

RV Ramblings

Middle School

Rishi Valley School

January & March, 2014

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Editorial...

Welcome to our final newsletter of the 2013-2014 school year. We had a wonderful year and we wish our best to everyone who is leaving the school. We hope you enjoy our last, long, and riveting edition of Rishi Valley Ramblings.

— Class Eight

Rules

by Maya Tanuj Shah

Are all the rules at Rishi Valley School necessary? Personally, I think that though most rules are reasonable, there are a few that seem unreasonable, like not being allowed to leave the hostel before the dinner bell rings in some hostels, but not in others.

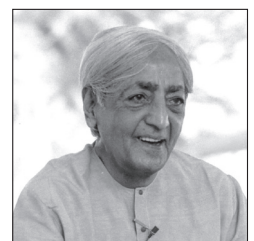
Most rules are there only for our benefit, health and safety. For example, having to wear a helmet while cycling, not being allowed to read certain books that are not age appropriate, and having to eat vegetables and maintain a well-balanced diet.

One question that has now come forward is whether teachers and students should have the same rules. After much thought and discussion; many think that some rules should apply to teachers as well as students, such as tying your hair back in the dining hall.

All in all, I think that the rules at Rishi Valley are not strict or hard and fast and can be changed if necessary.

If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem.

— J. Krishnamurti



New Year's Eve 2014

by Anoushka Dhar



The house was filled with girls trying to look perfect for the last evening of the year, and a fresh start with a new set of resolutions, promises and ambitions to live up to. I could feel the energy around me as all the girls were buzzing around as it was almost dinner time.

For most, dinner, of course, is the most awaited time of the evening as people are walking about with plates and glasses filled to the brim waiting to plunge into the delicious food that the dining hall staff made for us with lots of effort. On the menu, the New Year's Eve was special rice, aloo, ghee, and spicy dosa, gobi Manchurian, gajar ka halwa, kala jamun, and hot chocolate.

After dinner the juniors watched a movie called *The Wilderness Family* during which most fell asleep and some ran out to listen to the music that was playing in the senior auditorium for the seniors' New Year's party. The school bell was rung at twelve o'clock when all of us screamed "Happy New Year" and finally got some sleep.



New Year's Quiz and Treasure Hunt

by Naga Sumedha Nalluru

On 31 December 2013 we had the New Year's quiz which took place in the senior auditorium at 8:30 in the morning.

The New Year's quiz started off by the ninth standards reading off the names of the teams. There was a lot of murmuring going on around us because of the teams and because this was the first time in history that the ninth standards were doing the quiz instead of the eleventh standard students.

Once all the teams had settled down, they started off with the first round, which was the quiz round. The quiz round included current affairs, which Pari, Vaishnav, and Vinayak read out; Mohnish and Aravind did sports; Rishi Valley trivia was done by Dixsha and Tanya; Rishi Valley non-trivia was done by Veda and Divya; the conflict round was done by Sahithi and Mytresh.

The next round was the fun round. They started with the dhobi bundle making, which actually tested their skills of making a dhobi bundle. There were a variety of bundles made, but most people agreed that Amitesh's bundle was the best and the messiest. Praveena and Moksh were the judges, while Aadarsh and Somesh conducted the round.

In the following few rounds Rukmini, Kaivalya, and Deepak sir were the judges. The next round was the jam session, which Ria, Pranali, and Daanish introduced. The last and funniest was the dance to Beethoven, in which eighth standard Devansh, eleventh standard Kieran, tenth standard Srikari, twelfth standards Mirnalini and Mallika Pandya carried to the tune. Kieran and Mallika were the best and the funniest. Once this was over the final scores were given by the judges. Once the scores were displayed, everyone disappeared.

But this was not the only fun event of the day before 1 January 2014! Classes were followed by a scavenger hunt for the juniors after which was the event everyone was waiting for: the treasure hunt!

The treasure hunt was conducted by the eleventh standard students. It began at 4:30 and it carried on for a long time.

It looked like they had a lot of fun running around and doing various activities. They also had many funny incidents. One of the funniest incidents happened to Saahil on the Six Geese A-laying team. Saahil picked up the treasure, but being Saahil he threw it away thinking that it was trash and looked elsewhere for it. Meanwhile Sangeeth's team found the treasure, which was a big chocolate bar.

Everyone had a lot of fun that evening, which was followed by a special dinner and the New Year's party for class nine and above.





Classical Dance Programme

by Poornapriya

Bharatnatyam is a classical dance from south India and for many decades, Rishi Valley has nurtured the study and practice of Bharatnatyam.

On Saturday, 4 January 2014 there was a classical dance programme. The venue for the show was the lawn outside the senior auditorium. The decoration of the stage was simple, but beautiful. Srinivasam sir, who played the mridangam, Sheshadri sir, who played the violin, and Sudha akka who gave vocal support were already there, warming up before the performance

The programme followed a regular pattern of a dance recital, which showcased various aspects of Bharatnatyam. A mangalam and the nritha or pure dance. The evening's recital began with Ganapathi and Kautuvam that was performed by Eksheeka of fourth standard. The audience was wonderstruck looking at a fourth grader dance so gracefully. The second item of this recital was the Jatiswaram.

