

# THE VALLEY

Rishi Valley School - Newsletter



There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

J Krishnamurti

## Bird Migration and Ringing at Point Calimere

On October 14th, just as the school closed for the winter break, seven students and two teachers went on a short birdwatching tour to the Point Calimere Sanctuary, located in the Nagapattinam district of Tamilnadu. Known for harbouring wintering birds like large wading birds such as flamingoes and shorebirds of several species, besides being located on the migratory route of several thousands of other migrants, winging their way to Sri Lanka, Point Calimere has been a favourite destination for birdwatchers from all over the country. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) had for decades using this sanctuary to ring migrants as a part of their Bird Migration programme.

This visit enabled us to experience first-hand, bird ringing conducted by Dr S. Balachandran, deputy director of BNHS, a seasoned ornithologist, based there. Over the 3-day stay, we witnessed ringing of over 90 individuals of birds in the BNHS Bird migration station, located there. These included the uncommon birds like the Red-necked Phalarope, Broadbilled Sandpiper and the Philippine Shrike. Dr Balachandran explained to our students the differences between similar-looking waders like the plovers and stints, besides familiarising them with the protocols of bird ringing which included collection of measurements of the bird (length of beak, tarsus, wing and tail feathers, its weight). Examining a wild bird in hand was a really thrilling experience for our students. Apart from participating in the ringing exercises, we also visited the Sanctuary as well as the Salt pans and the lagoon and recorded over 90 species of birds including Peafowl, flamingoes, pelicans, storks, gulls and terns. The wildlife seen included Blackbuck, Spotted deer, wild boar, feral ponies, mudskippers etc. We also made a brief visit to the Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary in the adjoining Thiruvavur district where over 10,000 water birds congregated to roost (and nest) on the trees in the freshwater tank. On our return journey we stopped at the Veeranam Lake on the outskirts of Chidambaram town and again were astonished to see a large roost of waterbirds, easily numbering 10,000 birds. We are grateful to Dr Balachandran and his team for hosting our group at the BNHS Bird Migration Centre at point Calimere and for his patience in explaining the bird ringing procedures.

## WELCOME OAKGROVE! ANNUAL VISIT

The senior students of Oakgrove school, all the way from Ojai, California arrived at Rishi Valley on a Sunday before the New Year 2020. After their misadventures with luggage and mix up of dates they finally settled in. The group consisted of four seniors –Geetanjali, Luna, Natasha and Jane along with their staff. They spent a week in school, interacting with students and staff and left for Valley School, Bangalore and Patashala School near Chennai.

The Oakgrove students interacted mostly with Class 11 and even had the opportunity to attend classes with them. The interactions consisted of an exchange of questions where knowledge about both schools were passed around. They also visited the Rural Health Centre and the Rural Education Centre. They were quite moved by these experiences and expressed a desire that they would like to come and help out in the future. They were fascinated to see India as they were visiting the country for the first time—they enjoyed both the cuisine and the culture. They especially liked the dosa and ate it with gusto. They also explored the valley when they went on a hike to Krishnamurti Sagar Dam with some teachers and a few students.

We learnt a lot about their school and about American system of education from them. Apart from the formal sessions, we also talked about their lives, dreams and aspirations. They joined us for folkie, treasure hunt, the new year party and the quiz. They also helped in setting up some games—we learnt a couple of good ones from them.

They gave an assembly starting with a moment of silence (as they do in their school) and moved on to introduce themselves and perform a dance that was choreographed by

one of them. After the jolly performance, they sang songs - 'Treehouse' and 'Here Comes The Sun' and a questioning session started. They answered queries and profusely thanked us for being very welcoming.

By the end of a week, we formed a bond with them by frequently conversing over meals and classes. They also had the chance to spend a night at Girls Hostel and we played fun games and got to know each other even better. By the next morning (which was also the morning of their departure), a concrete friendship was formed and promises of future contact was made. They also invited us to visit Oakgrove.

They thoroughly enjoyed their experience and were extremely happy with all the discussions, activities and events. They left with happy memories, more than a dozen mosquito bites and the vow to come back to visit the school and India.

Adithi

## JR MUSICAL EVENING

The junior classes brought forth their best talent as they performed in the junior musical evening celebrations.

