

— Spring 2026 —

# AG NEWSLETTER

*A newsletter made by the students of Alder Grange*



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## Spring Into Action!

We are proud to share with you the Spring Edition of the School Newsletter.

Since January, we have been exploring a range of goings-on in school as well as within the Rossendale community as a whole. It has been a great opportunity for us to gain a deeper insight into how we all function as a unit.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who is pivotal to keeping the school running, and to thank you for taking the time to read our work.

The Student Newsletter team includes: Myla N, Katie H, Chloe H, Hollie M, Zara S, Bobbie C, Ruby P, Issy F, Amara R, Catherine R, Alfie A, Ella T, Iris M, Bella I, Abigail W, and Mr Cardy.

# The Great Enterprise Badminton Showdown!

Written by Alfie A

The sports hall was filled with the smell of deep heat and desperate ambition as the Year 10 Enterprise Group hosted the most anticipated event of the term. As part of their mission to raise heaps of money for Rossendale Hospice, they've already been running the length of the country and serving up hot chocolate and hot Vimto at break times. But this event was a first!

The rules were, one teacher and one year 10 student, paired up by the hand of fate (a hat), playing for glory a trophy, and most importantly chocolate! Best of all, thanks to everyone's competitive spirit, they raised a fantastic £45 just from entry fees!

## FINAL STANDINGS

- 1st** Mrs Archer & Izzy
- 2nd** Mr Harter & Zac
- 3rd** Mr Reynolds & Isaac
- 4th** Mr Emmott & Ethan
- 5th** Mr Antony & Erin
- 6th** Mr Cardy & Harrison
- 7th** Mr Ali & Romeo
- 8th** Mr Butterworth & Finn
- 9th** Mr Fielding & Lucie



The drama started early in the round robin stages. Mr Butterworth and Fin Hemissi put up a brave fight, but when the winning point slipped away in their match against Mr Emmott and Ethan Guy, Mr Butterworth didn't just lose he collapsed onto the floor in a heap of despair.

Meanwhile, Mr Reynolds and Isaac Hacking were playing like champions. In fact, Mr Reynolds was so sure they were headed for the final that he started practicing his victory speech. When the math didn't quite add up and he realised they were actually in the runner-up bracket, the 'Reynolds Sulk' was visible from space.

We also witnessed a true miracle. Mr. Ali paired with Romeo somehow won a game with a shot that hit the rim of Mr Ali's racket, wobbled through the air like a confused bee and died on the opponent's side. Skill? No, definitely luck!

The most intense game of the afternoon was undoubtedly Mr Harter and Zac Williams vs Mr Antony and Erin Oliver. It was neck and neck, point for point, until the very end. Unfortunately for Mr Harter, the Antony/Oliver duo pinched it by a single point, leaving Zac and his teacher wondering where they went wrong.

The event ran like clockwork thanks to the organisers and a huge shout out must go to Maria, who did a brilliant job managing the scoreboard and keeping track of all the chaotic results. It was a fantastic afternoon of sport and laughter for a brilliant cause. They are well on their way to their goal for Rossendale Hospice.

# A Reflection of Rawtenstall

*Written by Myla N, Chloe H and Hollie M*

*Researched by the above and Katie H, Zara S, Bobbie C, Ruby P and Issy F*

Recently, the staff at the Whitaker museum were kind enough to run a tour especially for some of our students and while they were getting an in-depth look at the exhibits, another smaller group of students were speaking with and interviewing the creative director, permanent collections curator, and school and community manager. The students were visiting to learn more about the way a museum is run behind the scenes, the history of the building, and discover the way the museum is connected to the local community and area.

Before the industrial revolution, Rawtenstall was a small farming village with handloom weavers and cottages surrounded by woodland and moorland. Rawtenstall gained popularity for its woollen mills, cotton mills, and industrial workshops, though the 1800s changed that. As a result, the town expanded swiftly and underwent significant adaptations to become more modern. Steam engines replaced waterwheels, enabling the town to produce more goods and generate a greater profit for the community. The increasing notability meant it grew in size with chimneys, buildings, and factories changing the skyline immensely.

Alternatively, life for workers was not so great, it included long hours in the hot, noisy atmospheres inside the mills. As well as this, families relied on all family members working including young children who took on some of the most risky jobs. Despite tough conditions, a strong community formed as people supported each other through the challenges of industrialization.

Rawtenstall has faced many challenges in its history, from the harsh mill conditions of the industrial era to the economic decline that followed the closure of factories. Workers once had to endure long hours, low pay, and unsafe machinery, yet their resilience created a resistance and strength in the community. Today, the town continues to adapt and overcomes the loss of the industry by building a new identity through small businesses and creativity. In many ways, the town is still built on the persistence that it has carried throughout its industrial past.