The programme concluded with a Tillana, the crowning piece in a recital. The Tillana was in praise of Lord Natraja, the dancing deity of Chidamabaram. A statue of Natraja is usually placed on the stage during a dance recital. In the Tillana all the dancers come together and dance to the same song. They were all very graceful.

The night's programme was the result of a combined effort of many people, guided by the school's dance and music departments. Venugopal sir practiced for this one programme with several dancers for one year. The orchestra started practising for the programme a week before putting up the lovely show. Venugopal sir is the school's dance teacher. He has been teaching dance for the past fifteen years.



Pongal

by Maya Tanuj Shah

An air of excitement surged through the expectant crowd as they had heard the distant tinkling of bells. For many children, this was to be their first bull dance. As the sounds of bells, tambourines, drums, and cymbals grew louder, everyone jumped up and formed a circle, making way for the musicians to join at the centre.

Pongal is an annual festival in south India. It is usually celebrated around 15 January, but it got delayed this year at Rishi Valley because of the jaggery making process. Pongal is a festival for the bulls, to honour their work throughout the year ploughing fields, giving us milk.

At Rishi Valley School, we celebrate Pongal by making rangolis outside our hostels and by having a bull dance. Men from the surrounding villages come here, bringing with them magnificently decorated bulls and traditional instruments that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The bull dance has been going on since the school began. It is now an annual event very much a part of the culture of the school. This year, we started off with a ceremony at the estate. The men turned their drums over a fire and sounded them to a correct pitch. Then, after breaking a coconut, the bull dance began.

The children rushed ahead of the procession, enthusiastically followed by the men playing instruments, the men leading the bulls, and the women bringing up the rear. They paraded to the open space in front of the office. After dancing for about fifteen minutes, they moved to the area in front of the junior hostels. There was a larger crowd there so they danced for longer. The next stop was the football field, the largest open space for dancing. There was already a large crowd ready to join. The original crowd was now only half of the present crowd. The stop after that was outside the dining hall. We got some refreshments there—buttermilk and ladoos. The crowd thinned out by the time we reached the last stop, outside the study centre.

After the five stops, the villagers led their bulls to a diety called Kaatemaraju or Kaatemadevadu. "It was surprising to see it here, as it is a diety from Kanigiri", said Ramana Reddy sir.

They performed some puja and then lit a fire. According to custom, the fire has to die out naturally and musn't be put out. They served some pongal, a sweet dish made of jaggery and rice.

Although everybody seemed to enjoy themselves, the bulls didn't seem to. They seemed disturbed by the loud noises and crowds, and the flowers and other decorations kept getting into their eyes. Some of the bulls had red, sore eyes. I wonder what the bulls would say if they could speak...



Art in the Valley

by Meghna Basu Singh

The nine o'clock bell rang. The Rural Education Centre (REC) children came into the senior auditorium on 23 February 2014. The art exchange was going to take place.

As the REC children came in and settled down, the tenth standard students and Roopika akka called the Rishi Valley sixth and seventh standard students in. As the directions for the exchange were being discussed and the groups were being allotted, a buzz of excitement spread among everyone in the auditorium. The work started by around 9:20. The REC children had spent time with the eighth standard students learning different paper arts so that they could teach the children once here. There were three different art forms being taught, all paper related ones which were easy to make at home. The arts were: papier mâché, paper weaving (loopology) and three-dimensional paper cutting (kirigami).

As the children got to know each other's names and started to converse, the eighth standard students realised that there would be a few difficulties, one prominent one would be the language barrier. But the problem was sorted out in no time as each group had at least one Telugu speaker. In the first session, the REC children taught the basics of each art form. The first session lasted from 9 until 10:40 AM. Then Rishi sir and a few students got water for the children to drink and wipe out their thirst after a tiring session.

At eleven the second session began. Here a new group of eighth standard students came and exchanged with the first group. In this session the aim was to finish the rough model of their final project. The final project for the cutting students was a lamp for paper weaving, a pen stand. The papier mâché group made balloon masks and bowls of different shapes. The second session ended at noon and it was time for lunch.



The lunch took place at the REC. All the children walked together to the REC. The lunch was made and packed in the Rishi Valley dining hall itself. We had a good meal of lemon rice with really good mango pickle.

After eating lunch together at the REC, we split up again. The paper cutting and weaving group went to the sixth and seventh classrooms while the papier mâché students stayed back in the dining hall. This session was the most tiring one for the eighth standard children, especially because this would show them how well the REC children had understood. In this session the group together had to make the final project in a fair form. This session lasted from 1:40 until three o'clock. By three the children had made their final projects. It was the end of a very tiring, but fun day.