It was hosted by class 9 who had the audience on their toes with their brilliant puns and jokes. They kept them laughing for days! The juniors themselves put up a marvellous spectacle as they sang from their hearts. The songs were mostly regional and were well chosen to suit the occasion.

A few memorable hits were the class and house songs. The group songs were also well performed with new faces singing new songs.

The instruments including guitars were also beautifully played by the students.

The teachers also gave their best with their rendition of an old Hindi song that left everyone starstruck. Overall, the event along with a special dinner left the children bright and happy for the night ahead.



A beautiful November at Oak Grove School

# CELEBRATIONS

## Jingle Bells

The season's festivities was heralded by junior students theme based decorations of their hostels. Class 11 brought forth the carols with high spirits. On Christmas eve, all the students and teachers toured the valley to catch a glimpse of the beautiful decorations put up. Each junior house featured a special theme that had been captured by the ornaments and slogans displayed in their common rooms. Raavi house had a glittery EDM oriented decoration scheme with tributes to DJ's and even a disco fan! Neem house brought out the Jewish holiday Hannukha with soft yellow candlelights and the twelve candles symbolic of the holiday. Silver house took a summery tone with Christmas on the beach. They had pictures of sunsets and waves and even an awareness corner, making it seem as though Christmas is better at the beach. Golden house incorporated social media into the holiday by having a 'World Wide Web' theme which featured many aspects of the internet. Palm house had a sports themed Christmas with posters and jerseys of their favorite sports stars hung up. Meru and Nilgiri house had a musical Christmas showcasing facts and the history of music.

Girls hostel along with Malli and Takshila adorned their house with lights, candles and a Christmas tree to bring out their overflowing Christmas joy. Malli house even had a sock corner where gifts could be put into hung socks.

Class 11 began carolling from the junior hostels, going from Raavi to

Malli and spreading cheer through lyrical carols. Santa Claus was holly and jolly and was ringing a bell to announce her arrival. They then proceeded to Radhika akka and Geeta akka's houses while collecting smiles and getting treats on the way. They were joined by the alumni of the school and a few teachers including Valli akka and Rajan sir. After visiting the remaining hostels (girls and boys), they retired around 12:00 AM. Christmas was well spent by the students and everyone slept with bright hearts full of Christmas cheer.

Adithi

## New Year's Eve 2019

On 31st December 2019, the Valley was in quite a celebratory mood. The day began with the New Year's quiz organised by the 9th standard, followed by a busy afternoon where juniors took part in social games and scavenger hunt organised by the 10th, and a treasure hunt organised by the 11th. Overall, it was an exhausting afternoon, but enjoyable nevertheless for the entire school, as the spirits were soaring.

That night, students and teachers alike set their worries aside, bundled themselves up in layers of winter clothes, and headed for the New Year's Eve celebrations. After eating their fill at a sumptuous dinner prepared by the dining hall, the juniors settled down to watch the much anticipated Spiderman movie, while seniors and a majority of the teachers made their way to the senior auditorium.

This year's New Year's party

organised by grade 11, began with an array of games and activities organised by the students. Such as 'Limbo', 'Ring Toss' and bowling. People thronged from stall to stall, trying their hand at games of their choice, while upbeat music blared on the speakers. An hour and a half into the evening, 9th and 10th grade went for a night walk with their respective class teachers, while the remaining students and teachers continued in the auditorium, and played a few more games.

Many students and teachers left behind their inhibitions, and went on stage to participate in karaoke, while the audience sang along and cheered them on. Songs like 'We Are The Champions' by Queen, 'Afghan Jalebi', and 'Country Roads' were some of the favourites, and almost everyone sang along with much enthusiasm!

Then, the lights were dimmed and the music began, and the most popular 'Folkie' dances took place. Under scores of strings of pink and blue lights, everyone danced their feet out, while some of the students and faculty of Oak Grove School tried their hands at the dances too. Although Folkie takes place every weekend, there was something special about dancing together on New Year's Eve. After Folkie we played a few more fun games -- the night was cold, but all the running around left everyone warmed up.

