

The Register



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL GUILDFORD



The Headmaster writes...



The sense of community and belonging which exists at the RGS is one of the true strengths of the School. Being a part of such a supportive and energetic group of individuals is a source of great pleasure for me and makes my position at the RGS an incredibly fulfilling and enjoyable one.

Our pride in supporting each other within our community is balanced by our duty to look outwards on a local, national and international basis. Previous editions of *The Register* have reported on the School's outreach programmes, from schemes with our neighbours in Guildford to major international projects in Nepal, Cambodia and India. The current edition, as ever, gives a sense of the array of activities that take place every term at the RGS, including a focus on this year's Charity Day.

At a time when we are reflecting on the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the tension in the Middle East, the opportunity to commit ourselves to supporting those less fortunate was grasped with alacrity. I am delighted that the efforts of both boys and staff raised a considerable sum of money for a variety of charities. Charity Day supported a number of schemes including international relief to the Chernobyl Children's Life Line, United World Schools, Africa's Send a Cow project, the Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, and local support to Guildford YMCA and Link Leisure. I am very proud of the inventive ways in which money was raised and I thank everyone who contributed to such an important RGS event.

A force to be reckoned with



The recent CCF Inspection Report provided evidence of how integral the School's Combined Cadet Force is to the RGS community; indeed, the report noted that 'the Contingent is deeply embedded in the School's ethos with many diverse opportunities on offer'. Over half-term a group of cadets attended the contingent's annual adventurous training based in Bavaria where the boys enjoyed a packed programme including alpine skiing, a snow-shoe expedition, and the construction of emergency shelters. During the recent Field Day, cadets from the Army, Navy and

RAF were involved in intensive training and assessment on the new L98A2 rifle; a certified Sea Survival course, including a practical two-hour life-raft session; a fieldcraft programme; a survival skills course including the opportunity to skin and pluck rabbits, pigeons and pheasants (standard Sunday lunch fare for many of the boys) and fillet them ready for consumption; and visits to RAF Odiham where the cadets flew in a Chinook. The report rightly acknowledged the role of **Steve Yetman** as a 'dynamic and highly enthusiastic Contingent commander'.



Firsts among equals

Another successful year for university applications has seen a number of 'firsts' for the RGS. For **Russell Hay**, the lure of the USA proved to be irresistible and he became the first RGS student this millennium to secure a coveted place at Yale. Also celebrating 'firsts' were **Emmanuel Bach**, who has the rare distinction of gaining a place to read music at both Oxford University and the Royal College of Music, and **Joseph Butler**, who will study music at The Royal Academy. Commenting on this year's cycle of application, **Peter Dunscombe**, Director of Higher Education, was quick to praise the efforts of both staff and pupils: 'This level of success cannot be achieved without careful long-term preparation, clear guidance, strong support and individual determination and commitment. It is a privilege to be able to work within such a mutually supportive environment.'

Medicine men



This year has not just been about Light Blue and Dark Blue; as well as another excellent year in terms of offers for Oxford and Cambridge, RGS students have also celebrated notable success at other top universities. Of particular note are the 20 offers made by Imperial College, London, widely regarded as the equal of Oxford and Cambridge in Engineering, Mathematics and Science. These offers are part of the 42 offers made by the various London universities of which eight are at highly prized medical schools. It has been a good year for medical school applicants in general with 12 boys holding places. Such a high degree of success alongside the 33 offers received from Oxford (22) and Cambridge (11), confirms the reputation of the RGS as a school from which boys can be confident of achieving places at the top UK universities.



Les formidables

Those fortunate enough to experience the RGS production of *Les Misérables*, produced by OG **Matthew Eberhardt**, were left marvelling at the quite remarkable quality of the performances. Sell-out audiences were transfixed by the story of Jean Valjean and his life's journey from convict to Mayor to revolutionary. In the lead role, **Cyrus Dromgoole-Cavazzi** gave an unforgettable performance, his stunning vocal talents being displayed to the full as was the choral and acting dexterity of **Dominic Bull** who played his nemesis, the obsessive and ultimately tortured Javert. **Jonny Peters**, in the role of Marius, also held the audience spell-bound throughout the evening by his passionate portrayal of

the role and he was ably supported by **Peter Bergin** in the role of Enjolras, the leader of the student revolutionaries. In the midst of this emotionally charged epic, comic pathos was wonderfully provided by the impish **Will Cowie** as Gavroche and the comic genius of **Charlie Hunt** as Monsieur Thenardier, 'the master of the house'. One must also acknowledge the immense contribution of the girls from GHS who provided half the cast including the four female leads, all of whom were quite brilliant. All the cast and, indeed, the orchestra, expertly conducted by **Sam Orchard**, thoroughly deserved the standing ovations they received, a testament to their talents and commitment: bravo!