Class Excursions

by Wazeed Naseem

The two longest excursions in the senior school are the ninth and the eleventh standard trips. They happened at the beginning of second term. This year's excursions are detailed below.

I asked Reuel about the ninth standard excursion. He said, "it was great". He also said it was a lovely trip planned by the teachers. The excursion lasted eight days in total. They went to Hampi, Madikeri, Coorg, and Jog Falls. They stayed in nice hotels and the students loved it. In Madikeri and Jog Falls they saw the nature of the place. They first went to Hampi for three days and two nights. Then they went to Jog Falls for two days and one night. They ended the trip with a three day, two night stay in Madikeri. They saw ruins and a waterfall where they swam. They also saw a Tibetan Buddhist monastery and went shopping. The food on the excursion was typically Indian cuisine. The ninth standard students loved the food. In all, the ninth standard students enjoyed the excursion as did the escorts.

I asked Sai Dev of class eleven about his excursion. His reply was that he loved it. He felt the teachers arranged it well. This excursion lasted for twelve days. They went to Mysore first. On the way they visited the National Centre for Biological Sciences where they attended science talks and saw temples. They stayed in Mysore for three nights. One day in Mysore they went to an Ayurvedic centre. They also visited temples. Next they moved on to Bylakuppe. There they stayed for two nights. On day one in Bylakuppe they went to a Tibetan school and the next day to a Tibetan monastery. They camped in Madikeri for four nights. The last place they went on their excursion was Kannur. They stayed there for two nights. On the first day they went to a naval academy and listened to a lecture by a ship's captain. They went to



temples and beaches, too. The children didn't face any difficulties. But Sai Dev feels the teachers did while organising food and transport. They shopped in Bylakuppe where they bought Tibetan crafts and in Kerala on the road side. The total budget was 500 rupees. Some people didn't use the money fully. The food had variety. The types of food included Tibetan, Italian, Karnataka cuisine and Malayalam cuisine. The eleventh standard students had a very memorable trip.



The Bird Race

by Aravind M

The 2014 bird race was held on the first and second of February. It began because we wanted to know what the approximate number of birds we have at Rishi Valley. During the bird race there were a few teams. Each team goes around the valley in search of birds. On both days, each team gets two to three hours to find the most number of birds.

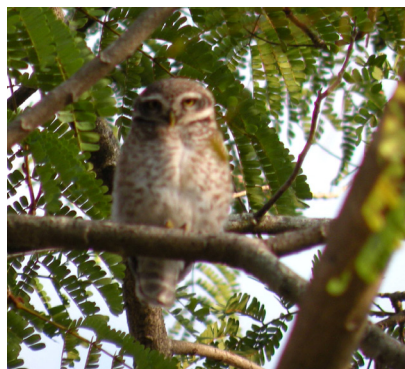
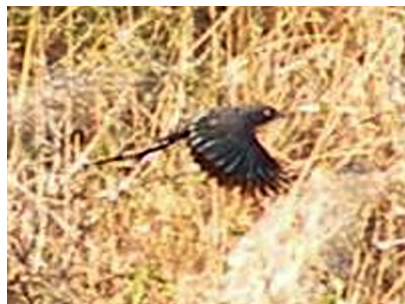
We started off the bird race right after tiffin time. Each team had a teacher to guide and identify the birds. Our group had a guide named Kannan. He came from the United States just for this event! He knew about us because Santaram sir had invited him for a few bird races. He is an amazing listener. If he would hear a bird calling from the distance or if he could just see a glimpse of a bird, he could identify it.

On the first day we saw the graceful Paradise Flycatcher. We even saw a Vermillion Flycatcher. At the sight of that bird, Kannan sir was surprised because he thought that this bird was only found in the Western Ghats. That day Kannan sir was delighted when Santaram sir told him that even he had seen that bird—his broad smile turning into a shocked look. An interesting fact I learned that day was that if you see a group of crows you call it a murder of crows!

Early in the morning we continued the bird race. We went directly to Sunrise Point. On the way we only saw a few Ashy Drongos and White-browed Bulbuls. Finally, when we reached Sunrise Point, we saw an abundance of birds. We saw two massive Eagles about a hill away. Next, Kannan sir spotted a Dusky Crag Martin (a bird of



approximately five/six centemeteres in length) about fifty metres away. I could see it at the beginning so I took a photograph and then when I zoomed in, I still couldn't see it. When sir pointed out a spec in the close-up picture, I realised it was the Dusky Crag Martin. After that it flew away. I saw a Yellow-throated Bulbul. I just glimpsed it, so I was very lucky. The next major bird I saw at Sunrise Point before we left was the Malkoha. It's a black bird with a sky blue ring around its eye. After we departed, an hour after breakfast, we saw the Spangled Tailed Drongo. That was the last bird my team saw during the 2014 bird race.



Gieve Patel

by Dhanya Indraganti

The thirty odd seats in front were occupied by students ranging from grade eight to twelve. One of the two podiums was occupied and the auditorium grew silent. Gieve Patel, the man at the podium, spoke a few words before announcing twelfth standard Chaitanya's name. He came up and read a poem about a train.