Then, with hot glasses of coffee and chocolate fudge, people settled down around the bonfire. Under the soft glow of the fire, slow songs were sung accompanied by a guitar. At the stroke of midnight people rushed to wish each other. What better way to end yet another year and decade, than being surrounded by the happy smiling faces?

# ASSEMBLY CORNER

## JUNIOR AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The **Tuesday Junior School Assemblies** are mostly teacher assemblies that are attended by students from Prep to Class 7.

**Tanuj Sir** started the term by speaking of some dos and don'ts, mainly about the need to be prepared in different ways before the teacher arrives in the class.

**Derek** treated us to a beautiful story with his trademark sentence, "...and he walked and he walked and he walked". In addition to his own special music he had with him a friend, **Mike**, who accompanied him on the base guitar lending an ethereal quality to the experience.

**Ranjit Sir** gave an assembly of building a story simply through postures and guided by individual interpretation.

**Geeta Akka's** assembly on Xmas Eve was about the Christmas spirit very beautifully brought out through a story of Dr Seuss.

**Meenakshi Akka** introduced herself and spoke about her involvement with Rishi Valley which has gone through several stages in her life, from a parent to Director of the school.

**On Pongal** there was a celebratory air to the assembly. The junior auditorium was decorated in traditional style and teachers spoke about what Makara Sankranti means back in their native place. Teachers sang regional songs relating to the occasion and Joshi Sir chanted mantras dedicated to the sun.

**Sonali Akka** spoke about the music of Cuba and gave a background to its history and culture which shows up in the various types of music played there. She played songs of four musicians.

In the **Thursday Junior School Assemblies**, the magical space in front of the Prep section becomes a beehive of various presentations by the students of Prep to class 6.

There was a **short skit** in English by the class 5 students and recitation of English poetry by class 4 and 6 students.

There was a **Taekwondo** demonstration by Induvadana of class 6B. Children read out interesting facts about this martial art form.

Keeping in focus the diversity within the school, regional language **poems** was recited by teachers and students.

There were two sessions of the rather breathless **JAM** (Just a minute) and its younger sibling **HAM** (Half a minute) in which students of class 4, 5 and 6 tried their impromptu story telling skills.

Some keen discussions have taken place in **Thursday Middle School Assemblies** this term by the Class 7 and 8 students.

**Ahaan and Bilva** of class 7 presented an assembly on Greta Thunberg. They talked about her journey so far, her vision for the planet and her plans for action in the near future.

**Prajna and Ashra** of Class 7 presented an assembly on M.F. Husain. They talked about his life and career and described a few of his paintings in detail.

**Naail, Devesh and Jidvish** of class 8 spoke about the genre of electronic music, its history, evolution and current status.

**Saturday Junior School Assemblies** this term had a spread of regional language stories, poetry and songs, presented by teachers and students of the various states of India.

On two occasions we got to see the rich diversity of languages and cultures that exists in the school. Konkani, Oriya, Marathi, Nepali, Kumaoni, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Asamia, Bangla, Manipuri, Gujarati, Punjabi and Garhwali were represented.

The children were shown video clips by **Sai Jagan Sir**, of the gymnast Olga Korbut and the legendary Ice Skating couple Sergei Grinkov and Ekaterina Gordeeva.

## SENIOR SCHOOL

**Tashi** did first student assembly of the term on various forms of bullying. He explored both the victim's and bully's psychology in each case, and concluded with sharing various solutions.

**Vanya's** assembly was on CHIRAG, a NGO in Uttarakhand she used to go to. CHIRAG (Central Himalayan Rural Action Group) deals with primary education in remote rural areas of Uttarakhand.

# ASSEMBLY CORNER (CONTINUED)

## SENIOR SCHOOL

**Abeni's** assembly was on a NGO she visited in Tanzania which works on waterconservation. She talked about the interactions she had with the Maasi tribe.

**Kirtana and Sanjushree** spoke on modern art. They showed various pictures of different artists through the initial years of this artistic movement. The artists whose work they showed included legends like Picasso. They also touched upon our perception of 'good' art by slipping a piece drawn by Sanjushree in the presentation which managed to elicit a long drawn wow of greater intensity than other artists in the slideshow.