Sax of the best

The final of the RGS Musician of the Year Competition, once again, provided the annual showcase of some extraordinary musicianship, as the finalists all gave exceptional performances. **James Altunkaya** (piano), **William Atkins** (viola), **Richard Elson** (violin), **Joseph Fell** (oboe) and **James Hamer** (violin) all performed with real passion and technical precision; indeed, the eminent composer, conductor and Director of the

Junior Academy, Jonathan Willcox, who was adjudicating, indicated that the standards were so high that he could have given the award to any one of the six depending on different criteria. He awarded the Steynor Prize, RGS Musician of the Year, to **James Powell** (saxophone) the musician who, in his opinion, had provided the most stylish performance.



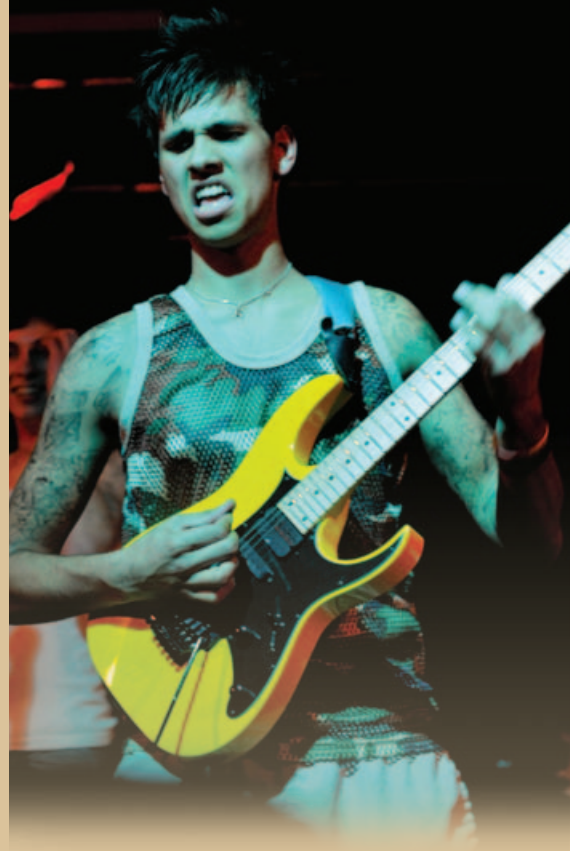
Sweet charity



Starting with the hilarious Upper Sixth Assembly and finishing 24 hours later with the Sixth Form sleep out, RGS Charity Day 2011 was a momentous success. Sandwiched in between, the boys managed to beat the staff (literally in the case of PE teacher **Tom Taylor**) at dodge ball and then of course there was the cerebrally challenged staff quiz. Flamboyantly chaired by the Paxmanesque **Roger Meadocroft**, **Catherine Moorehead's** 'eggheads' controversially defeated the SMT 'blockheads' captained by **John Simpson**; though after over 30 years at the RGS Mr Simpson has probably never felt greater injustice and will no doubt still be heard muttering 'we woz robbed' when he retires to a Spanish holiday resort. Despite the incessant rain, the 40 stalls organised by the Tutor Groups went ahead regardless

and the usual RGS resourcefulness came to the fore with one form raising nearly £400. Away from the flippancy of some of the activities the serious business of finding the RGS staff sumo champion took place at lunch time in Great Hall. Brilliantly organised and compèred by **Thomas Barnardo** and **Thomas Woffenden** and with entertainment interludes ranging from rapping to magic to ukulele, the mighty **Alan Dodd** emerged triumphant. In the evening the rock gig drew record numbers and the seven acts kept the punters jumping and moshing. Finally, **Jimmy Pressley**, **Ian Wilkes** and a group of intrepid sixth formers braved a freezing night sleeping in cardboard boxes to raise money for Guildford YMCA and woke to the news that the School had raised over £8,000, with money still coming in.







Kings of the castle

With the return from retirement of the School's very own grand master of chess, **Alan Thorn**, the RGS Chess Club has continued to flourish. Success on the board has coincided with the production of a *magnum opus* on the history of chess at the RGS by **Daniel Hunt**. Through the archives, he has meticulously researched the origins of the chess club from 1921 incorporating many anecdotes including the story of an OG who managed to win a chess tournament while a prisoner of war in Germany during World War 2! Chess has been an integral part of the RGS; in 1976 it was the largest society in the School with 150 members, and this strength continues to the present day. The RGS 1st team recently played in the English Chess Federation qualifying tournament and came first out of the 15 schools competing. The team now progresses to the national stage of the competition. The 1972 edition of the *Guildfordian* reported that it was 'no coincidence that the meteoric rise of school chess began in October 1971, a month after Mr Thorn arrived'. Some things never change!



Astro heroes

The U16A team have led the field in hockey this term. As well as completing an unbeaten season with 100% victories, the team were crowned Surrey County Champions after a fine 3-1 win in the final against local rivals, Cranleigh, with goals from **Charles Warren** and **Christopher Way**. The U16s then went on to win the Southern Divisional Cup and now progress to National Finals. **Nick Gough**, the coach of the U16A team, enthused, 'the boys have been a pleasure to coach: the blend of individual skill, team spirit and desire to win has made them a formidable side this season'. In **Matt Baggs'** first season as Head of Hockey, there have been a number

of impressive achievements. The U14C team were unbeaten in all matches; the 2nd XI and U15C team lost just one fixture each. The 1st XI reached the semi-finals of the Southern Schools League and the semi-finals of the County Championship; likewise, the U13As reached the semi-finals of the County Championship. The strength of RGS hockey was highlighted in the recent Varsity Hockey Match which featured four OGs, with **Alex Evans** and **Matthew Wood** (OGs 2008) playing for Oxford, **Jake Foster** and **Stuart Jackson** (OGs 2006) playing for Cambridge. Oxford triumphed 3-1 in the 110th meeting of the two sides.



Belting success

In addition to the major sports, RGS boys are currently enjoying the opportunities to experience a range of sports with the benefit of expert coaching. The RGS continued an impressive recent record in judo, improving on their second place last year to win the national judo championship in the small team section. All the boys competing won a medal: **James Edgeley** and **Oliver Platt** won gold; **Guy Solan** won silver; and **Angus Hammond**, **Benedict Wigmore** and **Henry Xuan** all won bronze. The boys easily won the Small Team Competition, and gained enough points to come second in the Large Team Competition. Peter Swettenham, the coach, commented: 'These successes have served to inspire all members of the judo club who are now seeking to emulate and surpass these achievements in the future.'



Touche

Holding their own within the cut and thrust of school life have been the ever-improving fencers of the RGS. The sight of boys garbed in full fencing regalia has become an increasingly common sight around the corridors of the RGS, in no small part due to the charismatic influence of master of the foil, **Wai Shun Lau**. In the county épée finals **William Doherty** took the U18s title while **Laurence Peplow** was crowned U16s champion. **Wai Shun Lau** commented: 'The boys' ultimate long-term goal is to represent England in an international competition and earn the honour of wearing national stripes.' The term finished on a high with the RGS U18 team, also including **Christopher Bennett**, winning a bronze medal in the prestigious British Schools Team Fencing Championship, the School's best result in a national tournament.



Seventh heaven

The RGS U16 rugby sevens competition was, once again, one of the standout occasions of the tournament season. Over twenty of the strongest rugby schools in the south-east competed for the title. The RGS were the current holders but despite producing some great rugby the boys were unable to repeat their feat of last year. After the completion of eighty games, the final of the main competition, played in front of a crowd of over 500, was won by Hampton School, who beat Tonbridge School 22-12. The plate contest was also a thrilling encounter with Bryanston eventually running out convincing winners against Brighton College by 29-7. **Oliver Torri**, Director of Rugby, commented: 'The day was a tremendous occasion and the boys impressed with their involvement in such a high quality and thrilling tournament'.



Sports shorts

Alexander Clifford, **Gus Cockle** and **George Gathercole** have been selected to represent Surrey after their success in the Surrey Cross-Country Championships.

Ben and **Tim Gratton** had a successful time at the 420 Sailing World Championships in Argentina. Tim and his partner won a silver youth medal, finishing sixth overall in the open fleet which includes adult sailors; Ben was ninth overall and continues to attend the RYA's Olympic Development Programme.

Patrick Russell has been selected for the Great Britain U18 ice hockey squad. There are only four others of his age in the 27-man squad and he is reserve goaltender.

The RGS competed in the Surrey Schools Individual Swimming Championships. The Senior Team won the aggregate trophy to become county champions:

Liam Man and **Christopher Morgan** won gold medals and were crowned Individual County Champions, **Michael Ingram** won silver, and **Jeremy Mulliez** won bronze. In addition, **Edward Dillon** also became Individual County Champion by winning gold in the intermediates.



Soirée I haven't a clue

The twelfth annual First Form Soirée allowed first formers to showcase their diverse talents in front of a two hundred strong audience. 1C began the evening with a group rendition of 'Jabberwocky', a stirring reading from 'Beowulf' and a powerful reading of Tennyson's 'The Kraken' by **George Glover**. Next up, 1E performed a cut down version of Oliver Twist! **Oliver Platt**, excellent in the title role, was accompanied by **Charlie Waller's** suitably creepy Fagin and **Adam Rutledge's** menacing Bill Sykes; **Guy Solan's** performance as Bullseye, Sykes' dog, was an unexpected highlight. In 1L's performance of Ian Serrailier's wartime novel, the Silver Sword, standout moments included a rampaging irritable German guard played by **Thomas Holland**, the two Jans, **Kit Preedy** and **Matthew Hind**, and the poetry writers. Bringing the evening to a close, 1P performed a series of sketches based on the idea of a TV broadcast, including news, weather and sports reports, all written, directed and organised entirely by the boys.



The ski's the limit

Opportunities for skiing, both social and competitive, continue to abound at the RGS. Over the holidays, 84 boys took part in the senior ski trip in Montgenevre and 61 boys in the junior trip to Val Claret, close to Tignes. Such is the passion, ingrained in RGS students, for the slopes that the pilot on the return leg of the journey was OG, **Suneil Banerjee**. Both trips were a great success with mornings of ski lessons followed by afternoons on the slopes and evenings of après-ski ranging from bum boarding, to skidoos, to fondues. The school ski race team then entered the British Schoolboys' International Ski Race Event held in Meiringen Hasliberg, Switzerland. The boys raced against over 40 teams from schools across the UK and the rest of Europe and the A team gained bronze medals in the combined Slalom/Giant Slalom non-registered event. **Oliver Cassidy** particularly impressed gaining a bronze medal in the individual combined competition for non-BASS competitors.



And finally

Samuel Mead has been appointed the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet until September 2012. Sam is the first cadet to be chosen from an independent school CCF. The previous incumbent, **Nicholas Daniel**, was a member of the RGS CCF but was selected as Lord Lieutenant's cadet for his work in his local scout group. Lt Cdr **Steve Yetman**, the School's Contingent Commander, was delighted to hear that Cadet Cpl Mead had been selected for such a prestigious role. 'Sam's leadership skills have developed enormously though his experiences within the cadet force; he will serve the Lord Lieutenant well and is also an excellent role model for other cadets to aspire to.'

Ben Standring, fresh from his cameo role in the Charity Day video, recently starred in 'The Golden Quest' at the Duke of Edinburgh Theatre. A feast of dance was enjoyed by the sell-out audience; Ben's fusion of tap, modern dance and ballet captivated the audience as he searched for the 'golden treasure' in this wonderful production presented by the Elise Marie Academy of Performing Arts. Ben, a multi-award winning exponent of the discipline, has recently performed with Plan B and Akon and is currently a member of the English Tap Team. We look forward to hearing all about Ben's future dancing 'feats'!