It has been a tradition at Rishi Valley School, since 1994 for Gieve Patel, a renowned poet, to come here and do an assembly. This assembly is put up by him with the help of a few students and the English teachers. Students read out the poems they wrote the previous year, which he edits. Sangeeth, another twelfth standard student, read his poem, a couplet, although he said it wasn't originally a couplet, "It was six lines long and Gieve cut the first five and turned the last one into two". This is the poem he read out:

What is so beautiful about
reading small words line after line?

Gieve Patel doesn't only come to do this assembly. He also comes to take poetry classes with the students in grades seven through twelve. This year, eighth standard students read four poems written by Arun Kolatkar entitled "Heart of Ruin", "the Priest's Son", "The Butterfly", and "Yeshwanth

Rao". These poems were very interesting. They were about a temple town called Jejuri. We read the poem and analysed the figurative language. After the reading, Gieve assigns us to write particular poems. We submit them to our teacher, Jyothi akka, who gives them to Jayanthi akka to type and send to him. Gieve reads all of the poems sent to him by the month of July and selects a few. He makes students read out these poems the following academic year.

Jyothi akka, being an English teacher, listens to these poems. She says, "I have been listening to the same poems for a long time now. I love them and I don't think it is tiring or monotonous, as every class has a different response to the poems."

This year's assembly was wonderful. The poems were on topics like trains, challenges, love, sorrow, comedy, and lots more. All the students recited their poems on their topics very well. This was maybe because of the practice they had with Gieve Patel. Naina, another eighth standard student, said that the practice was needed.

Astachal

by Adhiraj Pratap Lath

Birds chirping, birds winding up for the day. The sky showing its vibrant hues. An unusual quiet and serene atmosphere seeps into everyone, from students varying in ages and sizes, to teachers. It brings people together in a subtle manner, brings a community togetherness. Nature at its perfection. The sun slowly sets on the horizon, bringing peace to one's heart. Astachal, meaning sunset is all about this!

Started in the 1950s, asthachal has since been a unique thing at Rishi Valley School. But this idea was brought in by a principal named Mr. Gordon Pearce from the Scindia School in Gwalior.

This is a time and space provided for people to stay quiet and observe their inner selves and also observe nature. People who practice this seriously will be at peace with themselves. It also encourages people to be within themselves and bring a sense of community togetherness. The Astachal Hill, as we call it, was chosen for this practice because of its perfect location. The hill overlooks the valley and also sits at the perfect height to watch the sunset.

Unfortunately, these days Astachal only takes place during the second term as the first one has a lot of problems to deal with. The first problem is that there are swarms of mosquitoes and also due to the rains. The rains cause problems like creating pools of water forming in small depressions, which are perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The ground also gets wet and slushy. But now, as Rishi Valley is not receiving much rain, there is talk of having it the first term, too.

It takes place between 6:00 and 6:25 in the evening. It is a great time as nature winds down for the day. You should experience it once at least. It is spellbinding!

Interview with Santaram sir about the Board Exams

by Mehul Ahal

Rohit: How do you prepare the students for the board exams?

Santaram: We complete the portions in the first term. I give them mock exams. The exams are divided into two sets. After the first set is done, we discuss answers to the first set of questions. I do it quite frequently.

Rohit: What is the procedure for the board exams?

Santaram: It's the same format as the series. It's just that we don't discuss or tell the answers to the students because it's the teachers who correct and these teachers are from another school. It is random—every year there are different teachers who correct the exams.

Rohit: Who sets the papers for the boards?

Santaram: The board sets the papers.

Rohit: Is it true that teachers from other schools correct our papers?

Santaram: Yes, it is.

Rohit: Do you correct papers which come from other schools?

Santaram: No, I don't.

Rohit: Which subject papers do you set for the tenth and twelfth series?

Santaram: Environmental applications for the tenth standard, which is also their sixth subject, and environmental science for the twelfth.

Rohit: How were the board exams in your tenth and twelfth?

Santaram: Since I studied for the state board, they were far easier. Even if I studied in at ICSE syllabus school, the boards would have been easier.

Board Exams

by Mehul Ahal

The board exams happen from February to April each year. Our school is affiliated with the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) board. It is the only school in a two hundred kilometre area to be affiliated with the ICSE. The rest follow the state board syllabus. Rishi Valley followed the Cambridge boards for many years until ICSE came into being after India's independence.

Tenth standard students take the ICSE exams while twelfth standard students take the Indian School Certificate (ISC) exam. There are series exams held for ninth and eleventh students.

Schools usually get the question paper on the day of the exam from the banks. Rishi Valley gets the paper on the evening before because the Madanapalle Bank is far away. The question papers are kept in the bank in the safe deposit. They are kept in trunks and enclosed in vaults. The trunk has two locks. One key is kept with the bank manager and the other with the school.