Today, Rawtenstall has a warm, lively atmosphere shaped by its history and the people who've grown up around it. Independent cafés, shops, and small businesses give the town a modern, creative feel, with places like the Whitaker bringing art, music, and community events into everyday life.

The town centre has become somewhere people drift to without really thinking about it; not just to buy things, but to catch up, relax for a while, and feel a part of what's going on in the community. This sense of community is shown in the way people interact day to day. Markets, festivals, and workshops add to the atmosphere by giving people places to meet, share their thoughts, and feel connected to the town and to each other. Local artists also play a role in this, with their work appearing in galleries, community spaces, and even in the independent shops, adding a creative touch that reflects the people who live here.

*Continued on the next page...*

**Our students found that the Whitaker Museum mirrors these core aspects of Rawtenstall in so many ways.**

Bringing the old and new together reminds us that the past and present do not exist independent of each other, but are intertwined, and Rawtenstall is a perfect example of that. When asked about some of the displays, Gina, who is responsible for permanent collections, told our students that at the Whitaker they “take in objects which help to tell the story of Rawtenstall.” A perfect example of this is the Valley Paths exhibit, which includes items from our local history, such as old bottles, weaving and brick work - a nod to the town's industrial past.

Another aspect of Rawtenstall that makes it so special is its ever changing nature, something else which is emulated beautifully at the Whitaker Museum. The creative director, Gaynor, commented that “The Whitaker is an ever changing place”, where everyone is constantly working hard to assemble a unique and varying set of displays. It is clear that the Whitaker is able to appreciate and embrace the past without getting stuck in it, moving with the times just as Rawtenstall has. For example, multiple staff members expressed an interest in obtaining the funding required to be able to loan artefacts or pieces of art from other museums to provide more options for displays and enhance exhibits. The museum also strives to continue to change in a way that is representative of Rawtenstall and the people who live here. Gina said “we want to diversify voices” and Ella (who navigates school and community links) agreed that “it's important these spaces are inclusive.”

***“The Whitaker is a very special place for both artists and young people”***

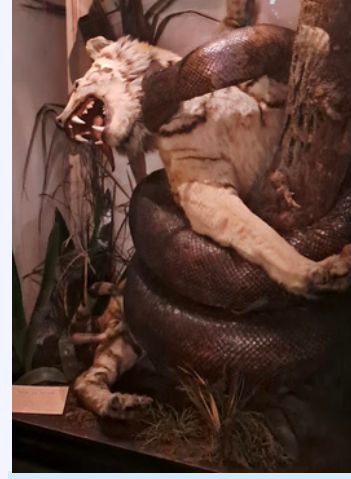
***Gaynor, Creative Director***



It is clear from spending even a short time in the museum that the Whitaker has a very strong commitment to its service to the community, which is evidenced by its workshops, children's Mini Makers activities, constant dedication from staff, and much more. The Whitaker's value within the community has been highlighted when locals decided to come together to do something to give back. When the beloved Nellie the Elephant became worn down after being sat on or touched by young children, a campaign was hosted, which raised enough money to restore Nellie back to her original condition (she is now kept safely behind glass). This touching story showcases the bond between the Whitaker Museum and Rawtenstall as a whole. It also serves as a reminder of just how tight knit the community is here in Rawtenstall.

Not only is the Whitaker very closely connected to the local community, it also has a strong community of its own between staff and volunteers. With a staff of 9 and an overwhelming proportion of workers who are volunteers, the whole organisation really is one big team effort, something which was confirmed by Ella who stated “Without volunteers we couldn't run the museum”. It is apparent that the whole workforce of staff and volunteers need to work as one to provide their engaging experiences and services and Ella commented that this dynamic means that “The Whitaker really just has a community feel to it.”

To conclude, the Whitaker Museum is a place for all of the community to unite and embrace our collective past, present and future. The constantly renewing displays and community feel makes the museum seem almost like a microcosm of Rawtenstall itself. The Whitaker is a space for creativity, community and learning, which we are lucky to be able to call the beating heart of Rawtenstall.



# Thoughts on the Social Media Ban

Written by Alfie A and Ruby P

## For the ban - Alfie A

I support the 16 and under social media ban because it helps safeguard children during critical developmental stages. Early teens are still developing their identities and gaining self-confidence. Self-esteem and mental health may suffer as a result of the pressure social media puts on its users; causing them to compare themselves to others, want to look a certain way, and get likes.

If the ban goes forward, teens will be able to concentrate more on their studies, interests and in-person friendships when they take a step back from the pressure.

Concerns about internet safety are another reason why I favour the ban. Young teens might not be able to fully comprehend inappropriate content, cyberbullying, or privacy risks. They will have more time to mature and learn safe and responsible social media usage if access is restricted until they are older.