**Raavee and Anshika** dwelt on abortion and the legalities concerning it. They provided an unbiased opinion with reasons both for and against abortion. They also talked about the issues faced by women regarding contraception and abortion.

**Bharati's** assembly was on the book Nudge. She talked about fallacies and biases and the 2 systems of thinking (autonomic and reflective) in human behaviour and ways to nudge people to do the right thing in subtle ways.

**Safdar** shared a few aspects of the ancient Egyptian civilisation - few characteristics of their culture, and their mythology.

**Sanan and Sanjula** spoke about critical thinking, and how to verify the authenticity of a claim, at a time when it is quite necessary.

**Xara and Abeni** spoke about growing islamophobia around the world with focus on India. They talked about the recent developments in the country's situation and the change in the constitution and what it means for Indians.

**Shoneq and Madhura**, presented a brief overview and history of the Baul music prevalent in West Bengal. They performed a baul song 'kichu din mone mone', and displayed some Baul instruments.

**Ayaan** portrayed a shocking, revealing and informative picture of Big Data and Analytics, focusing on Cambridge Analytica in particular. He warned how our data is now a commodity, and described a few steps we can take in order to guard against targeted media and leave a smaller digital footprint.

**Vivek** brought up the topic of ghettoization, both religious and racial, demonstrating the power of simple models to predict complex phenomenon with an open source modelling software. Dance Assembly by

**Eksheka and Sanjula** displayed varanam (colours) -- words cannot describe the performance.

**Kumaraswamy Sir** played classical music from China that has few lines of lyrics and primarily consisted of string instruments. His reason for taking the assembly (quite rightly) was that students usually listen to only limited genres of music.

**Dr. Meenakshi Thapan** presented her views on the current controversy of the CAA. She explained it in a way that made it accessible to students.

**Rahee Akka** spoke on the importance of literature in today's society. She recited a touching and evocative poem which resonates with today's problems, and concluded by playing a song by Bob Dylan.

**Santharam Sir** presented a slideshow of bird photographs, this time featuring birds from Sayadhri school.

**Derek**, the much-loved storyteller visited with a friend **Mike**, who is an eminent jazz guitarist and complemented his storytelling brilliantly. He had a new Scottish folk tale to tell this time.

**Sai Sir** used the opportunity of Ramanujan's birthday to extend students' horizons on mathematics, presenting what is widely considered his most beautiful formula. He also touched upon the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus.

The **Drama Club** showed a video and performed too to illustrate the concept of physical theatre. It was a forerunner to their upcoming production, which depended heavily on this.

**Siddhartha Menon Sir** who was on a visit introduced the students to few interesting aspects of life at Rajghat Besant School, with his own poetry to better capture the emotions associated with the place. Topics included the biodiversity, the Ganga, and the weather, in admittedly British fashion.

## SPORTS SCENE THIS TERM

All of us love sports either love to watch it or love to play it. But do we know the meaning of sports. Do we know what sports is? Sports is a vast subject and for different sports there are different rules and regulations, but what is common to all of them?

Sports is **Teamwork and Team Spirit**: even in individual sports a person is capable of doing things because of many factors helping him. **Self confidence**: without self confidence neither can we achieve what we want nor love what we are doing. **Passion and dedication**: these two go together. **Talent**: this isn't something everyone has but can achieve if they work very hard. **Belief in yourself**: no one can help you if you don't believe in yourself and don't help yourself.

Sports isn't just about playing, it is about feeling the game and enjoying every bit of it. In Rishi Valley we have a nice sports system for both girls and boys. We play sports like football, basketball, volleyball, handball, cricket, tennis, and badminton. We have something called seasons which is a way to divide these sports and each season lasts for two to three weeks.

We just had Cricket season for boys and Basketball season for girls. Girls had two Basketball externals - one was in Rishivalley and the other was in Madanapalle. Rishi valley team won both the matches and the score was 30/10 for the first match and 52/16 for the second match. Rhea Rose scored the most number of baskets.

The boys they had two externals and one staff vs student match. In the staff vs student match students won with a score of (124 /123) and the highest scorer was Prabhakar sir (22 runs in 24 balls) and Jayesh (43 runs in 46 balls). The first external was against Valyalpad which was won by Valyalpad with a score of (144/131). The highest scorers for this match were Malleshan (58 runs in 42 balls) and Rishi (66 runs in 52 balls). The last external was played by the junior team against the junior team of Valyalpad. This match was won by Rishi Valley team with a score of (118/115). In this match the highest scorers were Delhi Babu (28 runs in 48 balls) and Ahaan (29 runs in 53 balls).

Now we have football season for boys and handball season for girls. And after that we will have football for girls and basketball for boys. Apart from these sports if people want to any other sports such as volleyball or basketball

(when it is suppose to be some other season) they can still play.

Sports quality in Rishi Valley is perhaps falling every year because the people who play good either leave the school or stop playing the sport. This is the main issue we are facing today, even if the juniors are learning they can't be replaced by the people who left because they don't have the interest and that dedication to play. They may be good but their match looks very dull and sad. This is the only thing we have to improve in our system. We need to give sports equal importance as we give to any other thing. It may be easy to study and get good marks but it is very hard to play with others mind thinking that what will the opponent do if I make this move. Otherwise we have a really good system for sports and infact good sports teachers too.

Shreya B



The new Tennis court

# TRANSFIXED!

## BY THE ECLIPSE

In the early hours of Thursday the 26th of December, groups of children gathered in the games field wearing tinted glasses and staring intently at a giant screen. Relax readers, they weren't watching a 3D movie, they were experiencing the last solar eclipse of the decade!

This spectacular feat of nature brought out the scientist in everyone. Students observed the half-moon shadows cast by the leaves like a mosaic on the walls. They made scientific deductions and experimented with light. Many observed the reactions the animals had to this phenomenon. Dhruv, Tharan and other 11th grade physics students were doing their project on this and were tracking the darkness moving across the sun. A junior school student and budding scientist asked me why

bats and other nocturnal animals weren't getting triggered by the sudden loss of light! It really is true that the best way to learn science is through nature!

Anagh sir and Karthik sir explained the side effects of looking at the sun without proper eye protection goggles or solar eclipse viewing shades during the assembly before tinted glasses were handed out and everyone was allowed to view the eclipse.

Sonali akka, the junior school Geography teacher gave us some insight on the reactions in the junior school: "It was a truly magical experience! The excitement and awe in the students' eyes made my day!"

Krishna



## K TALKS

Thinking about the surroundings and being aware of ourself is a skill everyone should develop. It is not easy but when you start meditating and concentrating on your surroundings, your body and you start to realise many secrets of life. Most students don't like the idea of meditation and concentration.

To introduce them into this world we have a K-talk session once in every month on Thursday. Since we have a large number of people (students and teachers) we are divided into nine groups. Every Thursday the topic changes like the previous group discussion was excerpts from "This Matter of Culture." The second session was several excerpts on the topic of sensitivity. My group read a chapter and the questions started coming up. What is arrogance? Is it bad or good? What ideas Krishnamurti ji mean by saying "You have confidence because you are really innocent?"

What is the difference between confidence and arrogance? Many people gave their views on these questions and tried to understand what Krishnamurti ji would have meant. Apart from this we have a Sunday K-talk session and these discussions continue there and people bring up their own questions and we all start thinking about them. These talks happen in Study Centre. Life is just how we look at it, is it? I don't think that because what we look at is limited and the life on earth is unlimited. Life is a gift given to us and we should know how to use it properly. Many people don't even know about themselves, their culture, language and many

other things. This act of mindfulness will only come when we are aware of things. Life gives us many opportunities and we lose all of them.

Whenever I go to AIIMS I see many people stand in the appointment line since three in the morning waiting for their turn and after their appointment they have to do certain tests like MRI and show the report to the doctor. Now the MRI dates AIIMS gives are after three to four months. And they have to wait till then 'cause the private ones cost a lot of money and they don't do it properly. So the poor people sleep on the footpath waiting for months and then their treatment starts. There is more to it than this, the biggest is peoples' behaviour in the hospital and outside. It is all very confusing and astonishing. Humans are so complicated and their mind set is programmed by the way they have been taught. I hope that we humans learn why we are in this world for? And why do we need to do certain things which we do want to?

