



From the Headmaster

I mourn the demise of daydreaming. Individuals have daydreamed for thousands of years and yet, these days, spare moments are all too often filled with smartphones and other devices – scrolling through social media, watching video clips, responding to emails – leaving little time for our minds simply to wander. Indeed, the average Brit allegedly checks their device more than 10,000 times every year. Silence and reflection are replaced with a cacophony of communication; solitude is replaced with compulsive online interaction. There are precious few opportunities to press pause and just reflect.

For the best part of twenty years, each Thursday morning assembly has included a *Thought for the Day* which is delivered by – predominantly – a member of the Upper Sixth Form on the theme of the week: a message which has been interweaved into the readings and hymns. This term alone we have focused on some of our School Values and the themes have included leadership, resilience, respect, and spirituality, to name but a few. The boys are given free rein to reflect in any manner which they choose, thereby producing original, diverse, insightful and frequently topical interpretations of the theme which may have a religious or secular approach. The quality of these talks is remarkable and I am always astonished by the maturity and sophistication of their musings. Such opportunities for public speaking in front of a large audience have innate value in themselves but also for many of the boys in assembly this may be one of the very few times in their week where they have the opportunity for peace and reflection, without the temptation and distraction of technology! We must never underestimate the importance of such moments of contemplation and in this light I have every confidence that this is one tradition which is set to last for many years to come.

So, after a very intense, successful and enjoyable first half of term, I would like to thank the students and staff for their committed approach to all aspects of school life and I hope over the half-term break you find time to relax and indulge in just a spot of daydreaming. I look forward to seeing you all refreshed and recharged for the second half of term.

Latest News

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Drama: The A Level drama students performed two extracts from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard, a challenging play which explores the existential angst of the two titular characters as they sense a deep foreboding regarding their fate. The Sixth Form students – **Dominic Baker, Olly Pinhey, Danny Sampson, Oliver Taylor** and **Henry Vokoun** – did exceptionally well, with a maturity of performance, a confidence and assurance with the demanding script, and convincing comic characterisation.

Musician of the Year: An absolutely packed Recital Room was treated to a fantastic evening of music as the final of the RGS Musician of the Year unfolded. Six remarkable finalists – **Philip Bowler** (U6), **Eddie Emmett** (U6), **Ridley Hymas** (U6), **Sam Jones** (U6), **Stan Lawrence** (5H) and **Roshan Patel** (U6) – competed for the Steynor Prize and as adjudicator Tim Johnson, Precentor and Director of Music at Eton College said, any one of them could have been declared winner. In the end, Tim Johnson had the unenviable task of

choosing a winner and huge congratulations must go to Philip Bowler. As Director of Music, Peter White, commented: "Philip's rich and low bass voice is quite remarkable in one so young but where he really scored was in the way in which he harnessed his impressive vocal technique with an ability to deliver the words and moods of his varied programme with such conviction. Sondheim's *Ballad of Sweeney Todd* was delivered with such demonic force that it sent a shiver down the spine."

Senior Music Competition: The Senior Music Competition provided the opportunity for nearly 60 performances by our more advanced musicians. This was a remarkable display of the depth and breadth of instrumental music at the RGS and adjudicator Luis Pares, Head of Piano at Dulwich College, was enormously impressed by the standard of performance throughout the day. The winners were as follows: Strings: **Noah Campbell** (4N); Piano: **Harry Hodge** (5A); Woodwind: **Angus Miller** (L6); Brass: **Solomon Poole** (5N); Singing: **Ridley Hymas** (U6).

Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

Badminton: Our Under 19 A team recorded a narrow 5 – 4 win against King's College School, Wimbledon.

Chess: A successful first half of term on the league circuit was brought to an end with a 4 – 2 victory for the 2nd VI against Sutton Grammar School.

Fencing: In the Newham Swords Challenge at Under 14 Foil, **Zed Law** (3R) won bronze. The RGS teams then enjoyed considerable success against Charterhouse School, with the U18 Épée A team and both the Under 15 and Under 14 Foil teams all victorious.

Football: The highlight of the last fortnight was the block fixture against Box Hill School where all our senior teams recorded convincing victories: the 1st XI won 5 – 0 with a hat-trick from **Matthew Ledbury** (U6). **Hamish Klintworth** (U6) also scored three goals in the 3rd XI's win by the same score-line.

Hockey: After the Trinity School Croydon block fixture was cancelled due to frozen pitches, the RGS teams returned to action against King's College School Wimbledon and Reigate Grammar School. The 1st XI set the tone for the weekend as they secured an outstanding 8 – 0 win with **Harry Relph** (L6) scoring a fantastic solo goal. In total the RGS teams achieved ten wins and four draws: an impressive set of results which showcased the strength in depth across all the year groups, especially as the RGS teams were all playing up a level, i.e. B teams were playing against A teams etc. The Under 16Bs extraordinary unbeaten run continued as, drawing 1 – 1 with 10 minutes left on the clock, they went on to secure an emphatic 4 – 1 win. In the cup, the Under 16As recorded a 4 – 1 victory over Charterhouse School to progress to the next round.

Swimming: A huge squad of over 50 RGS boys headed down to Guildford High School for our second joint gala against Churcher's College, fielding A and B teams at Under 13, Under 14 and Under 18, and A, B and C teams at Under 12. Combining the results with those of the girls gave overall victory once again to the joint Guildford High and RGS squad.

Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Monday 26 February	Upper Sixth Form Mock Examinations start
Thursday 28 February	King's Lecture, Environmental Special, in the Auditorium
Tuesday 5 March	Senior Piano Concert in the Recital Room
Wednesday 6 March	Fifth Form Parents' Evening in Great Hall and the Main Building
Thursday 7 March	Seminar on <i>Screen Time, Social Media, and Gaming</i> in the Auditorium



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