this morning, not to park on zig zag yellow lines which prohibit stopping, and not to book international travel in term time which impacts attendance and educational attainment, as I am not able to authorise requests.

May I once again encourage students to treat each other with kindness, to sustain focus and curiosity, and throw themselves into the final weeks of practice for House Music, or revision for mock examinations. May I once again thank colleagues for all their efforts and wisdom, and encourage perseverance.

I would very much seek to co-create a story where we all find a resolution that benefits the aims of our school and its students. With this in mind, I encourage parents to consider attending Monday evening meetings which are being held throughout this term to share plans of our 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, details of which have been previously shared in the Bulletin dated 4<sup>th</sup> October. Or perhaps our Remembrance Sunday Service from 10:45am this Sunday, or the eagerly awaited House Music Competition on November 24<sup>th</sup>? All are warmly welcome.

With very best wishes,

**Dr Chris Evans**  
**Headmaster**

# Key information

## All years

### Reading School Admissions Consultation for 2026 entry

The Governing Body is currently consulting on the admissions policies for 2026 entry. The changes are to the Year 7 Day Policy, Year 7 Boarding Policy, Sixth Form Admissions Policy and Non-Routine Admissions Policy.

The main changes are summarised below and are highlighted in yellow on the policies linked below:

- Oversubscription criteria - introducing a social and welfare need as category 3

The consultation starts on 1st November 2024 and will end on Tuesday 2nd January 2025. If you have any comments to make regarding the changes to the policy, please email: [consultation@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:consultation@reading-school.co.uk) no later than midday on 2nd January 2025.

- [Year 7 Admissions Policy for 2026 Entry for Day Applicants](#)
- [Year 7 Admissions Policy for 2026 Entry for Boarding Applicants](#)
- [Sixth Form Admissions Policy for 2026 Entry](#)
- [Non-Routine Admissions Policy for 2026 Entry](#)

### Allergy notice for parents/carers and students

We would like to remind parents/carers and students to be mindful in relation to allergies and what food students bring to school. Both children and adults with severe nut allergies can suffer from life threatening reactions if they eat, smell, or touch any foods containing nuts. We are therefore grateful for your cooperation in helping to keep our students and staff safe.

Although we are not a 'nut free' school, we would like to raise awareness of the impact that bringing nuts into school can have on students and staff who may have allergies. Packaged nuts, peanut butter, chocolate spreads containing nuts, cereal, granola, chocolate bars containing nuts, cakes or biscuits containing nuts, peanut based sauces (like satay) and any food made with sesame seeds can cause severe allergic reactions for those affected by allergens. This list is not exhaustive.

[Allergy UK](#) is a nationwide charity for people living with an allergy and has resources for parents to access further information.

### Staff Wellbeing & Retention – a trial

With teacher recruitment increasingly challenging, the wellbeing and retention of our staff is paramount to the high-quality education of your child. That is why we are trialling a slightly shortened day on **Thursday 28th November only**, ahead of Year 13 Parents' Evening, where our staff will be spending their evening giving rich feedback to parents ahead of A Level exams.

The School Day will therefore finish at the end of Period 7 at 14.35, on this day only. Apart from Year 12 students (who are engaged on a Philosophy Day) and Year 10 students (who have Games afternoon) remaining on site, students of all other year groups are then welcome to return home. The LRC (library) will be open until 15.45 for any students needing to stay later.

We thank you for your support in this wellbeing trial and will share the outcome with parents and carers in a future edition of the Headmaster's Bulletin. If you would like to share any comments or feedback, please email [communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk).

## Years 11 – 13 only

### Maths Support

Are you in Years 11 to 13?

Are you looking for helpful support with mathematics questions or topics?

If yes, come along to weekly support sessions run by teachers and senior students every Thursday lunchtime between 1.15pm – 1.45pm in M4.

The Senior Maths Clinic is an academic support session designed to help students with 1:1 support on mathematics questions and topics. The sessions are designed to provide extra help that you can take advantage of with areas of the curriculum that you may find challenging, in order to deepen your understanding of concepts while preparing you for your exams.

The Senior Maths Clinic is a great way to reinforce your knowledge, target weak areas and gain clarity in a supportive environment where you can learn from both teachers and peers.

## Years 7 & 12 only

### Portraits and Class Photographs

Reading School's chosen supplier for school photographs, Gillman & Soame, took Year 7 & 12 portraits and Year 7 class group photographs earlier in the autumn term. If you have not already, please order these photographs as soon as possible (especially if you would like them for Christmas).

If you are interested in ordering:

1. Please email [communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk) to request a security password.
2. Once you have received the password by email, Gillman & Soame can be contacted by emailing [action@gillmanandsoame.co.uk](mailto:action@gillmanandsoame.co.uk) or by calling 01869 328200 (please share your child's name and the security password).

# School Community News

## Parent Governor Election 2024

### Ballot Arrangements

Following nominations that were received for the parent governor vacancy originally publicised in the Headmaster's Bulletin dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024, this notice is a reminder that the ballot to elect a new parent governor will be held next week. It will be an electronic ballot and will be open from 10am on Monday 11th November until 4pm on Friday 15th November 2024.

Instructions for voting will be sent to all parents and carers in a separate e-mail on Monday morning.

The candidates nominated are listed below:

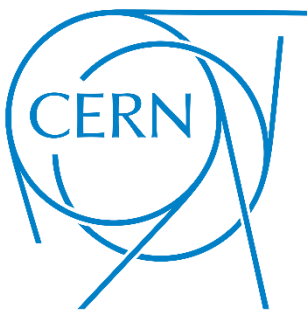
- Sanjay Desai
- Neil Devanand
- Jagadeesh Ratnala
- Kathryn Winter

Supporting statements from the candidates were shared in the Headmaster's Bulletin dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024, but will be re-circulated with the instructions for voting.

The results of the poll will be announced to the candidates on 19th November, via e-mail, and to all parents on 22nd November.

## Trips during Reading Week

### A trip to understand the most basic elements of matter and the forces governing them



Reading School's Physics department led 14 lucky aspiring physicists to CERN on a 3-day trip during Reading Week. CERN, located in Geneva, Switzerland, is the largest particle physics lab in the world, home of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) and famously responsible for the discovery of the Higgs Boson in 2012.

While visiting the laboratory, the group received a guided tour of the facility from scientists and they got to see the Synchrocyclotron, the first particle accelerator built at CERN; the Data Centre, birthplace of the world wide web; and LINAC 2, a linear particle accelerator that used to feed into the LHC.

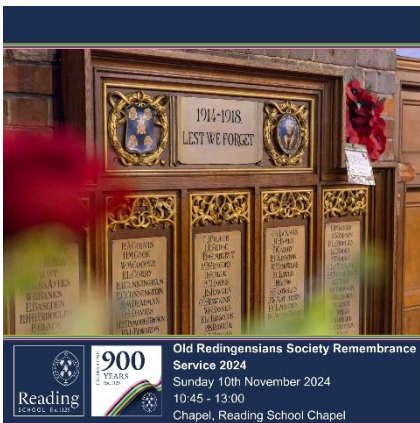
Students also got to take part in a hands-on superconductivity workshop, using liquid Nitrogen to cool materials down to -200oC so they become superconducting (materials gain very odd properties at this point, such as being able to levitate magnets). Students were able to work with these superconductors while investigating their properties and Anirudh V (13ZMC) shared, '*Being something we've only really seen through videos or subject content alone it was interesting to see it in action while being able to manipulate it ourselves*'.

As well as visiting CERN, students also had a tour of the Swiss Plasma Centre, a nuclear fusion research facility, and the Einstein Museum, part of the historical museum in Bern. Max B (13EF) shared of his visit to the Swiss Plasma Centre, '*Seeing a tokamak was very unique and allowed us to see the route of academia into experimental physics.*'

Trip photos of the visit can be viewed in the photo gallery at the end of this Bulletin.

## Upcoming Events

### ORA Remembrance Service 2024



The Old Redingensians Association warmly invites the Reading School community to join the annual Remembrance Day Service in the School Chapel from 10.45am this Sunday 10th November to remember the service and sacrifice of all those that have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life.

Tribute is paid to those fallen Old Redingensians and those that lost their lives as a result of conflict or terrorism as well as to members of the Armed Forces and their families from Britain and the Commonwealth, along with the vital contributions of the emergency services.

Reading School families and friends across generations attend this annual event and all are welcome.

- The service will be led by the ORA Chaplain, Reverend Dr Chris Evans and the sermon will be preached by the Rev Stuart Robinson (OR 1964 -1971).
- The Lesson will be read by the President ELECT of The Old Redingensians Association, Dr Fraser Peck (OR 1999 - 2006).
- The Act of Remembrance will be read by Ken Brown (OR 1955 -1963) ORA Archivist.
- Wreaths will be laid the Chapel on the 1914-18 War Memorial, the 1939-45 War Memorial and the Kendrick Boys School War Memorial (Kendrick Boys was absorbed by Reading School in 1916).
- Reading School students will play the Organ and sound the Last Post and Reveille.
- The School Choir will be led by Mr O Griffin, Director of Music.
- The Reading School Combined Cadet Force (CCF) will provide a Guard of Honour.
- Light refreshments will be served after the service in the School Refectory at 11:30 to 13.00.
- Parking is available on site.

Principal Organiser: Mr Christopher Widdows (1955-1962) Membership Secretary, Old Redingensians Association

[Please confirm attendance by clicking here.](#)

### Service of Nine Lessons & Carols



We warmly invite the Reading School community to join us for our cherished annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols event - an evening brimming with Christmas spirit, beautiful music from Reading School's talented musicians, and moments of reflection.

Following the service, join us for a delightful reception in the Refectory, where you can enjoy mince pies and non-alcoholic mulled wine.

Please RSVP to confirm attendance by clicking this link: [Service of Nine Lessons & Carols 2024 | Events | Reading School Alumni Society](#)

## German Christmas Market comes to Reading School

On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> of December the annual German Christmas market makes a welcome return. The event, also known as 'Weihnachtsmarkt', is a traditional holiday market that originated in Germany and now celebrated worldwide. The markets are typically held in city squares from late November until Christmas offer warmth and cheer through selling food and drink, handmade gifts and crafts, music and entertainment and festive lights and decorations.

The Reading School German Market event is for students to experience the popular German cultural event with food, drink and Christmas related gifts on sale. The money raised will go to the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) to purchase books students have wished for.

The event also offers the opportunity for budding and experienced bakers to bake traditional (nut-free) German Austrian biscuits which go on to be sold at the market. All donated baked goods can be dropped to the LRC on the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> of December and we thank in advance to all who chose to donate. Please [click here to view easy to follow recipes](#) with photos for a range of traditional German Austrian biscuits.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Mrs Senfblechner ([ssenfblechner@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:ssenfblechner@reading-school.co.uk)) or Mrs Kesteven ([lkesteven@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:lkesteven@reading-school.co.uk)).



## House Music Competition 2024



Now entering its 89th year, the Reading School House Music Competition will take place on Sunday 24th November from 15:00 to 19:30 at The Hexagon, Queens Walk, RG1 7QF.

Anticipation is always high for this eagerly awaited annual event which promises stellar performances from all five houses. Ensembles, both large and small, will captivate the audience with music from films, while solo acts will showcase the talents of Senior soloists (Year 11-13) and Junior soloists (Year 7-10).

The exciting event stands as one of the year's highlights and is anticipated to sell-out. Ticket prices start from £18 and availability is limited. *Parents are asked to please ensure your child's participation is confirmed before securing non-refundable tickets.*

To secure your seats, please click here: [Reading School Inter-House Music Competition 2024 | What's On Reading](#)

We understand the financial challenges faced by some families. Families in receipt of Pupil Premium are eligible for two discounted tickets in the Arena Left or Arena Right. For details, please contact [events@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:events@reading-school.co.uk).

# RSPA

## Who we are



'The Reading School Parents Association' is a charity managed by the parents and carers of Reading School students and we work alongside the School to provide a community for all the parents and carers. We raise funds using several methods, like the Preloved Uniform Shop, School Lottery, events and donations.

Over recent years, we have funded much needed outdoor seating, cricket nets, refurbished toilets, minibuses and, most recently, AV equipment. We are always looking for

new members to support the RSPA in order to continue supporting the school for the benefit of its students. For all enquiries, please email [contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk](mailto:contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk).

## Nominate the RSPA for a chance for us to win £1,000!

We're asking for two minutes of your time! Please visit [movementforgood.com](http://movementforgood.com) and enter "Reading School Parents' Association" (Charity Number 1101822). There is no purchase necessary and by nominating the RSPA, we have a chance to win money that will help raise funds for extra resources to benefit all our students. It's quick, easy and nominations close on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

### Opening dates and times:

- Friday 6th December 3.30pm to 4.30pm
- Saturday 7th December - 10.30am to 12.30pm

No parking is allowed on site on Friday openings.

There is parking available in the Walled Carpark on Saturday openings and the Uniform shop can be found in the back of the Walled Carpark. Please note shop opening is weather dependent, in the event of a poor weather forecast the opening may be cancelled. Please email [shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk](mailto:shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk) with any queries.

## A winter warmer for all the family



A welcome addition when taking part in any PE or games activity and may be worn to school on games day only.

Available online or try before you buy at the pre-loved uniform shop events.

Should you wish to order this can be done via the RSPA website or by [clicking this link](#).

Please bear in mind that XL - XXL hoodies are currently on special order and will take 2-3 weeks.

Have a lovely weekend.

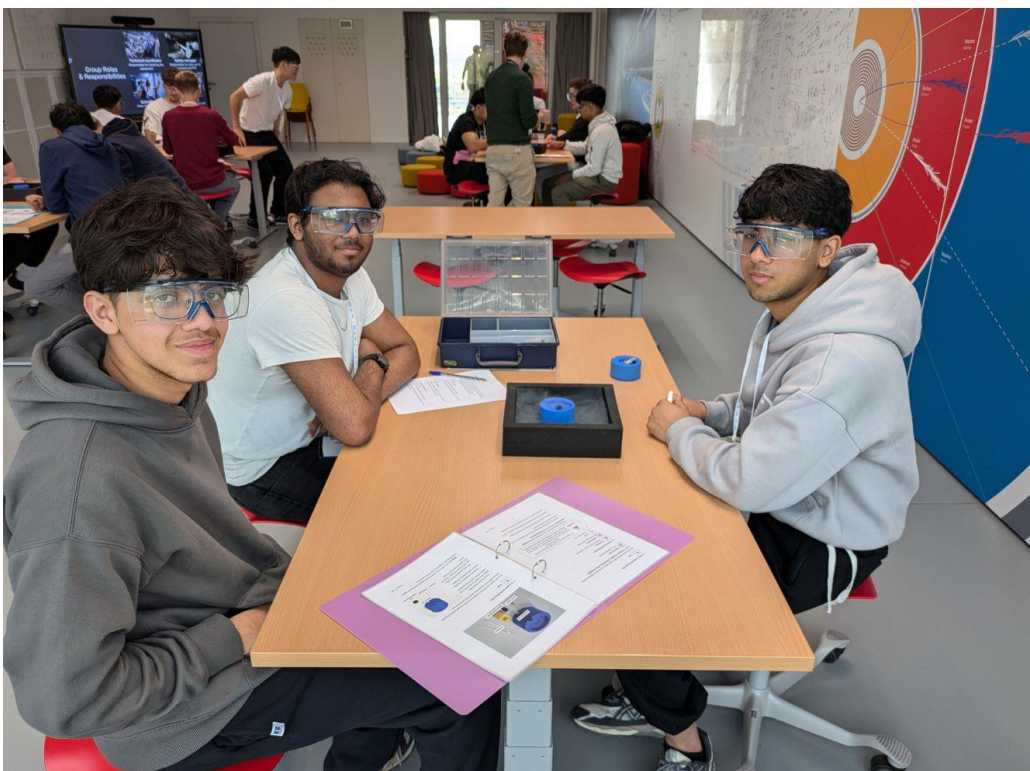
The RSPA Team

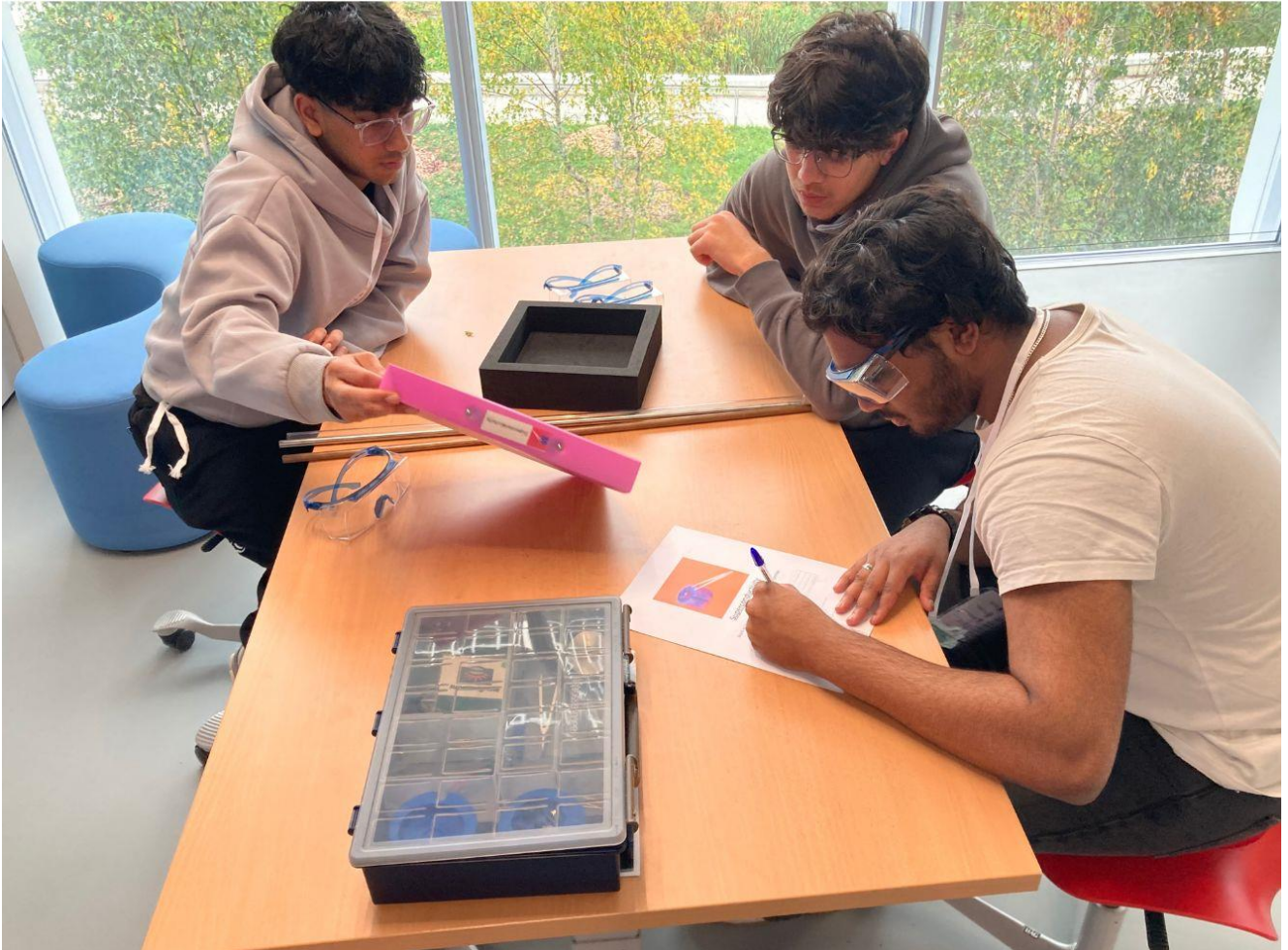
# Michaelmas Term – Week 10

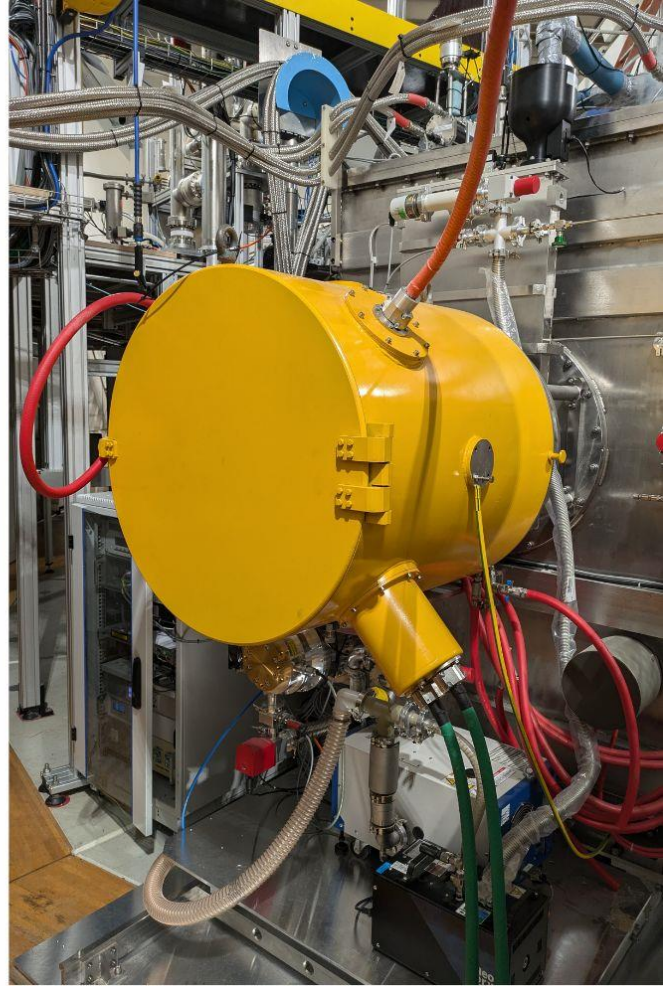
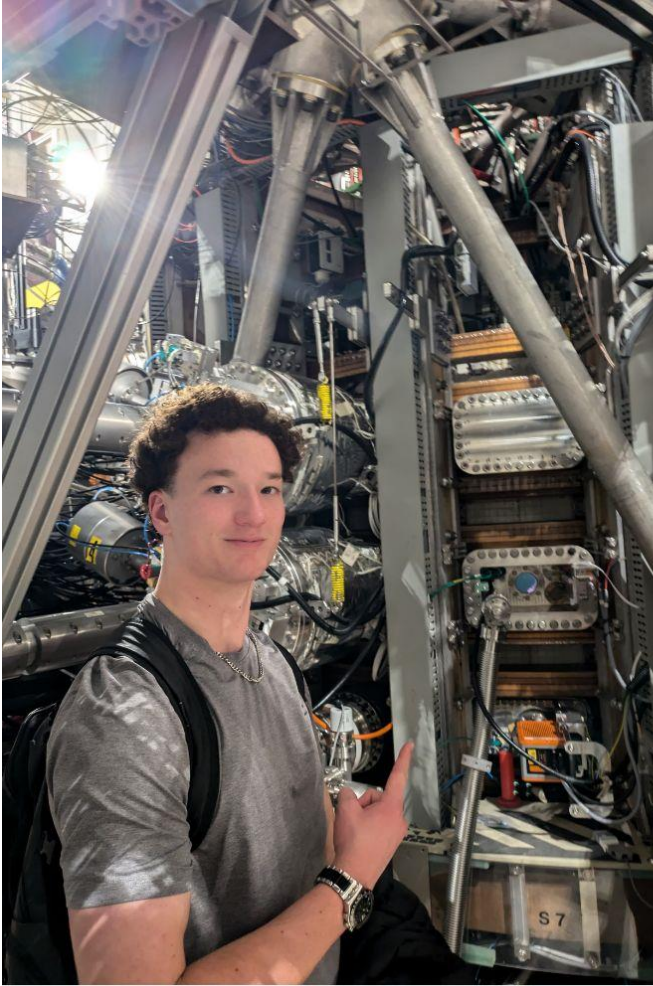
To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow, be part of, and stay connected with the Reading School community.

