



### From the Headmaster

This Sunday marks the anniversary of the fire which devastated large parts of the Old Building. During the early hours of a very cold and frosty night on Sunday 2 December 1962, an electrical fault in a cupboard led to severe fire damage to many of the rooms in the historic heart of the RGS resulting in the collapse of the roof over Big School and significant water damage to much of the site, including books in the Chained Library. The Fifth Form boys who were housed in Hamonde House at the time lost all of their exercise books and textbooks in the fire; in addition, about one-third of the books in the Mallison Library were damaged beyond further use. Charismatic member of the Art Department, Ron Smoothery, who had gone into the building to help in rescuing books, emerged on a stretcher, a water-filled light fitting having collapsed on top of him. He was fortunately not seriously hurt. Six fire engines attended the blaze which, according to the account of one student at the time, featured on the evening news that night ahead of items on India, China, U Thant (the UN Secretary General), Nikita Khrushchev (the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and – perhaps most significantly of all – the draw for the European Cup!

According to DM Sturley, the fire was a great personal shock for the Headmaster, Mr Hallows, who took genuine pride in the School; however, the enduring memory was how the community pulled together and persevered despite such challenging circumstances. The boys took an active role in rescuing books from the damaged buildings, while Pewley School and the County Council provided temporary accommodation and teaching space. As Sturley concluded, “The life of the School continued under some difficulty but unchecked.” Indeed, it is testament to the boys that, only the following year, the award of eleven Oxbridge open scholarships and exhibitions was regarded as so significant that the School was granted an additional day’s holiday.

In the face of such challenge and adversity, it is reassuring to note that the whole community united to make the best of such a distressing, difficult situation. Tenacity, teamwork and resilience were very much in evidence during that period and well over 50 years later, as our School Values articulate, I am delighted that – despite less trying circumstances – these core values still today remain central and at the very heart of our ethos.

### Latest News

[View the full news archive](#)

**King’s Lecture:** The RGS was delighted to welcome TV personality, Ade Adepitan, fresh from appearing on *Children in Need*. Ade captivated the packed audience with an insight into the challenges of his background and upbringing, his battles with health, his international sporting recognition. A string of entertaining, instructive anecdotes revealed a steely determination and dogged commitment to be the very best he could be. An inspiring and memorable evening raised well over £500 for Ade’s charity *Go Kids Go!*

**Lit Quiz:** Two RGS teams successfully competed in the regional heat of the Kids’ Lit Quiz at Seaford College. Both teams acquitted themselves very well, with the B team just pipped to a podium finish.

**Model United Nations:** At the Croydon High School Model United Nations Conference, among a number of accomplished performances, **Boldi Paladi-Kovacs** (3C), in his first ever MUN conference, and **Gabriel Levesque** (4V) were both awarded highly-commended delegate certificates.

**Music:** The Joint Schools' Chamber Choir sang at Choral Evensong at the chapel of Keble College, Oxford: a fitting venue for Hugh Blair's characteristically Victorian and somewhat bombastic setting of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* in B Minor, as well as the austere anthem, *The Deer's Cry* by Arvo Pärt. The service was accompanied magnificently and sensitively on the organ by **Sam Jones** (U6).

**Politics:** Old Guildfordian Sir Philip Sales, recently appointed to the UK Supreme Court, gave a talk to around 100 students from local schools. He focused on how judges interpret statutes and talked through his four principles of: democracy, human rights, public order and safety, and ensuring fairness.

**Quiz:** After emerging from the regional rounds of the Senior Schools Challenge as winners, the RGS team – captain **Alexander Norris** (L6), **Alex Mitchell** (4P) and **Salvatore Nigrelli** (5P), **Sebastian Norris** (4V) – continued their rich vein of form. The RGS defeated current regional champions, Hurstpierpoint College, in the final, to reclaim the title of South Central Regional Winners, last held in 2015 – 6.

## Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

**Chess:** In a league match against Sutton Grammar School, the RGS A team won 6 – 0. At the ECF Qualifying Tournament our B team finished joint first to qualify for the next round of the National Schools Championship.

**Football:** The 1st XI drew 3 – 3 with Lingfield School and then beat King Edward's School Witley 2 – 1.

**Golf:** In the second round of the ISGA knockout competition against Charterhouse School, **Lucas English** (1C) – already with a handicap of 10 – won his match to maintain his 100% record in school competitions.

**Hockey:** The Under 18 indoor team has progressed to the England Hockey South Finals. In the Prelims and South Pools, **Edward Ferguson** (U6) was player of the day, scoring an impressive seven goals.

**Martial Arts:** In the Kuk Sool Won Martial Arts Championships, **Jack Burrows** (4N) and **Alex Braithwaite** (4N) both competed as black belts. Alex won four gold medals and one bronze, thus placing him first for his age category and being crowned Grand Champion 2018.

**Rugby:** Highlights of a busy fortnight included eight wins against Abingdon School with victories for our 1st XV, Under 16A, 15A and 12A teams. Against Epsom College the Under 16 and 13 teams impressed recording four wins. In the Third Round of the National Schools' Cup, the Under 15As won 14 – 7 against Reed's School.

**Sailing:** In the inaugural BSDRA Fleet Racing Championships at Queen Mary, the RGS team finished third.

**Shooting:** Our VIII in the 10-bull match against Wellington College was defeated narrowly by 769 points to 761: a phenomenal achievement, as Wellington have not lost a home match for more than 12 years.

**Swimming:** In the English School Association Relay Championship Finals at the Olympic Pool, our Under 15s missed qualifying for the final round by 0.1 seconds. They are now the eleventh fastest team nationally.

## Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Tuesday 4 December	Market Day Concert in Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 5 December	Orchestral Concert in Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 6 December	Junior production <i>Emil &amp; the Detectives</i> in the Auditorium for 3 nights
Wednesday 12 December	Carol Service in Guildford Cathedral
Friday 14 December	Term ends at approximately 12.30pm