Shreya B

## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The reins of school committees have been handed from class 12 to class 11 with the unspoken promise that they will provide their best interests for it and will help make significant contributions to the school.

A new **land care committee** has been introduced by the students taking after fieldwork which was present in the valley before. It is headed by Natarajan Sir, Parita

Akka and Ramola Sir along with student volunteers. Their aim is to foster a spirit of community working in the valley through activities such as litter picking, subabul cutting and making compost pits. **Movie committee** has started off with a bang by showing interesting movies to the school. They are managed by Rahee Akka, Aniketh Sir, Parita Akka, Tanuj Sir and Chetana Akka.

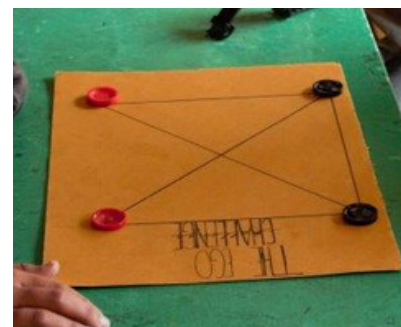
**Library committee** has started supervising the library and wants to try new ideas with the help of Meenakshi Akka, Bijayalakshmi Akka, Rahee akka and Krishna Menon Sir. **Assembly committee** headed by Anagh Sir and Nagammi Akka want to encourage and improve the quality of assemblies in the valley. **Dining Hall committee** wants to bridge the gap between staff of the Dining hall and students. They want to reduce food wastage and get involved in new recipe ideas. They are working with the Dining hall manager, Dhanya Akka, Rajgopal Sir and Valli Akka.

**Community service committee** wants to make every child perform community service and help prepare for school programs. They are managed by Swati Akka, Giridhar Sir, Vajahat Akka and Valli akka. **Sports committee** aims to make sports more inclusive with favourable timetables, increasing opportunities and new enjoyable aspects to the games played. They are closely working with Sunil Sir, Reddy Sir and Sagai Sir. Lastly, the **Newsletter Committee** aims to revive the newsletter and bring out monthly editions with the students hardwork. They are aided by Jyothi Akka and Rajesh Sir.

Adithi



# CLICKS FROM RAMANUJAN MATHS FESTIVAL



# MOVIE SATURDAYS

Watching a movie every Saturday has been part of life here in Rishi Valley School and I have watched myself grow up, waiting for Saturdays just to watch the long awaited movie. Entering Class 11 also has a great benefit, alternate movies (which are the more serious movies that are shown only to class 11 and 12) have now become available to us. The Movie Committee meets every week to select a movie that meets all the requirements to show here; it needs to be non-mainstream, mildly educational and enjoyable to help students wind down at the end of the week. This term, students have watched 8 different movies.



The first movie we watched was Paddington-2 a light-hearted animated movie starring a cute bear living in London who finds himself in prison due to a sequence of unfortunate events where he is being framed for the theft of a pop up book on London which he wanted to buy for his Aunt Lucy for her 100th birthday. Directed by Paul King, this movie is the sequel to Paddington in 2014. This movie was thoroughly enjoyed by the junior school students and served as a light movie to start off the term.



The next week two movies were screened; one for the junior school students and one for the senior school students. The juniors watched an animated fantasy film, The Song of the Sea about a girl, Saoirse who is half selkie and the adventures she goes through with her brother, Ben who initially doesn't like her. The movie ends on a happy note where Saoirse gives up her selkie powers and returns to live with her brother and father. Ben and Saoirse reconcile and become friends.



The senior students watched another animated movie- The Bread Winner. This movie directed by Nora Twomey was based on the best selling novel by Deborah Ellis. Set in a Taliban occupied Afghanistan this movie shows the life of a young girl named Soraya whose father was arrested unjustly and she cuts off her hair and transforms into a boy- Aatish to feed her family and get her father out of prison. Though the movie was animated it didn't have any of the lightness that accompanies animated movies and was enjoyed by the senior students.



Mirai a 2018 Japanese animated adventure fantasy movie written and directed by Mamoru Hosoda is about a young boy who feels neglected after his baby sister Mirai is born. He meets a humanised version of his dog Yukko, his sister grown up, his mother as a child etc and this changes his opinion and fully acknowledges that he is Mirai's older brother. This film received mixed reviews from the students; the ones who were really interested in Japanese films and animation really enjoyed this film where as others did not like it very much.