The examination is held in the upstairs senior audio-visual room. The students are made to sit in a certain order. There is a great degree of confidentiality. Some schools don't even conduct the series exams. They just give the candidates full marks. Rishi Valley doesn't do that. If someone is caught cheating, they are barred from taking the exam again for four years. The papers are brought and kept in one of Siddhartha sir's cupboards. After the exam, the papers are sealed three times over—thick paper, plastic, and a school seal, and then sent to Delhi. There are three sets of paper made. In the end, one set is chosen for the exam. In case of a leak, the other set is given, as in the case of last year and last last year's twelfth class. The chief

invigilator for ICSE is Savitri akka and for the ISC it is Mangoma akka from the Myanodhya School in Madanapalle. The examiner also cannot read or write during the exam.

Teachers at Rishi Valley feel that the marks have been increasing since the past ten years and that the school is decent or good. This year in maths, at least, two or three people are expected to get 100% after eleven years. Fifteen students will get at least 80% and ten to fifteen will get 40%. The rest are unpredictable. There are two sections—section A (ten marks, forty questions), which are compulsory. Section B students must try four out of the seven questions. In English, two out of three students are predicted to get more than 90%. Arts is a high scoring subject with students usually achieving 90%.

When asked, "How do you feel after you step out of the examination hall?" all students answered, "relieved". When asked "How do you feel before stepping into the hall?" there are a variety of answers—awesome and hopeful, nervous, dejected, and no feeling. "There is a lot of ambient tension. It's like I didn't write enough. More, write more, don't stop. And the ink cartridges just keep emptying out." They have to study six to eight hours a day, including their classes—two hours in the morning, prep time, one in the evening, and one hour after lunch. "Eighth and ninth is enjoyable, but tenth and twelfth you'll have to slog. Ninth series is okay, but boards are a killer." Students tend to get more marks in the series than they do on the boards.

Fantabulous Farwell

by Rahula Pema Ram

There was pin-drop silence in the senior auditorium when Rishi sir came to the stage and said he, along with Rupika akka and Mithali, were leaving. No one could believe what they heard. Some broke out in loud tears, while others were stunned. Children rushed to hug Roopika akka as tears rolled down their cheeks. Adding to this, we later got to know Srikala akka and Radhika Joshi akka were also ending their Rishi Valley careers.

Later in an interview Siddhartha Menon sir said that there will always be teachers coming and going. "Of course, it is a loss as you can't replace a teacher who leaves with another teacher, but a new personality will come. When anyone who you know well is leaving then there is always sorrow."

The farewell began with a class ten song called "Mithha". After this Arjun Nair came up and said a few words and sang a song called "I Have a Dream." There were plenty of speeches, some sad, some funny, but Govind and Rohit entertained everyone with practical jokes at the same time giving very good speeches. Some students said they are looking forward to their next phase of life, while other said they couldn't imagine life without Rishi Valley. Siddhartha sir said he is not deeply emotional about them. "Leaving

happens every year. It's nice to seem them all grown up and ready to face what's waiting for them outside."

Later in the night there were many speeches from students and teachers. Siddhartha said a few words and wished everyone leaving the best of luck. Later he commented that he tries to make people feel positive, but there is some sad feeling. Rajan sir also spoke a few words before singing the Scottish song "Auld Lang Syne". The farewell ended with the twelfth class song "Zindagi."

There is no special occasion at Rishi Valley without a mouth-smacking dinner. This time around there was a new player: the gobi rice. The raitha went nicely with it, complimenting all the flavours. Then there was a choice of egg masala or paneer. This time, again, spicy dosa was there giving some competition to the other dishes. There was also crispy apam. The desert was the ice cream stand with rasmalai and cold coffee to drink. The dining hall staff bid a very good farewell to everyone leaving.



Celebration or Constitution?

by Dhanya Indraganti

Republic Day is 26 of January each year. It is the day when India's constitution was put into action. At Rishi Valley, we celebrate it by hoisting the tricolour, our national flag in the middle garden. This is followed by the singing of the national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana". This day is a national holiday. It has been sixty-five years since we became a republic.

If anyone at Rishi Valley were to ask, "what is the constitution of India?" and "what does it say?" many would be unable to answer. So if we don't know what the constitution is or what it says, why do we celebrate a festival about it? Why is it a national holiday?

Our constitution is a book of rules, duties, and rights for everyone in this country. It contains rights like the right to live, the right to information, and the right to education.

In my opinion, we should not celebrate a festival about which we do not know. I think that Republic Day shouldn't be celebrated by hoisting the flag and the singing of the national anthem, but that time should be used for a reading and understanding of the constitution.



Shouldn't we know what we are celebrating? Shouldn't we feel what we are celebrating? All these questions are to ponder over and cannot be answered directly. Therefore, it is up to one to think and come up with some answer.



Interview with Roopika akka

by Meghna Basu Singh

Meghna: How did you come up with the idea of having an art exchange?