## Against the ban - Ruby P

I personally do not support the 16 social media ban because it focuses on the wrong solution and doesn't pay enough attention to the causes. Instead of making platforms safer with, for example, IP banning to avoid banned users making new profiles, they are cutting off a way of communication within their platform – which could create a growing sense of loneliness.

I understand the development of children is also a key concern and that's why some may side with this ban; however experts argue that denying young people social media prevents them from developing online resilience, making them more vulnerable digitally when older.

Cutting off all digital communication blocks them from finding uplifting content such as support for positive education or creative expression. With all these barriers up, this may lead children into more unregulated and darker depths on the internet, leaving them at more risk to begin with.

I agree, the internet and social media needs to be safer, however the potential ban will cause more harm to the voices of young people, development and mental health than good. I think positive alternatives to a ban like this could be more regulation on the media, enhanced reporting systems and metadata removal on more platforms.



**What do YOU think?**

**Let us know!**

# Teacher's Pets

Written by Iris M and Bella I



## Mr Campbell's leopard gecko, Marvin

**What is its natural habitat and where does it live in your home?**

Leopard geckos live in rocky grasslands and deserts in Asia. They can be found in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. They like warm, dry climates with lots of crevices to hide in and they usually avoid sandy deserts.

At home, Marvin lives in a large glass tank called a terrarium. It has lots of places for Marvin to hide in, like caves and small logs. There is also a heater to keep the temperature in the tank hot like in a leopard gecko's natural habitat.

**Why did you want to get this pet?**

Marvin originally belonged to my step-brother. When he moved to London last year, he couldn't take Marvin with him. I've always been interested in reptiles and used to have some pet frogs, so I offered to look after him.

**What food does it eat?**

Marvin needs to eat live insects. These are kept in a small tub near his tank. He mostly eats small locusts, but his favourite food is waxworms. They look a bit like maggots. They are quite fatty, so he only gets them as a treat.

**What does it like to do?**

Marvin mostly sleeps during the day inside his cave. He usually comes out after it gets dark, or if he hears me open the tub of insects. When he is out, he likes to wander around his tank and sometimes climb on his log. I sometimes take Marvin out of his tank, and he likes to sit on my shoulder while I watch TV or work on my laptop.

## Mrs Watton's rottweiler, Bronson

**What is its natural habitat and where does it live in your home?**

Bronson typically sleeps wherever he wants! He has a bed in the living room that he uses when I watch TV, but usually sleeps upstairs as he likes to be as close to me as possible.

**Why did you want this pet?**

I LOVE dogs! I wanted a rottweiler because they are caring and loyal and well-behaved.

**What does it eat?**

He eats anything he can grab - he loves food! For breakfast and tea he has a mix of dry and wet food.

**What does it like to do?**

He loves to sleep, walk, chase sticks, cuddle, and get lots of attention!



# Transitioning from KS3 to KS4

*Written by Katie H and Myla N*

The shift between Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is one of the most recognisable changes that happen in secondary school. Amongst growing maturity and various friendships, students never miss the echoing bellows of 'GCSE' after each weekend. The switch from calm, unrushed lessons to pressured, focused courses is showcased in some research conducted by some year 11s on some lower school lessons to compare this shift from KS3 towards KS4.

In Year 8 Humanities, our Year 11 pupils found that students were in a controlled but relatively slow-paced environment, due to the lack of the rush of GCSE. It is apparent that the deadlines and lesson schedules were more for the teachers, as students didn't feel as though they were in any particular hurry to retain absolutely everything as they are not on a countdown towards exams. Students were getting on with work and fluid communications were common with pupils asking non-proposed questions that related to the lesson, rather than the exact curriculum or specification they were studying.

Topics were found to be loosely connected to GCSE such as History where the idea of a 'boom' and a 'bust' directly relate to the "Opportunity and Inequality, America 1920 - 1973" topic which heavily touches on the American economic boom in the 1920s followed by the Wall Street Crash in October 1929, resulting in the Great Depression. The cotton trade was also found and is eminent in the "Migration, empires, and the people, c790 - to the present day" topic at GCSE. The class were interacting with each other and the teachers as they discussed 1800s Rawtenstall.

In Geography, students found that lessons started immediately and that the class were responding well and getting on with work whilst cooperating with their teacher. This shows us that behaviour isn't necessarily tied to pressure to succeed in exams, as the year 8s still have years to go. Topic wise, the content taught was extremely similar to what KS4 students would expect to see. The lesson was focussed on deforestation, which is a key part of the "Living World" topic in GCSE geography.

Whilst there are obvious things that are present in KS4 as well as KS3, the absence of certain dynamics are also evident. At Key Stage 4, lessons constantly 'zoom out' to see the bigger picture and what the content students are taught actually means in terms of the GCSE specification itself for example which paper this topic is on. Additionally, KS3 displays less of an emphasis on practicing key skills like answering exam questions, clearly focusing its attention on teaching the information instead of teaching students how to pass in an exam (because these skills are not necessary yet).