## MOVIE SATURDAYS (CONTINUED)

The students also saw the first alternate movie of this term, Brooklyn. Brooklyn is a 2015 romantic historical period drama film directed by John Crowley and written by Nick Hornby, based on the novel of the same name by Colm Tóibín. It features a young Irish immigrant Ellis Lacey who immigrates to the United States. Her shy and quiet personality changes drastically after she meets a young Italian-American Tony Fiorello. Their romance becomes serious and Ellis marries Tony before she goes back to Ireland for her sisters funeral. In Ireland she is faced by many hurdles that test her love. The movie ends with Ellis back in Brooklyn embracing Tony.

School celebrated the Maths Festival to commemorate Srinivas Ramanujan's birth anniversary. Accordingly the movie Man Who Knew Infinity was shown. The Man Who Knew Infinity is a 2015 British biographical drama film about the Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, based on the 1991 book of the same name by Robert Kanigel.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Srinivasa Ramanujan is a struggling and indigent citizen in the city of Madras in India working at menial jobs at the edge of poverty. While performing his menial labour, his employers notices that he seems to have exceptional skills at mathematics and they begin to make use of him for rudimentary accounting tasks. It becomes equally clear to his employers, who are college educated, that Ramanujan's mathematical insights exceed the simple accounting tasks they are

assigning to him and soon they encourage him to make his personal writings in mathematics available to the general public and to start to contact professors of mathematics at universities by writing to them. One such letter is sent to G.H. Hardy, a famous mathematician at University of Cambridge, who begins to take a special interest in Ramanujan. Upon arrival in Cambridge Ramanujan faces discrimination and finds life much harder in England. Ramanujan is then diagnosed with tuberculosis and returns to India to spend his last days.



The next movies shown were Where the Wild Things Are for the juniors and Yesterday for the seniors. Where the Wild Things Are is a 2009 fantasy drama film directed by Spike Jonze. 8-year-old Max, a lonely boy with an active imagination whose parents are divorced, is wearing a wolf costume and chasing his dog. His older sister, Claire, does

nothing when her friends crush Max's snow fort with him inside during a snowball fight. Out of frustration, Max messes up her bedroom and destroys a frame he made for her. At school, Max's teacher teaches him and his classmates about the eventual death of the sun. Later his mother, Connie, invites her boyfriend Adrian to dinner. Max becomes upset with his mother for not coming to the fort he made in his room. He wears his wolf costume, acts like an animal, and demands to be fed. When his mother gets upset, he throws a tantrum and bites her on the shoulder. She yells at him and he runs away, scared by what transpired. At the edge of a pond, Max finds a small boat that he boards. He is met with a series of adventures where he is crowned king of the wild things. He then boards the boat again realising that he is not the king anymore and is welcomed back home by his mother.

Yesterday is a 2019 romantic comedy film directed by Danny Boyle and written by Richard Curtis, based on a story by Jack Barth and Curtis. Jack Malik is a struggling musician who meets with an accident and wakes up in a world where The Beatles never existed. He uses the opportunity and sings all the Beatles songs as his own. He rises to fame and then at the peak of his career renounces his claim to the songs and informs the world about the existence of the Beatles. This movie brought back the dormant craze for the Beatles in the valley and now the Beatles tunes can be heard with the calls of the birds at all times.

# INTERVIEW WITH DEREK

It was in the second term of eight grade, the first year I had joined that there was a great buzz in the air; everywhere I went I heard "today is Derek's assembly!"

I thought to myself, "So what?". Upon some digging, I learned he was a storyteller. I didn't know what to think. Forty five minutes later I stumble out of the senior auditorium, my mouth open and in a daze. My mind was still in the land of enchanters and enchantresses, mermaids and mermen. Four years later I get the opportunity to interview him, I grab it with both hands.

**Q: What got you interested in storytelling? Derek:** (It began with like a story) Twenty eight years ago a friend of mine, Mr Fredriech invited me to come and visit a school in India, The Valley School. The director at that time Mr Satish, who also happened to be my friend asked me to do something for the children: so I decided to do a story and I quite liked it, the sight of those 200 happy faces. I came the next year and the year after that, till now, 28 years.

**Q: How do you spend your time in India and what places do you visit? Derek:** I come to India for 9 weeks in the winter and stay in Rishi Valley for 5 weeks and spend the remainder of my time at the other KFI schools (The School ,Rajghat School, Sayadhri and The Valley School).

As I was coming to Rishi Valley so often Radhika Akka suggested that I build a cottage here, I did and now it is known as Derek's Cottage.

**Q:What is it about K's philosophy that appeals to you?**

**Derek:** I had attended a talk at Brockwood Park (a KFI school there) by Krishnamurthi where I briefly met and interacted with him. Krishnamurthi's ideas resonated with my own, specially about how thought works, and how it is disruptive in some areas and constructive in others.

**Q: Other than story telling what are your other interests? Derek:**

I am very much interested and good at cooking. In fact , I have my own establishment in UK, a restaurant that serves vegetarian food. I am also interested in music, I play an assortment of musical instruments like acoustic drums, cymbals and of course the hand pan that you are so familiar with.

I have attended performances by the legendary percussionist Zakir Hussain in the UK and (ironically) Dave Holland in Mumbai.

The place where I live, Yewfield, a beautiful lake district in the north of England, holds the annual Ambleside Music Festival where musicians and poets from all over the world come to perform. This passion for music led me to meet and become friends with Mike who has come to perform at one of my theatres.

He showed a picture of his house and guesthouse and I could not help but comment on the lovely interior design; he told me that interior design was another of his interests.

Aatreya



Derek's Cottage

# SIMPLY SABUN

At nineteen, Atul Sir learnt how to make soap from an NGO called Gandhi Gram Trust in Tamil Nadu while doing his B-Tech. The learning experience made him realise that his true passion lay in making handmade products that are well received by the masses. However, times were such that it was ideally expected of young adults to take up conventional desk jobs. This put a halt to Atul Sir's ventures in hands-on manufacturing of products. Years after this incident, in 2016, he finally had the opportunity to resume his passion. When the new design and Technology department came up, he saw greater potential in expanding his small soap making venture.

While Atul Sir had a soft spot for soap making, Design and Technology students Dyuti and Rhea had a different inspiration. The sheer amount of plastic waste created from cosmetics like shampoos and soaps alarmed them. Hence they envisaged the making of a soap cum shampoo bar with minimal packaging.

This common motive inspired the three of them to embark upon the soap making journey. There were quite a few challenges on the way, which had to be carefully addressed. When a bar of soap for both hair and body is desired, it has to perform both cleansing and moisturising functions, which happen to be opposing tendencies. To address this, a specific blend of different oils had to be taken to make the soap. After having made three batches of soap, receiving feedback from the students and tweaking the

percentages of the oils, an ideal mixture was formulated, comprising of coconut oil for cleansing and lather, rice bran and sunflower oil for conditioning, olive oil for moisturising and neem oil for anti-bacterial properties.

The soaps are made via the cold process which requires the soap to be cured for a minimum of four weeks. To make the distribution process more convenient, surveys had been taken from the students and staff regarding the demand of the soaps. The surveys showed that around 300-400 bars of soap were required to be made in a month, which meant around 70 to 100 soaps had to be made per week. According to that, a production rhythm was created.

The name 'Simply Sabun' was finalised after great thought. It was named so for the sole reason that the product is inherently simple.

It contains no exotic oils or butters, everything is locally available and the whole process is handmade at home. It is a non-profit production and is charged directly through individual Rishi Valley accounts. This ensures that the businesses of various SHG groups such as Marichettu remain unaffected. After rigorous costing and calculations, a final value of Rs 32 for the Basil soap and Rs 42 for the Lemon Grass soap has been reached.

Overall, this soap making project has been thoroughly satisfying for both the producers and consumers. It is unfortunate to see that many of us today have lost the art of making things with our bare hands, as we are so used to purchasing commercialised products. Small student - teacher initiatives such as this is what makes life a tad bit more enriching, and this entire journey so special.

-Madhura