Roopika: I thought that the REC kids were mostly only interacting with eighth standard students and to get the REC students to Rishi Valley and interact with the children here would actually only be possible through an art exchange.

Meghna: Why were the sixth and seventh Rishi Valley students the only ones taking part in the program?

Roopika: The reason behind only the sixth and seventh standard students learning the art forms is that they are the same age group as the REC kids and some new friends could be made through the process. Also teaching the fourth and fifth standard students would have been much harder work.

Meghna: How do you think this will help the REC students?

Roopika: I personally think it will help them to gain confidence in talking to some of the students here, and as the Rishi Valley students have a wider range of art forms compared to the REC kids, so it could

make them gain confidence by teaching students something they don't know.

Meghna: Who were the teachers involved in organising the day?

Roopika: To help out and put this up, it was me and Rishi sir, a few REC teachers, the Rishi Valley dining hall manager, some tenth standard students, and Deepak sir.

Meghna: What are the difficulties you think you are going to face during the program?

Roopika: The main worries are whether there is enough material for the children. The other main worry is that the language barrier between the students shouldn't restrict the learning among them.

Meghna: Is there something you learn from Art in the Valley?

Roopika: For me Art in the Valley is like an energy booster. My week ends with it and starts with looking forward to it. I've also realised that many kids at the REC know much more and are more skilled than me at certain things, so I've learnt how to make new things from them, too.

INTERVIEW - Silence Bell

by Nandini Adusumilli

Once that loud bell rings, everyone is quiet. Well, at least most of them. As most people think, this period is not for praying. Rishi Valley had a completely different reason it came up with for the silence bell, which Alok sir explains in this interview.

Nandini: You have been here for a long time, so when did silence bell start?

Alok: I'm not exactly sure, but it started before I joined [more than thirty years ago].

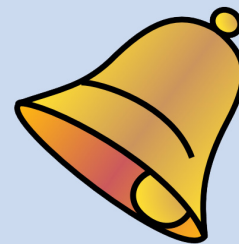
Nandini: What do you think is the purpose of this?

Alok: Well, people walk in talking, shouting. But before we begin eating, we need this togetherness, as a family, to be quiet before eating, to calm ourselves down, and pay attention to what we are going to eat.

Nandini: Why is the senior bell longer than the junior bell?

Alok: The juniors take a shorter amount of time to calm down. But the seniors are much louder and noisier, so I guess it's longer.

After this we came to know the actual need for a silence bell. Many people tend to not get the actual meaning of it and think it is devotional and make noise.



Interview with Derek Hugh

by Anoushka Dhar

Born and brought up in Blackpool, England, Derek Hugh has come a long way in his life to become the owner of nine Italian restaurants and cinemas. And, of course, he's Rishi Valley's favourite storyteller! Derek's life is an inspiring tale because he stood for what he wanted. He started small and let things progress little by little.

Anoushka: Could you tell us about the best parts of your childhood?

Derek: There isn't much interesting about my childhood. I lived with my parents in a boarding house in Blackpool. It was a lovely place and I used to walk a lot by the sea. I studied in Mount Gomery Secondary School, but didn't like school one bit and I wasn't too good at it either. The best part of my childhood, though, was probably playing the drums for a band.

Anoushka: What do you enjoy doing?

Derek: I love walking so I have a two hour walk when I'm here every day. I love cooking, too, so I have a garden here in which I grow lots of lettuce, zucchini, basil, beans, and palak and cook from my garden. I also read books of poetry. My favourite poet is Billy Collins because he writes beautiful poems about very simple things.

Anoushka: How is life at home?

Derek: I live with my brother Raymond who is a director on our land called Hugh Field, which consists of eighty acres. I also have a sister Dorothy who runs the restaurants and a niece, Jenny.

Anoushka: You have restaurants?

Derek: Yes, we have nine restaurants which are all Italian vegetarian hotels cum cinemas. We have one called Zeffirelli and one called Fellinis.

Anoushka: Is there something special about those names?

Derek: Yes, each one has been named after a famous Italian film director. We also have many classical and contemporary jazz concerts and people coming to record music.

Anoushka: Anything you really enjoy doing at home?

Derek: I enjoy walking and attending concerts.

Anoushka: What exactly is the story of your life? How have you reached this position?

Derek: I come from a butcher's family, and one day I was going to kill a chicken. I had the knife in my hand, but I just didn't. I just put down the knife and left. I walked by the river thinking of what I was going to do for my livelihood, what I wanted to do. Some time later I opened a vegetarian cafe and got into some good business. That's



when I started listening to some Krishnamurti talks at Brockwood Park and other places. Around that time I also sold my cafe and came to India.

Anoushka: How exactly did you come to India?

Derek: I got in touch with a person called Frederick Jrowhe with whom I first came to India. We went to many places: Rajghat, Rishi Valley, and Bangalore. I've been coming back to Rishi Valley for twenty-three years now.

Anoushka: How did you start storytelling?