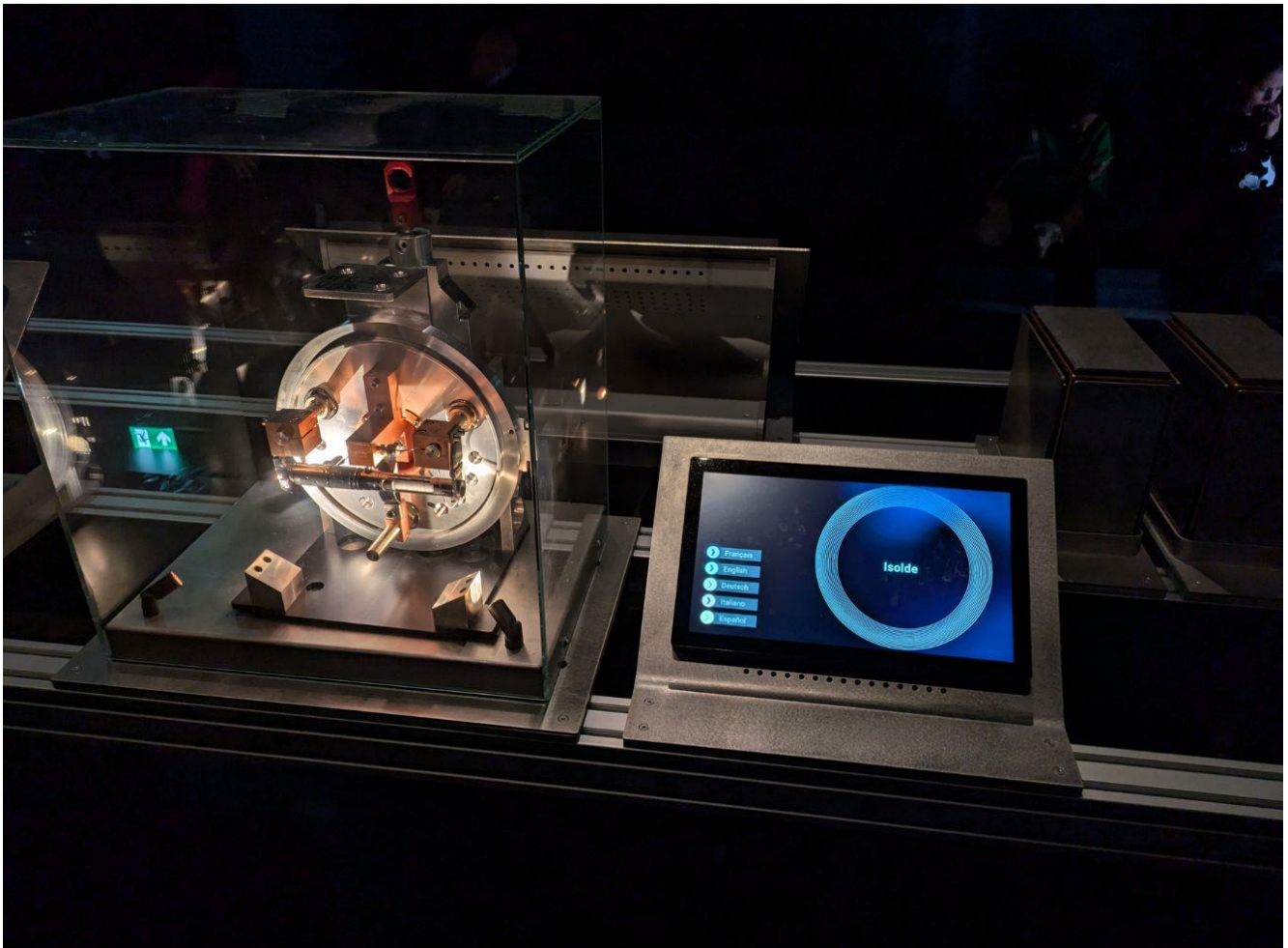
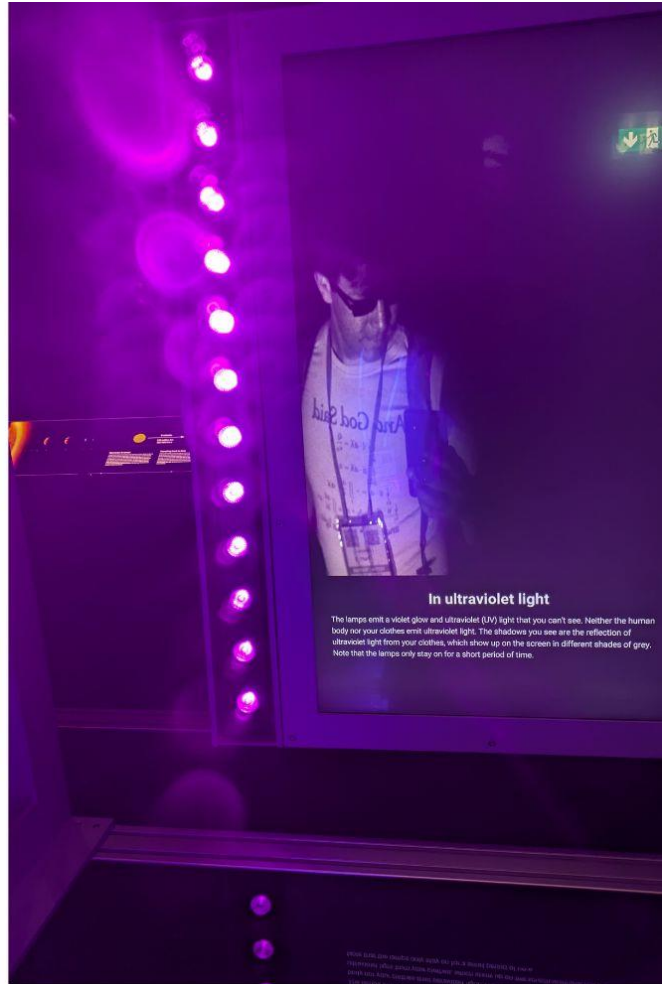
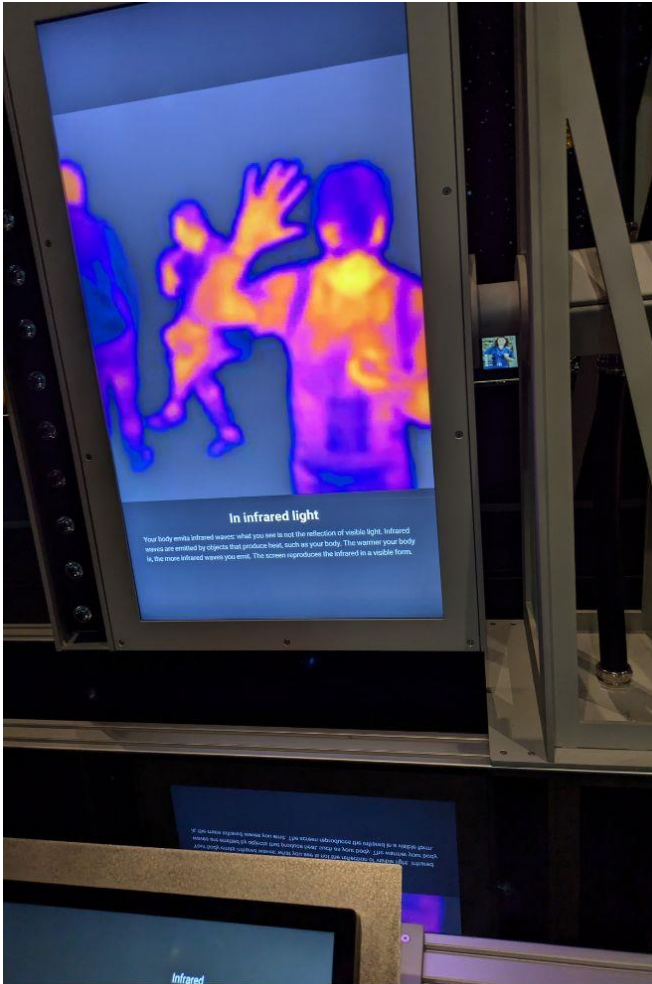


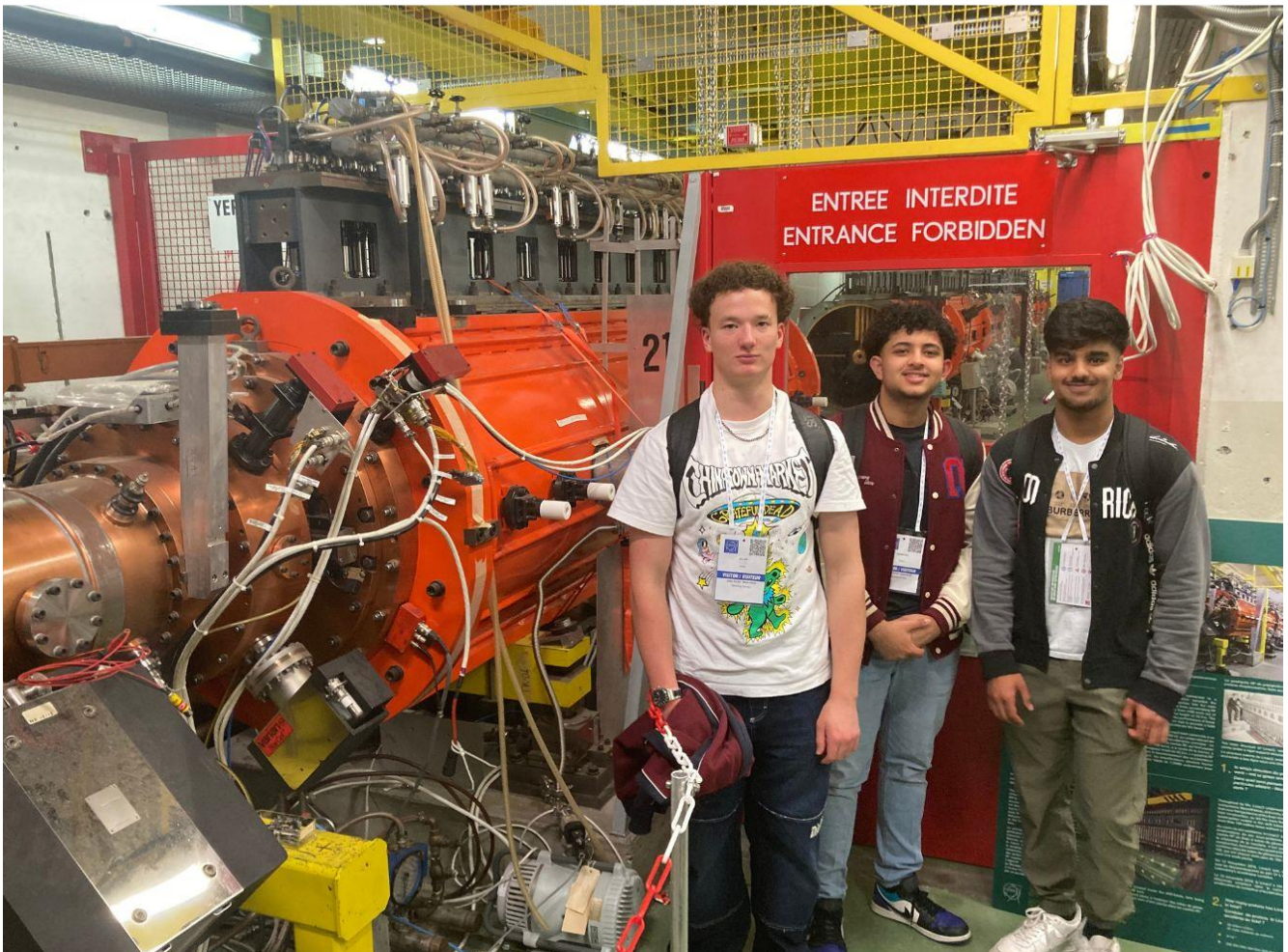
## CERN Trip 2024



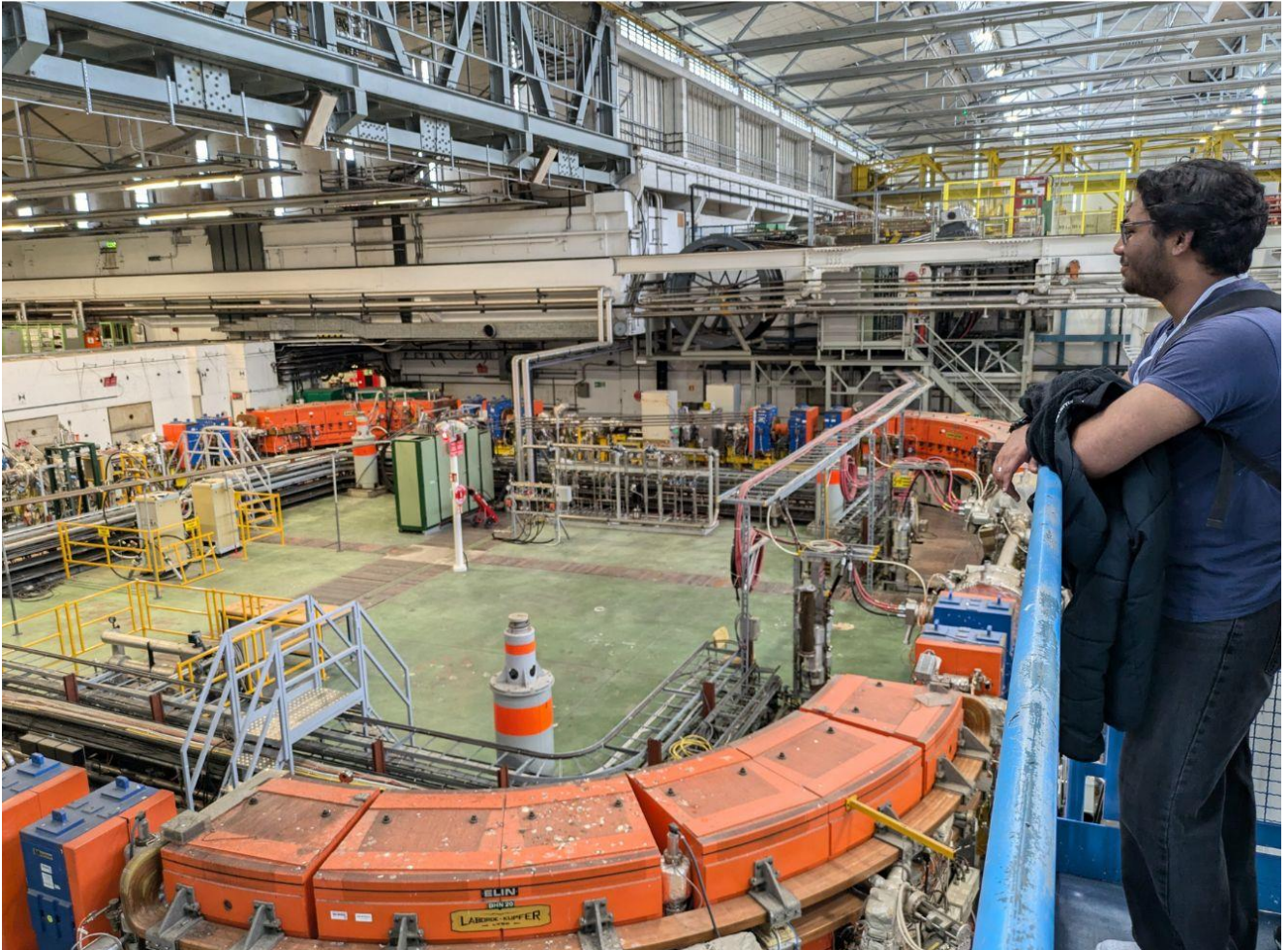














With thanks to trip leaders, Mr A Elmore (Head of Physics) and Mr C L-B (Teacher of Physics & Maths)

## Commemoration Service 2024

Each year we celebrate the founding of Reading School in 1125 and its historic ties with the Borough of Reading at the Reading Minster of St. Mary-the-Virgin.





This year's guest preacher was Reverend Seminarian Luke Theobald, Archdiocese of Birmingham (OR 2003-2010). He joined Reading School in 2003-2010 and along with academic studies he was a sergeant in the RAF and he graduated in 2013 with first class honours in economics from the University of Warwick (pictured to right).

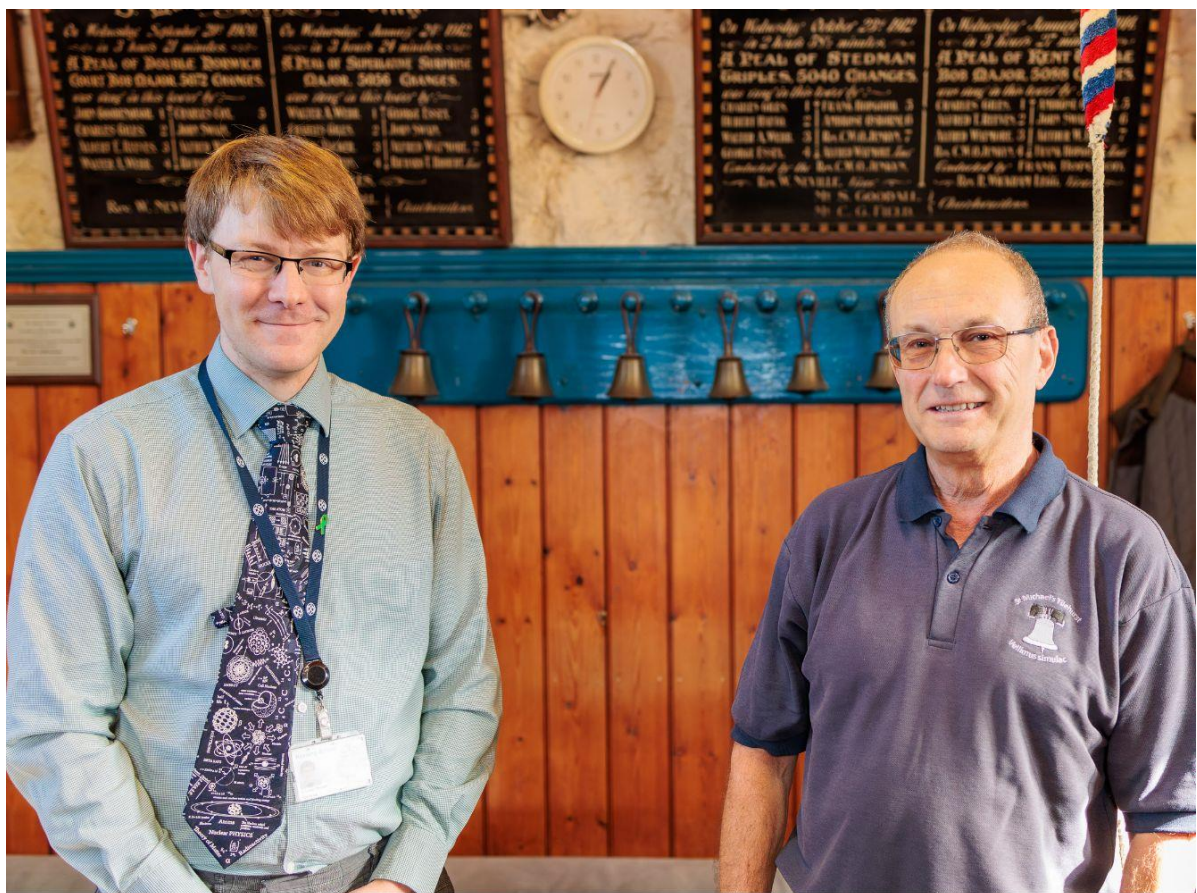








Ever wondered who's responsible for the ringing of the church bells during Commemoration Service? Several of the team that made up the bell ringers on the day included our very own Teacher of Physics and Maths, Mr C Lewis-Brown (pictured on the left) alongside several ORs and parents of former pupils.



Giles Winter (OR 1966 - 1973), Dan Page (OR 2014 - 2021) and Doug Beaumont (OR 1965 - 1973)

Bell ringing is a team activity, relying on close coordination between the different ringers. At Reading Minster, there are 8 bells, each with one ringer. Each bell will ring in turn, this comprises one 'change', and then each bell will ring again, but in a different order. There are complicated rules for how the order changes between each 'change', and these rules are called methods.

The method rung for commemoration was 'Cambridge Surprise major'.



An attempt was made to ring a 'Quarter Peal'. A quarter peal consists of around 50 minutes of continuous ringing, and is a test of mental and physical endurance. Across the quarter peal, no 'change' will ever be repeated. That is, the bells ring in a different order every single time. A quarter peal will typically consist of 1260 'changes', so this is a lot of different orderings of the bells. Unfortunately, a mistake was made about halfway through the ringing. While not noticeable to anyone outside listening, this mistake meant the quarter peal was not completed and won't be recorded.

In previous years, the ringing before the Commemoration Service was organised by Ian Judd (OR 1962 – 1969) who committed 40 years of his professional life to Reading School and he was also an accomplished bell ringer. Ian sadly passed away in 2022, but is still fondly remembered among the bell ringers in Reading and the surrounding area.

## ORA Remembrance Service 2023

An annual event to remember the service and sacrifice of all those that have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life, including fallen Old Redingensians.









## A trip to Salamanca, Spain

¡Vamos a Salamanca! A Cultural & Homestay Year 8 trip to Salamanca, Spain during Reading Week.



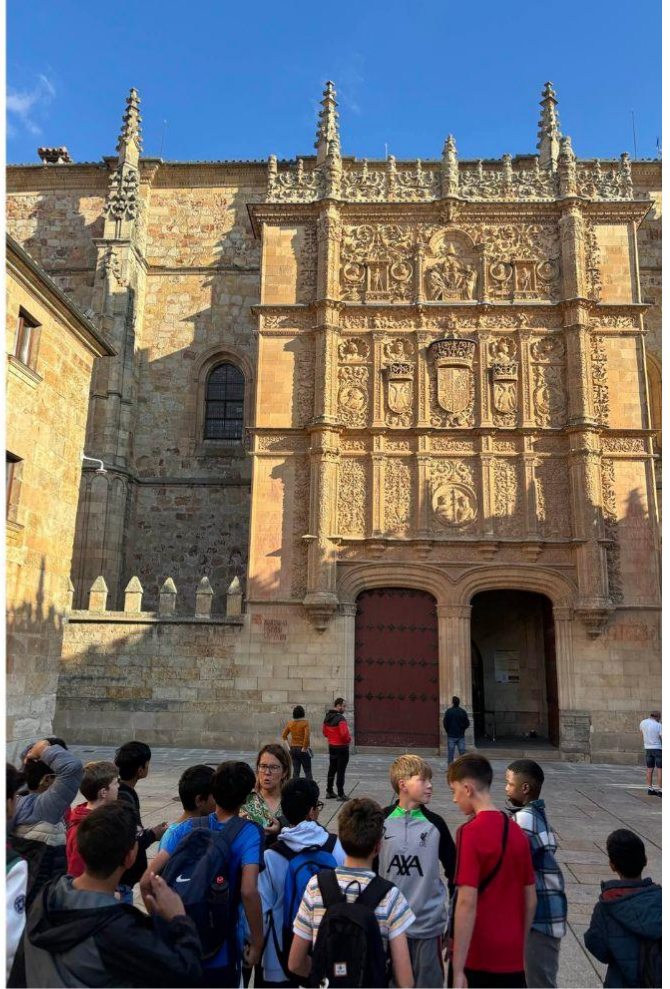














With thanks to trip leaders, Mrs E Humphries (Teacher of Spanish & French), Ms J Kiszka (Teacher of Spanish & Drama) and Mr S Allen (Head of Sport & PE)

## Chapel Choir head to Barcelona

During Reading Week, Reading School's Chapel Choir got to travel on their second annual overseas tour to Tuscany, Italy. They provided accompanying music for three Catholic mass services (Montecatini, Lucca and Empoli), along with visiting: landmarks such as the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Boboli Garden, the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, the historic walled town of San Gimignano, the house of famous opera composer Giacomo Puccini in Lucca, and the Piazza del Campo and Duomo in Siena.



The choir's new student leadership team was announced for the coming year during the trip: Daniel H (8E) Head Chorister, Oscar Z (10W) Deputy Head Chorister, Raphael N (12SP) Choir Captain and Joel P (12MC) Choir Vice Captain.



*"I found the trip extremely interesting due to the cultural elements of the tour amalgamated with the religious aspects of the choral services. It allowed me to immerse myself into a new environment where a cultural aspect defined the tour- something I have rarely been able to experience outside the choir."*

Joshua O (9W)





With thanks to trip leaders Mr O Griffin (Director of Music), Mr J Newman (Teacher of Music) and Mr J Druce (Director of Chapel Choir & Peripatetic Music Teacher)

A poem marking Halloween

## The Smile

And he smiled,  
A sweet smile,  
That felt like sunset on a summer's evening,  
Calming, reassuring, honest,  
It felt like I could see his heart through his pearly teeth,  
His clear mind through his mouth,  
It was simple and yet invoked so much trust,  
I could feel him through the gesture,  
It felt like he would catch me, should my legs give away,  
Like he'd never give up on me,  
And he smiled,  
Almost sickly, I was wading through honey,  
And the sun, was soon to give way to the sinister moon,  
Engulfed in darkness and the cold,  
Empty, shallow, unsettling,  
His heart was hollow, and his teeth bared,  
And his threatening thoughts draped over me,  
They were a cape of death, fast approaching,  
There was no longer emotion, or a blanket of belief,  
Merely the beat of my heart, pounding through my chest,  
And coldness of nothing else left but his smile,  
And I could feel my knees knocking, and head throbbing,  
The feeling was poison pulsing,  
I knew I was soon to fall, I was no longer in control,  
And he would not catch me when I gave up,  
And he smiled,  
And I fell over, I fell onto to the ground,  
And he stepped over my body,  
And it all went blurry, and I stopped shaking,  
And it all slipped away,  
And I smiled.

Henry R

A poem marking the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos), a Mexican holiday celebrated on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, dedicated to honouring loved ones who have passed.

## The Dead

The dead can't walk,  
The dead can't run,  
They can't get scared,  
And they can't have fun,  
The dead can't hate,  
The dead can't care,  
The dead can't steal,  
And the dead can't share,  
The dead can't smile,  
The dead can't sneer,  
The dead can't see,  
The dead can't hear,  
The dead can't laugh,  
The dead can't cry,  
When you're dead you do nothing,  
Do it in life.

Henry R

Feedback is important to us and if you have any positive news, comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing [communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk).