

THE RUISLIP EYE

The latest news and updates from Ruislip High School



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Gareth the Rhino's: RHS's Sponsored Pet

by Elisabeth (Year 9) and Jess (Year 8)

As you all know the sixth formers and science teachers went on a trip to Africa six months ago. We have interviewed multiple science teachers and here is what we have found out.

Where did they stay?

They stayed at a reserve in Mankwe (in the North West of South Africa) where the workers there take care of rhinos and protect them from hunters.

How old is Gareth?

Gareth was a newborn when our school went on the trip. He is now nearly 1 year old and is healthy. Rhinos usually live from 40 to 45 years if they are not hunted or poached.

In the world there are 5 different species of rhino: African rhinos, Black rhinos, Sumatran rhinos and Javan rhinos: all of them are also endangered. Rhinos can weigh over 3 tonnes, which is the same weight as about 3 cars!

Recently the number of rhinos has gone down by a lot in the last 10 years. In fact, over 7,100 rhinos have been poached in the last few years and they have become endangered. Reserves like the Mankwe reserve help protect rhinos and keep them healthy.

What did the school donate?

All the expenses during the trip went towards the reserve and helped them to take care of the rhinos.

Introducing our New Year 8 Head of Year: Mr Joseph



by Lorena (Year 8)

In January, Mr Joseph came to our school as Head of Year 8 and teacher for different subjects. Fun fact: he was one of the best basketball players in England and used to compete in different countries. As students want to know more about him, Lorena from 8B asked him a range of questions to get to know him better. Here are the questions she asked with the answers:

1) When he was asked, "What did you do before you came to Ruislip High School?", Mr Joseph answered: "I was Head of Year for Year 9 at another school!"

2) "Did you always want to become a teacher?" He answered "No, I first wanted to do sports development but work was inconsistent."

3) "What inspired you to become a teacher?" He answered, "It is rewarding to help young people and inspire a generation."

4) "What is your impression of Ruislip High School?" He said, "Students are well behaved, the staff are friendly and things are organised."

5) "What do you think of the Year 8 group?" He hesitated at first, then said, "It is an interesting group with lots of character and I look forward to getting to know them better!"

6) "Do you have any hobbies?" He replied, "Basketball and cycling"

7) "Are you going to create a club?" and he said, "Yes, basketball on Wednesday afternoons."

Overall, it's clear that Mr Joseph is a great addition to Ruislip High, and he will definitely be very helpful in turning Year 8 into a more disciplined year group.

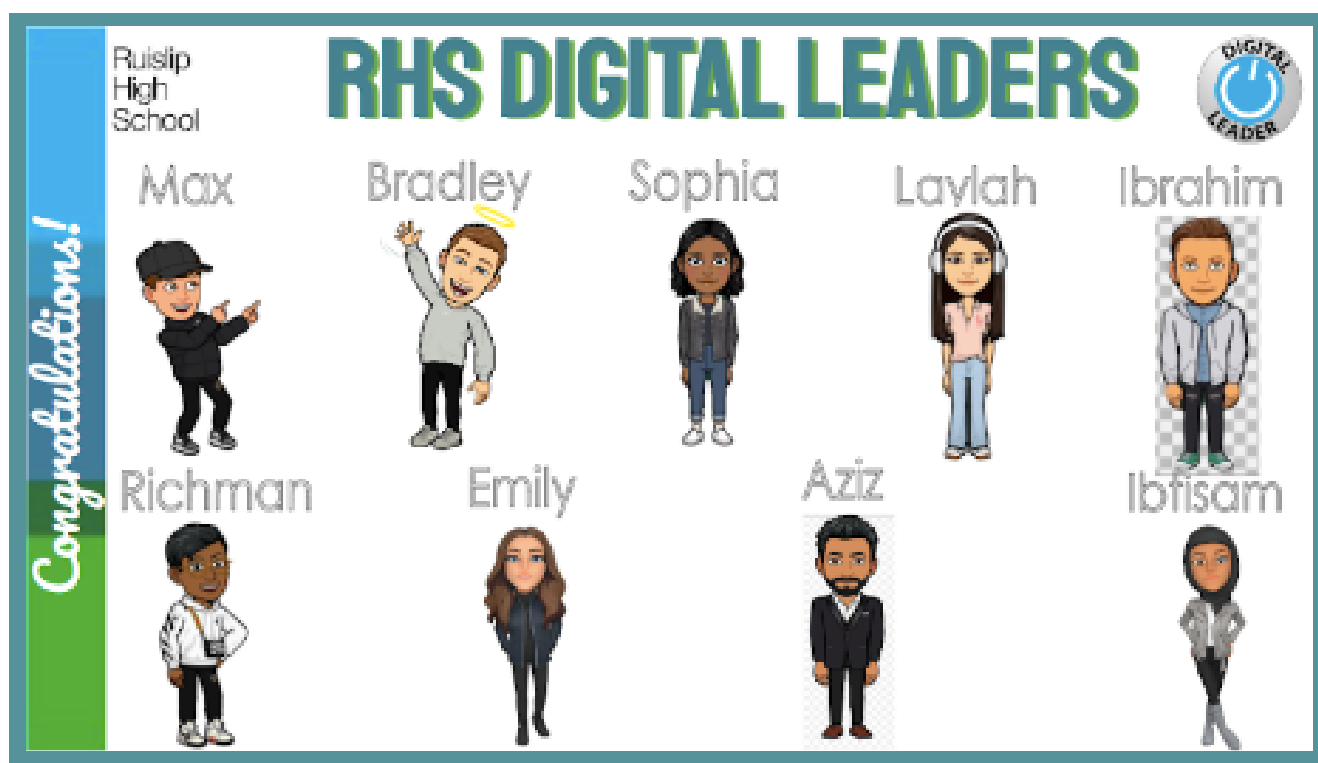
Ruislip High's Digital Leaders

by Laylah (Year 9)

Walking around the school, I am certain that you have seen the blue TVs lighting up with pictures of homework reminders, competition announcements, big news stories and so much more, but one thing that pops up on the slideshow almost every day are the Digital Leader representatives. They are always shown around the school, but have you ever stopped, looked and wondered, who are they? What do they do? Or the inevitable question: How do I become one?

The Digital Leaders are students from year seven to year thirteen; their job is to make sure that you know how to be safe on the internet whilst getting the most out of your online experience. They meet up a few times every half term to discuss plans on how to make sure that every student in the school is fully educated on how to be sensible online. If you ever want to spot a Digital Leader, they will wear small, silver badges on their blazer or tie, and are almost always in the computer science corridor!

Now you know about Digital Leaders, and you want to become one. Here's how you can. At the start of the academic year, Mrs Carstens will put out a form, you will fill in your basic information, and at the end of the form you get to write about how you would be an asset to the Digital Team, and how passionate you are about becoming a leader! This form will be looked at by SLT and your HOY. Wait patiently for a response and if you get one? Well done! You are now a part of the Digital Leaders! Welcome to the family!



SAFER INTERNET WEEK: 6th February 2023 to the 10th February 2023

With Safer Internet Week quickly approaching, the school and the Digital Leaders have been very busy while preparing for the event! There have been interviews, slideshows, videos and assemblies being recorded, edited and finalised within the past few weeks and we are very excited to share our hard work with you!

The main focus of Safer Internet Week is to, obviously, stay safe online- as Digital Leaders, we believe that other school's online safety awareness is boring, that's why we don't just do safer internet day- we have a whole week dedicated to it! This year our theme is 'Want To Talk About It?' This means that our safer internet week is all about speaking out about what you see online and how to report things and maintain a safe online life.

The Digital leaders are going to be delivering assemblies to every year group in order for every student to be able to sustain a safe and healthy relationship with the internet. Not only will assemblies be taking place, but in your computer science lessons you will look at new and old ways to stay safe online and learn more about the world of media. As if this wasn't enough, our Digital Leaders have created tutor group slideshows, where your tutor group can learn and suggest new things about staying safe online.

New Year, New LRC

by Lorena (Year 8)



With the coming of the new year, the LRC has created many new opportunities arranged for the rest of the year. Firstly, Year 7 are all involved in a challenge: the Year 7 Bingo.

The Year 7 Bingo

Mrs Austen has created an amazing bingo for Year 7. All you have to do is to go to the LRC to get a bingo card. On each box, there's a different type of book that you can read, and then after you finish it, be sure to give your completed Bingo card to Mrs Austen in the LRC to be in with a chance of winning a prize!

More specifically, the competition involves mini-challenges: whenever you complete a line you get a green card and once you complete it all you get a chance to win an individual prize or a tutor group prize.

Secondly, every month, Mrs Austen updates the Mobile Trolley, which showcases to students a range of books that are linked to a theme for the month. For example, in October, the trolley displayed books around the theme of Black History Month. This month, the trolley has an arrangement of classic novels on display.

New Books:

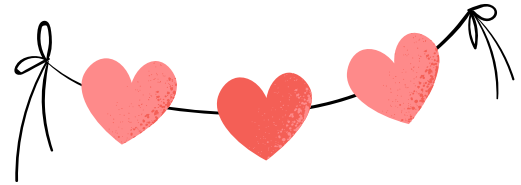
With the start of 2023, Mrs Austen bought huge amounts of new books for the library. She bought new annuals, nonfiction and fiction books for different year groups to read. Excitingly, some of these new titles include: *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard; *You Don't Know Me* by Sophia Bernet and an amazing Tiktok 2023 edition annual. They're definitely worth checking out!



*Pictured above: the LRC's mobile trolley for the month of January.
Below: the Year 7 Bingo card - pick yours up from the LRC!*

Read a book of your choice	Read a classic book / story or fairy tale	Read a book that became a film or TV series	Read a funny book	Read a Non-Fiction book
Read a book about animals	Read a book borrowed from the LRC / LRC Book trolley	Read a book from the recommended reading list	Read a book mentioned in one of your reading tutorials	Read a book recommended by a friend
Read a book by your favourite Author	Read a Autobiography/ Memoirs book	Read a Fantasy/ Dystopian book	Read a book of poems or short stories	Write your own book review for one of the books read
Read a creepy or spooky book	Read a Book by a Female Author	Read a book by a Male Author	Read a book about Diversity	Read a book based on a true story
Read a second book of a series	Read a book your Parents/Guardians recommended	Read a book your Tutor/Teacher recommended	Read a book Mrs Austen sent out to Tutors of new titles	Read a book of your choice

Is Valentine's Day Too Commercialised?



by Marwa (Year 7)

Are you interested in Valentine's Day? When it comes around every year, are you sitting alone with your tub of ice cream, or are you out on a date with your significant other? Are you holding hands with your lover while watching *The Notebook*? Or are you crying your eyes out all alone watching *Titanic*?

Regardless of what you're doing on Valentine's Day, have you ever stopped to think: is Valentine's Day overrated? Is it worth the hype?

Before I share my own views, here's what other people had to say when asked what they think of Valentine's Day. Fatima in 7W, said that, "No, I don't like Valentine's Day as it's not very advertised in the UK but online it is." Interestingly enough, Fatima is quite right in her opinions as on social media Valentine's Day seems to build such a hype.

Also, Rahma in 7D, claimed that Valentine's Day is not one of her interests as she doesn't celebrate it and has no love interest for her age. Similarly to Fatima, she believes that Valentine's Day is quite is quite overrated. In the UK, Valentine's Day may be less popular as in restaurants and brands, it is advertised less.



The Valentine's Day Nike Air Force 1 "Love Letter".
Image taken from: <https://sneakernews.com/2021/01/26/nike-air-force-1-low-valentines-day-love-letter-dd3384-600/>

Somewhere that this holiday is more widely celebrated is America. This could be because of supermarket branding and packaging for food. Some examples of this include Oreos, Cadbury and even branded Nike shoes! The reason that Valentine's Day in the USA or Canada is so much more existing, interesting and popular is that it is more focused on the commercialised and profitable sides to this 'holiday'.



I personally have mixed opinions on Valentine's Day. Whilst I don't necessarily find the love interest storyline of Valentine's Day appealing, I'm quite fond of the commercialised side to things (especially the discounted chocolates the day after Valentine's Day!).

International Women's Day

by Rahma (Year 7)

On March the 8th of 2023, we will celebrate International Women's Day! This is a great day to appreciate what a big role women have in society.

Unequal 'Women's Rights'

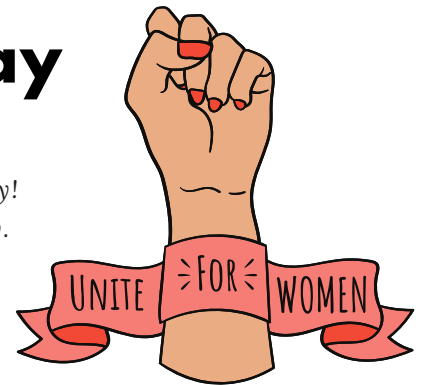
There was no such thing as women's rights before 1918, when women weren't allowed to vote or in the Middle Ages, when women wouldn't have been educated causing them to remain ignorant of their interests.

Women in the 1950s were raised to do the following: get married when they were 20; obey men at all times; take care of food, clothes, chores and children. This might have been fair if men and children were inclined to help with some chores like washing the dishes, but this was not the case. The men were raised to do and believes things such as own a business, marry the perfect wife and work. As you can see, a woman's job is clearly harder than that of men.

Women's Rights

Luckily, this has changed because of the suffragettes. The suffragettes were women who would not accept unequal rights.

Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela Pankhurst, and a little group of women based in Manchester founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. The WSPU's goal was to spread awareness about equal rights and to allow women to vote. Group member Emily Wilding Davidson died on 8th of June 1913 after having been trampled and suffered fatal brain damage and died 4 days later. She jumped off the fence and was trampled by a horse.



Some years later, in 1928, women were allowed to vote in the UK which was a huge leap for women all across the globe! There are also many others like Margaret Thatcher who was the first woman to be prime minister; Valentina Tereshkova who was the first woman in space; Amelia Bloomer owned and ran a newspaper and was a female rights activist; Mary Seacole (one of my favourites) who was a nurse helping the injured in WWII and many many more, and I couldn't name them as there are so many more, which is astonishing.

Recent Problem(s)

Something that I can't miss in this topic would be the horrible situation in Iran. If you are unaware or haven't read our first edition, women are not getting the freedom they deserve, ending up with people like Masha Anini, who died last September, because she breached the strict dress code. This is unacceptable and I hope that by the time you're reading this, this has settled down.

There are also problems with countries across the world run by a patriarchal society (run by men). This is a problem as it may suggest to young women that only men can have important roles and in small things like how a family is run by your father, or the oldest men get to have the last say, which can further suggest that men are important and women aren't.

However, what we need to recognise is that women and men are equally good and talented and should be treated the same. We're all human beings at the end of the day.

In conclusion, here are some ways to celebrate Women's Day! You can dress in purple (for justice and dignity); green - for hope; and white, for purity against prejudice and discrimination. You can also research a female role model like your mum, a politician or someone you know! For the teachers, you might want to hold an assembly or tell your students to wear colours that represent Women's Day on March 8th. And finally, tell someone something you learnt from this.

Mother's Day

by Fatima (Year 7)

Everyday our loving mothers take care of us and sacrifice everything for us. As a thank you, we have a Mother's Day to thank all of the women that helped us through the years.



How was Mother's Day created?

Mother's day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1907. It originated when Anna held a memorial service at her late mother's church (Ann Reeves Jarvis died in 1905) in Grafton, West Virginia. Anna Jarvis created this celebration to honour the individual mothers who sacrificed everything for their children. It started in America when the people took Anna's small memorial as an example to celebrate the sacrifices mothers made.

How is Mother's Day celebrated?

People usually let their mothers do their favourite activities because mothers usually let their children do their favourite activities as they care about their children. Although, some people celebrate Mother's Day differently, for example in the UK, children give flowers and bouquets to their mother to express their love for them. In Spain, children make hand-crafted gifts for their mothers.

Suggestions for this year's Mother's Day

For this Mother's day, try to make your mum happy. Be the one who takes care of the house (with siblings if you have some) as that will make your mum relaxed. Give your mum a present whether it's hand-made or bought, just like a Cadbury Milk Tray chocolate box might make your mother's day or some homemade cupcakes. One thing you could do to make your mother feel special is just respect her and treat her just like she treated you since you were born.

Does Being a 'Man' Mean Hating Women?

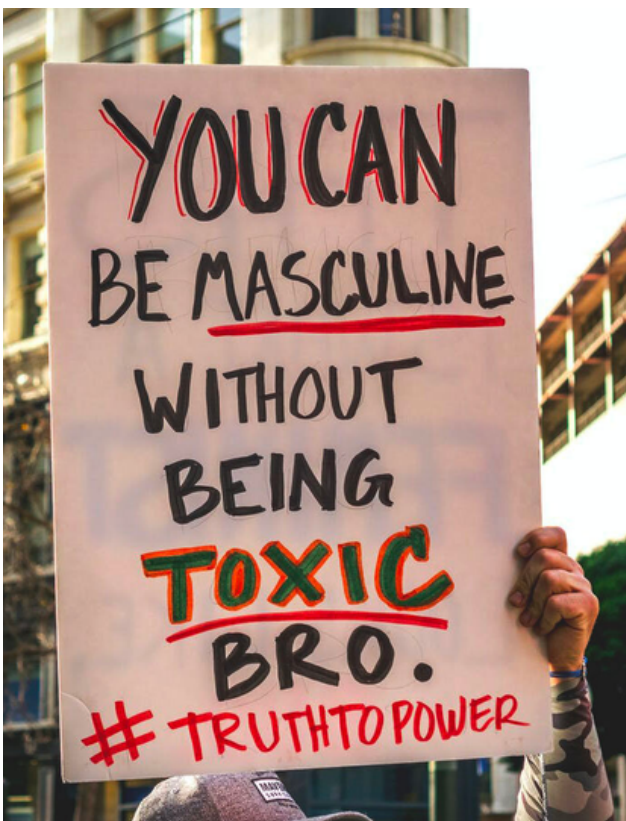
by Laylah (9C)

With the rise of feminism becoming a part of mainstream media there has been an uproar of 'over-done' masculinity - this has been coined as 'Toxic Masculinity'. Followers of 'toxic masculinity' aspire to be the blueprint of a stereotypical man. He does not cry, ever; he has little emotion other than anger; he is smart in mathematics and science; he is probably a construction worker or aspiring businessman.

He is the 'ideal' man apart from his misogynistic views, lack of any kind of empathy, specifically towards women, and his selfishness. These toxic 'masculine' men aren't so perfect after all!

I am writing this article to show you, the young boys that wish to be strong, dominant and protective over 'their woman'- that your actions are not harmless and not only will they affect the people around you but they will affect your mental wellbeing, too.

Because of this harmful and negative mindset, when men were asked if they 'would like to seek help concerning their mental health' the results were extremely concerning: 32% said they "don't want to make a fuss" and 30% said they would feel weak or ashamed. A fifth (21%) worried that people would laugh or think less of them, and 14% said they would "feel less masculine". Meanwhile, 15% said they don't know how to ask for help.



To be able to tackle such a large and seemingly invisible issue like toxic masculinity, we must know exactly what it is. Toxic masculinity is a set of behaviours that are stereotypically associated with men, regarded to have a negative impact on society as a whole; it can affect us all.

How can we as a community expect to thrive when half of us believe they are stronger than the others? A key part of being a toxic male is being insecure. We can see this when they attack feminists for being 'hysterical' or 'delusional'. 'You can vote, what else do you need?' seems to be a firm favourite amongst the sexist comments. These sexist and misogynistic views can be hard to unlearn, especially if it has been drilled into you since birth!

Ways to break this toxic cycle are to stop trying to be overly-masculine! Learn how to trust someone and be vulnerable with them, don't try to be less trusting because it's viewed as 'weak'- in my personal opinion, being trusting and vulnerable is actually a sign of mental strength! Another way to eradicate a toxic masculine mindset is to educate other men and lead by example. Do you want to eliminate this mindset for every other man? Lead by example; people will always follow.

What I am trying to say is: toxic masculinity does far more harm than it does good therefore we, as a generation, a community, as a school, need to change and begin addressing this! Let's normalise emotions and talk about them! Speaking about your troubles doesn't make you less of a man, in fact it makes you more of one.

So, no, being "a man" does not mean hating women, being sexist and 'strong'- being a man means to accept your flaws, and to love yourself and love everyone else around you.

Do We Live in a Dystopian World?

by Lorena (Year 8)

Solar panelled houses. Electric, flying cars, with zero emissions. No taxes. No threat of global warming. No sense of impending doom. A world of pure perfection.

Sadly, that doesn't exist. Whilst some people might say that we live in a world that seems closer to a utopia than years before, the existence of war, constant surveillance through CCTV, and the unreasonably high cost of living all prove this utopia to truly be dystopian. The reality is that our world is far from perfect.

Here are some examples of why people think we live in a dystopian world:

Our phones

Yes, you may have not thought about this, but our phones control us a lot. These small handheld devices, which we love so much and are so afraid of losing, can watch our every move and hear our conversations.

Social Media - We are slaves to social media. All we do with our free time is scroll through app after draining app, not fully aware of how much time passes and

how much our eyes are overworking themselves to focus on little words and little people dancing on our screens. Being constantly self-conscious and having to think about your digital footprint are pressures that are true concerns of citizens in a dystopian world.

COVID-19 and other pandemics

The rise of COVID-19 showed us the possibility of excessive measures to control people and how much power the minority can have on the majority. We were forced to isolate ourselves, follow strict curfews and witness ridiculous fears around not enough supplies - that definitely felt dystopian.

Despite these convincing examples, it's important to consider that compared to years ago, the world we live in today is miles better: we don't have the international slave trade of the 1600s, we are beginning to tackle issues of discrimination (even though we still have a lot to do!), and our technology is advancing and education is helping the youth progress and question the world around them. Maybe one day, we'll reach a utopia, but not yet; as a fellow student once said, "It only takes one rotten apple to ruin the batch."

What do you think? Do you think we live in a dystopian world or not? Follow this link to have your say in the topic:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1c481muOc22RnhLb_-M6FInDOR0FAA_cYbDvHAIJHIpY/vi/ewform?edit_requested=true

Results will be published in the next edition!

Image on the right taken

from: <https://www.lovereading.co.uk/blog/25-dystopian-reads-everyone-should-read-explore-the-darker-side-of-possible-worlds-and-alternative-futures-8777>



Puppies: Learn to Care and Love Your Furry Friend

by Sadie (Year 7)

Puppies were gaining popularity over 30,000 years ago. Puppies are very popular as they love to play, are lovable and are highly energetic. I know this as my Dachshund has just had 5 puppies and I've seen them grow up to roughly 8 weeks.



Take care of your fluffy friend by feeding your new bestie well but not too much. You don't want them to be obese and overweight, but make sure they are still healthy and have enough food. You need to bathe them often using special puppy soap for their rough skin as they are very vulnerable to rashes and flakey skin. Another way you can take care of them is by cleaning their sleeping and playing area often, as they are only small and have not been potty trained.

Treating your puppies with respect and care is very important as if you treat them unfairly they won't have a nice home and have to suffer in silence.

Why should you get a puppy? Energetic and fun to play with, they can also be calm and sleep on your lap. They are very snuggly and cute, and if you adopt one and not buy it, you would be saving it from potentially horrible owners. They are also a good means of defence and alarm in case of emergency - you'd be surprised how protective they get! Of course, they will be loyal and lovable to you if you are the same back.

Is Being Vegan a Bad Thing for Us and the Environment?

by Bianca (Year 8)



Being vegan actually has many disadvantages and side effects, such as anaemia, vitamin B12 deficiencies and depression from a lack of omega-3 fatty acids. Amnesia refers to the loss of memories, including facts, information and experiences. Some more of the negative aspects of a vegan diet are that it can cause things such as hair loss, weak bones, muscle wasting, skin rashes and hypothyroidism, which is where your thyroid gland does not produce enough hormones. All of these can affect the way a person thinks, messing with their mental health as well as physical. On the other hand, there are also loads of advantages.

Vegan diets tend to contain less saturated fat and cholesterol and more dietary fibre. Vegans tend to be thinner, have lower serum cholesterol, and lower blood pressure, reducing risk of heart disease. Does that mean that veganism is bad or good? Some people would agree it's bad, but some will agree it's not. But we still have more things to explore about this topic so get comfortable and keep reading.

As well as the effects veganism has on our body, it impacts on the environment hugely as well. How does the food we eat get transported to us? By either plane, boat or cars. What do cars and planes run on? Fuel. And what does the burnt fuel do? Create carbon dioxide which only aggravates global warming.

Say, for example, that everybody was vegan. We would have to think about things such as where we would plant all the new crops we would have to farm. There wouldn't be enough land and what if there is once a bad harvest? What would we do then? We would still need our food. And say, for example, the country's temperature was too dry or it rained too often. The land wouldn't be suitable for farming. And what would happen to all the animals such as cows and pigs, turkeys and all the other ones we eat? What about the people who work in slaughterhouses and meat factories? What would they do? They would need a new job and there would be thousands of them, where would they get their money from then?

Two teachers, (both non-meat eaters), and two students (both meat eaters) were asked what their opinions on our debate question is. Firstly, we interviewed Miss Vaghela:

So, how long have you been vegan for?

8 years

What do you think are the benefits of being vegan?

There's loads! I, for example, feel full of energy all the time. I also feel less guilty about eating food and not thinking about what happened to the animal itself if, say, I was eating a burger.

Have you seen any disadvantages about being vegan?

No. Definitely not. The only one that I could think of is that it's harder to find options especially when going abroad.

What do you like about being vegan?

I like trying out new recipes.

Would you ever consider not being vegan?

No. I love being vegan and always will be.

Then, we interviewed Mrs Austen:

So how long have you been vegetarian?

34 years.

What do you think are the benefits of being vegetarian?

Some of the products that I buy are much cheaper than regular foods.

Have you seen any disadvantages about being vegetarian?

Yes, because some restaurants still cook their food in animal fat/in the same oil that they cook their meat in, while there are also limited foods that can be found on the menus.

What do you like about being vegetarian?

I love trying out new recipes and exploring the many other choices there are.

Would you ever consider not being vegetarian? No. I wouldn't.

Does being vegetarian impact your mental health? No, it doesn't, I just feel happier being vegetarian.

What advice would you give to someone trying to become vegetarian/vegan?

To do it gradually and not just jump straight into it. Also, try different recipes and what you like and dislike.

Here are what Dathusan and Faraan (8C) had to say when asked their views:

Do you think veganism is a bad thing for us and our environment?

Possibly. It depends on how you look at it.

What do you think are some of the advantages of being vegan? Caring for the animals.

Would you ever consider being vegan or vegetarian?

Not really, no unless it was really, really necessary for us to be.

The questions were asked so that we could get a range of different perspectives from people who are either vegan or vegetarian or neither. While the argument can go on for ages with no definite resolution, I'll turn it over to you: what do you think? Is veganism really bad for our environment or not?

Should we be eating insects?

by Rahma (Year 7)



A fear some of you may have will probably be the fear of insects, but would you eat these creepy crawlers? Because this decision may change the way you see these “pests”, and might be the key for a greener world, let's delve deeper into the world of insect-eating!

Around 2 billion people eat insects; that's more than 1/4 of the world who eats them! They are mainly eaten in Asia, Africa and South Africa. Also, they are eaten in New Zealand and Central America, but not as predominantly. They are boiled, fried, baked, cooked and served in many more ways.

Now to the healthier side of the argument. Insects are surprisingly healthy - a lot more than you might think - as they are rich in protein while low in carbohydrates. They also have essential minerals such as iron, zinc, calcium and magnesium. For such a small size, this is, in some cases, the best choice for food!

Consuming insects is also a beneficial change for the environment, as cows take lots of space and need a farmer to take care of them. Cows also produce greenhouse gases which are destroying our environment. But our “vermin” don't need lots of space compared to farm animals, and there are around 10 quadrillion insects, so we don't need to worry about causing extinction. Bugs also reproduce quicker so we don't need to worry about a shortage of them.

Now, something that you might doubt when imagining these pests is the taste. You might think they are disgusting, but I assure you that they taste delicious. Crickets have a crunchy, slightly smokey taste, while a spider is a mix between cod and chicken. And as was mentioned earlier, there are many ways you can prepare this nourishment, including fried, boiled, sauteed, roasted or baked - a huge variety! Happy crunching!



Button, Button: The Sequel, Part 1

Story by Zaynab (Year 7), typed by Eleftheria (Year 7)

In the previous edition of the Ruislip eye, we published the first part of Zaynab's (7A) excellent Button, Button 2, a continuation of the short story Year 7 had been studying in reading. Go check out the first part of this story by asking your tutor for the old newspaper, or going to the LRC. Enjoy!

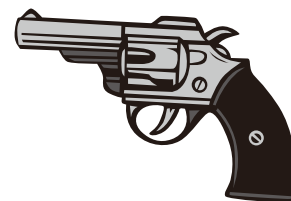


Chapter 4 - The Mass Murder

The next day, the post came: letters of condolences from her family and friends. Every letter she read didn't cheer her up, apart from the last one. This letter made her curious yet annoyed. It was from the council. They said to be aware of a mass murderer: MR STEWARD. They said he had been handing out buttons to couples who had life insurance + double indemnity and killing them.

Norma rushed to the phone and searched his name. Google read: *The person who finds Mr Steward would get ANYTHING of the following:*

- A partner - £10,000 - Ownership
- A house - Two toys - Tickets to a cinema
- A job - Equipment



Chapter 5 - The Escape and an Adventure

Norma studied the list carefully and two things caught her eye: a job and a partner. She desperately needed a job but as Arthur betrayed her, a husband would be nice for her.

She cleaned herself up, ate, and got ready to escape her house as she had been stuck in it for days on end. After adding makeup, she left, ready to find the enemy: MR STEWARD.

Chapter 6 - A Find

She went to Arthur's work by car and at arrival, was shocked to see everyone so happy and asked the manager if he had seen Mr Steward.

"Why?" he replied at Norma's curiosity.

"Because he used to work here."

"Oh," said the manager. "Well, he has disappeared for months and nobody can find him."

She looked in spy shops and places where she thought would find Mr Steward, but had no luck. 'One more place to look,' Norma thought - the subway! She went to the subway with a gun in her pocket. She was ready.





Dear Agony Aunt,
 I am struck with indecision. On my recent trip to the dentist, I was told that I would need braces. I am distraught, as soon the yearbook photos will be taken. These are considered important, as it is our GCSE year. I will be the laughing stock of the school if I turn up with braces. I have begged the doctor for another way, but he says this is what my teeth need. What do I do? Do I listen, or disobey the adults and take the braces off before the photos, even though my parents will have to pay money to put them back properly again?

-Helpless Holly



Dear Helpless Holly,
 I understand your worries, as everyone has been in high school and has probably felt this stress one time or another. However, is your pride really worth the incredible sum your parents must pay? You will also most likely be grounded for that. If it really matters for you, I would try to smile without showing my teeth. But really, what's the worst that would happen? Sure, maybe a few people will say something, but it will eventually become the norm and the novelty will wear off. And anyway, braces can actually look pretty nice! I think that as long as you have a good self-image, you will excel no matter what.

Good luck,
 Agony Aunt

Agony Aunt,
 Help me! What should I do? The person I have to unfortunately call my "brother" is so mean to me. He said I smell! I don't know if I should take revenge or just ignore it, but I can't stand him! I don't know how to get rid of this icky problem, but I do need some disinfecting advice!

-Disgusted Diana

Dear Disgusted Diana,

In your position, I would firstly, tell my mum about it, explain to her what happened and tell her why I was upset. It might be also be helpful to remember that your brother is still a human, not a bug, with feelings! You could ask him if he's going through anything and if there's anything you can do to help, because mean behaviour has a cause.

If still nothing has changed, maybe he just needs time. Revenge is never the solution, but only leads to more problems. Also, disinfectant should only be used to clean wooden surfaces.

Happy Cleaning!
 Agony Aunt