## World Book Day costumes



# Petition for Kids' Costumes

Written by Ella T and Abigail W

I think high school students should be allowed to dress up for World Book Day because it celebrates reading in a fun way. Dressing up as book characters helps bring stories to life and encourages students to take an interest in books that they might not normally read. It also creates a positive atmosphere in school, where students can share ideas, talk about their favourite stories, and feel part of something together. World Book Day costumes also help show that reading is not boring or childish, but exciting and meaningful at any age, making it a great way to promote a love of books in high school. Dressing up can start conversations about books, helping students recommend stories to each other and discover new interests. Overall, dressing up for World Book Day would make reading feel social, enjoyable, and relevant for teenagers - and this is why I think we should be involved in the fancy dress, too.

***“Dressing up as book characters helps bring stories to life”***

## TOP FIVE COSTUMES

Mr Harter as Sauron  $9.5 + 9.2 = 18.7$   
Mr Howarth as The Grand Elf  $9.5 + 9.1 = 18.6$   
Mr Fielding as Aragon  $9.3 + 9 = 18.3$   
Mr Carr as Dobby  $9.7 + 8.5 = 18.2$   
Mrs Speight as Cruella de Vil  $8.9 + 8.9 = 17.8$

*We are sorry that we did not get the chance to rate all of the teachers' outfits on World Book Day. There were so many creative and fun costumes and we really enjoyed seeing the effort everyone put in. Thank you to everyone who dressed up and helped make the day exciting and memorable!*

# A Good Girl's Guide to Murder

Written by Amara R

**Strong female lead**  
**Gripping and addictive**  
**Clever, twist ending**

***A good girl's guide to murder by Holly Jackson is a breathtaking cliffhanger and a gripping mystery.***

Although there is an audiobook and TV series, in my opinion the book is the best as when you are reading your imagination flows through the words. Like how the characters look and what they wear.

It is a very powerful book full of intense scenes and addictive plots. The original book is considered a standalone murder: it follows Pip Fitz-Amobi (also known as 'Sarge' by her friend - though soon lover - Ravi Singh) as she reopens a five year old murder case to prove that the accused dead boy, Sal Singh, was innocent.

The book's biggest strength is its clever, thought-out structure. It includes mixed media like interview transcripts, diary entries and project notes which make it feel interactive and unique. Pip herself is a strong protagonist who is determined and brave.

Overall, many readers praise this book for its elegantly plotted thriller and unexpected twist, calling it: "A perfect murder mystery with interesting characters." I absolutely agree!



# A Day 'Down Under'

*Written by Catherine R*

Today, I woke up at 8:10am and had breakfast, which consisted of a salmon bagel. Then, at 8:20am I got dressed and took the dog (Yoko) on a walk. We all got ready - my mum, dad and sister - and set off.

My mum's impulsive thoughts, together with some encouragement from my sister, got the best of her and she ended up getting a kangaroo tattoo as a reminder of Australia.

After that, we drove down to Byron Bay and visited the lighthouse, even visiting the most eastern point of Australia whilst watching rays in the ocean off the side of the cliff. We went to the beach on boogie boards.

Finally, we went home, had tea and watched the Tesla Light Show, ending the night with some Aussie Married at First Sight (MAFS) before bed.



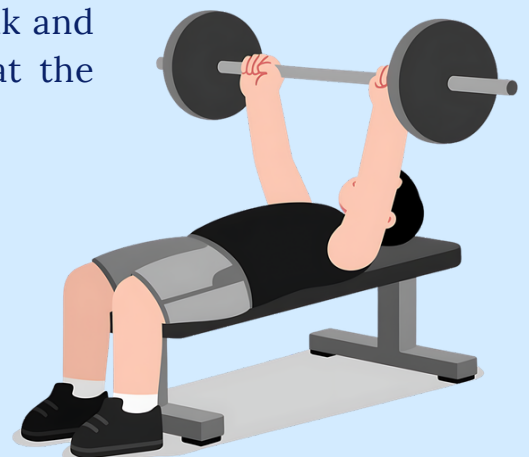
## Day in the life of... Mr Good

*Written by Bella I and Catherine R*

Mr Good wakes up at around 4:15am Monday through Friday. Then, he will go to the gym at 4:45am. He has breakfast at around 6:00am and arrives at school at about 7:50am.

During form time Mr Good will either host an assembly or supervise on the year 7 corridor. During first period, he will either have a meeting or a lesson. In period two, Mr Good will go through his emails or have a class. During break and lunch he will either be on duty or eating (or both at the same time!).

Mr Good goes home at about 5:00pm most nights. When he gets home he takes his kids to football or golf. Finally, after a day of hard work, Mr Good goes to bed at 9:30pm.



# **AG NEWSLETTER**

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