Derek: When I came back for the first time I wanted to do something. And I could play the drums and tell some stories so I started my storytelling career.

Anoushka: What are your favourite stories?

Derek: "The Unlucky Man", "Antonio and Death", and "Jack and the Mermaid".

Anoushka: What are the inspirations for your stories? Do you collaborate with other people?

Derek: Sometimes I hear a good story and work on it or just some ideas. I have worked with Duncan Williams.

Anoushka: What makes you work with him?

Derek: I listen to his stories and really enjoy them, so I think it's just that.

Foul Language

by Naga Sumedha Nalluru

We students of Rishi Valley do a lot of things that are not appreciated or encouraged by teachers. One of the main things is using foul language, which a lot of us do thinking it is cool or completely normal. But why do we use it? Do we do it absent mindedly or purposely? Does it become addictive when we get to senior school or are we brought up using it?

Here are some opinions from teachers and students on why we shouldn't and why we use foul language.

Sumedha: Why do you think children use foul language?

Nirmala akka: I think students often use foul language when they get angry and mostly the types they use are to curse someone or because they want something wrong to happen to the person.

Sumedha: When children are not angry why do they use foul language?

Nirmala akka: They think it is cool and that is in fashion to use foul language.

Sumedha: Do you approve of it?

Nirmala akka: Not at all. Foul language is abuse!

Sumedha: Are there people who tolerate using foul language? If yes, why?

Nirmala akka: There are some people. If you know the meaning and if they also know the meaning there might be some who don't mind, but there are many people who mind so we should learn to control our tongue.

Sumedha: How do you think it can be stopped?

Nirmala akka: We should help each other to stop and we should stop ourselves from using it even when we are angry. We should understand that it is a violation and we should also look at the other person's point of view.

Sumedha: Do you use foul language?

Kaushika: Yes, I do.

Sumedha: Why do you use it?

Kaushika: It is one of the ways of expressing my emotions.

Sumedha: Do you know the meaning of the words you use?

Kaushika: I do know the meaning of what I use, but I don't intend the meaning of the words I use.

Sumedha: Why is it the first thing that comes out of your mouth when you're angry?

Kaushika: I don't really know!

Sumedha: When do you use foul language?

Kaushika: When I'm very upset or when something is wrong.

Sumedha: What is your opinion about why teachers ask you to not use foul language?

Kaushika: They ask us not to use foul language because it is not acceptable behaviour and it is just not good for us.

Sumedha: How can you stop?

Kaushika: My friends are helping me stop and are correcting me whenever I use foul language.

This really shows us that using foul language is bad and that we can live without using it. There are a lot of students realising that they are using a lot of foul language. We should all make an effort to stop and we should not influence our juniors.

SPORTS - Cricket Coaching

by Adhiraj Pratap Lath

From 19 January to 1 February, the students of Rishi Valley School had cricket coaching camp conducted by Mr. Sunil from Chittoor and his assistant. The camp took place during morning physical training and the evening games. Only a select few were chosen as they were really interested. The students started with the basics of cricket and then went on to the complex skills.

Many people enjoyed this camp as they said that their skills had improved. The students started with stretches every day and did runs to warm up. Then the coach assigned people to do drills. These drills were basically to give more practice to the students. The bowlers had to get the holding of the ball right and the batsman had to practice drives with footwork.

The groups were divided into two teams, A and B. The people whose skills were good went to A and the rest to B. This made up the teams, too.

During the camp we had two external matches, one per team. The B team lost its match, but the A team won its match. The coaching was fun and we hope to have more camps like these in the future.

ART AND CULTURE - Art Exhibition

by Naina

The Rishi Valley art exhibition 2014 was held on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of February displaying different skills learnt by the students over the year. These art works not only displayed their talent, but also reflected their hard work and imagination.

This ritual of having an art exhibition every year was put to practice in 1991 by an old arts teacher in Rishi Valley, Mr. Shrirajan. The motive of having the exhibition at that time was simply to display the wonderful art work done by the students. But over the past few years that motive has changed slightly as the art department improved and has introduced students to many new art forms. Today the exhibition has become even a medium exposure for all those who love art.

The art works are organised according to their respective art forms. The genres included clay work, painting, batik, wood craft, needle craft, and origami. As time moves on, many new teachers come and teach or introduce new art forms to the kids. This year, the new art form, origami, was introduced by Roopika akka. But it is not only this year that a new genre has been taught. Kalamkari and screen printing were introduced by Prabhaka sir.

The clay work section even has an option of wood carving and metal work. "It's not like we always plan to introduce these new art forms. If someone is interested in sharing a skill or a talent with the kids, they are always welcome to do so."

The audiences always appreciate the student art work, but most of the time the work done by people behind the scenes goes unrecognised. All this work is done by the teachers, annas, and akkas. The work of cleaning the space, getting the boards ready, then putting up all the art work one week before the exhibit opens.

The art exhibition is to expose children and to build up an interest in them for different art forms. At the very least a respect or appreciation for art work done by others was definitely brought about by this exhibition.



Movie Review - *Mother of Mine*

by Aman Pai

Mother of Mine is set during World War II. During that war, all the children from Finland had gone to Sweden. They were sent to Sweden because Finland was fighting against the U.S.S.R. The children were sent because they wanted the kids to be safe.

This movie is focused on one child. He was sent to Sweden. His father died in World War II.

The movie starts when the son is talking to his mom about why she sent him to Sweden. His mother, Kristi, said that he was going for a vacation. When he reached Sweden, he went to stay with a family. That family wanted a girl, but they got a boy and the mother was very disappointed. At first Signe didn't have a good time with Eero, but slowly they started to adjust and they started liking each other.

When she started liking Eero. She said the reason why she wanted a girl was that she had lost her daughter. Her daughter loved swimming. Then once she let her go alone because she was busy. There was a storm and she couldn't bear it. This is how she died. The mother was really sad and she wanted another daughter.

Aunt Signe had given Eero her daughter's room. But just when Signe had to go back to Kirsti, Eero didn't want to go back, but he didn't have a choice.

When he reached Finland he wasn't that happy when he saw his mother. The next day he received a letter from that family, but he rejected the letter.

When he told his mother, he was really disappointed. He had rejected his own mother.

The movie was sad. When Eero was saying this to his mother he was around fifty and his mother was eighty. When he told this story to his mother, about what happened to him, the picture became black and white because the movie was mainly showing what happened to him in the past.

The characters showed everything nicely on the screen. The plot of the movie was about how a boy goes to Sweden and then settles down in an unknown family, and just when the relationship between the mother and the boy becomes like a mother and son's, the boy had to go back to Finland.

Movie Review - *Secretariat*

by Aravind M

The movie *Secretariat* is about a horse who wins the triple crown race, which is the longest race. It all started when Penny Chenery returns to her native home to attend her mother's funeral. On the other hand, her dad is in a really bad condition so she decides to finish her father's work with his horses.

After a few weeks of her learning, Penny gets some news that one of her horses is pregnant. When she returns to her native home, a young foal is born. It was a really strong horse because it stood on its four legs as just a newborn foal. She named it Big Red, but later it became Secretariat. Later Penny got a new trainer who was an experienced one and soon after many races, her horse won the horse of the year award. But her father passes away the same day.

She gets a good business going and for that to happen she needs to make sure Secretariat is famous. She needs to also show he is a strong horse for others to buy the foals he produces. In order to do that, she gets an experienced jockey to win the longest race. For a horse to do that he needs speed and stamina. Finally he finishes the triple crown with a huge difference between him and the antagonist and he wins. Later he breeds with thirty-two female horses and the offspring numbered around six hundred foals, each selling for around \$190,000.

It was a very breathtaking story about a horse and the races he wins. The last race of the movie is really the climax. The lead that the protagonist takes is just breathtaking.

The parts that I liked were the last few seconds of the race, the triple crown race. That race really does have a nail-biting finish. But the start of the movie was sad and dragged a bit. Otherwise, the movie is worth watching.

Review in Short:

Secretariat

Director: Randall Wallace

Actors: Diane Lane and John Malkovitch

Bottomline: Seems like fiction, when it isn't.

Farewell to Rishi, Roopika, and Mitali

Aahir: "She is the most amazing teacher I've ever met. She's like a mother to me."

Diya: "I will miss them, but I'll keep some really pleasant memories of them."

Shreya: "I will miss the small fights which Mishti and I had, their house where my weekends used to be. I loved them all."

Sumedha: "They are amazing people and I'll always want to be around them because they make me happy."

Rahula: "They might be leaving, but lots of wonderful memories will stay. I will miss them."

Parthiv: "Unfortunate things happen in this world. This is merely one of them."

Anoushka: "I am sad that they have to leave, but I am happy they will be doing what they love. I will treasure all my memories with them."

Surya: "I will miss you guys a lot. I know that wherever you go and whatever you do it will be fun and worthwhile. So I hope you both, akka and sir, have a blast and visit Rishi Valley regularly."

Smitha: "They were the best teachers I've ever had. I hope both of them enjoy themselves. We shall never forget those happy memories of them."

Spruha: "One of my best experiences at Rishi Valley were with both of them. I am glad I had both of them as my teachers. I'll make sure



I am always in touch with them and I'll never forget the three of them. I hope they enjoy wherever they shift and that they'll visit as frequently as possible".

Rohit: "Both of them helped me grow up in the sixth and seventh. They taught me a lot and gave me a chance to teach the Rural Education Centre children. They were really wonderful teachers and I'll miss them a lot! You were the best teachers I had at Rishi Valley and I mean it. I wish them the best of luck in following their dreams."

Aravind: "I'll miss akka's Bedi Gabas talks, sir's senti and funny talks, and Mitali asking me to call her Mithi."

Rishi Valley School,
Rishi Valley - 517 352
Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh