



The Headmaster writes...

There were a number of aspects of the recent ISI Inspection Report which were a source of genuine pleasure and pride. It was, however, some of the more personal elements which were particularly satisfying as the report encapsulated the strong sense of community and camaraderie at the RGS. The report noted how the "older pupils look after the younger ones" contributing to the fact that "the personal development of pupils is excellent" and that "excellent interaction takes place between pupils of all age groups." This interaction is central to so many areas of daily life at the School: the House system, the mentoring programme, the extra-curricular activities, charity and community work, musical performances and so on.

The report also drew attention to the fact that "achievements in creative, physical and performance skills are exceptional". The quality of drama at the School continues

to be remarkable, as highlighted by recent performances: from the more intimate productions to the outstanding main school production, *Our Country's Good*, where the result of combined industry and solidarity was very much in evidence. Although the actors rightly receive the plaudits, each play is the result of so many individuals working together, often behind the scenes, towards a common goal. No play is possible without the support of those involved in areas such as publicity, stage design, lighting, costume and ushering. This sense of harmony and co-operation remains at the very heart of all we do and I was delighted that the inspection formally acknowledged this aspect.





Shelf-awareness

The annual World Book Day provided the opportunity for the School to celebrate reading with a whole host of events. The theme of this year was *Writes of Passage* which invited individuals to reflect upon those books which had had a profound impact upon them, either by changing their lives or being influential in some other way. The RGS Book Club met to hear **Phil Leamon** from the English Department talk about *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman and **Harriet Suenson-Taylor** from the Religion and Philosophy Department discuss *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* by journalist Jean-Dominique Bauby. In addition, the First Form watched a live Question and Answer session with English author Robert Muchamore who is most notable for writing the *Cherub* and *Henderson's Boys* novels. The Mallison Library provided a stream of information about World Book Day on Twitter as well as a succession of *shelfies*, images of bookshelves from around the School, as for one day only, the world of social media was dominated by bookshelf images!

Blue-min' Marvellous

Early January witnessed the annual anxious wait for those who had applied to Oxford or Cambridge Universities. For 28 boys, the news was excellent and they became the latest RGS students to join an extraordinary list of 326 successful applications over the past decade. Leading the way again were the Natural Scientists where, for the second consecutive year, boys gained seven offers which made it nineteen in the past three years. As **Peter Dunscombe**, Assistant Head and Director of Higher Education,

commented: "This is especially impressive given that Natural Sciences has twice as many applicants as any other subject and has seen an almost 20% increase in applications over the same period." It was also an impressive year for those applying to read English with four out of the five applicants gaining places. For many of those who were unlucky just to miss out on gaining a place, there was the consolation of hard-earned places at other top universities including Bristol, Durham, Imperial and Warwick.



The Chauve must go on

The joint GHS and RGS production of the French play *La Cantatrice Chauve* by Ionesco lived up to its theatre-of-the-absurd billing to provide humour and bafflement in equal measure. The underlying theme of the play, the futility of meaningful communication in modern society, was portrayed by Sixth Form boys **Oliver Northover Smith** and **Benedict Philipp** who captured the complexity of the genre supremely



as they fully conveyed the range of the characters from the dead-pan and mundane to the irresistibly random and absurd. Supported by the wonderfully portrayed fireman, **Nicholas Vollers**, and atmospheric staging, the cast produced an outstanding performance and really impressed audiences over three nights with their confidence and fluency in French.

It Took a Long Time

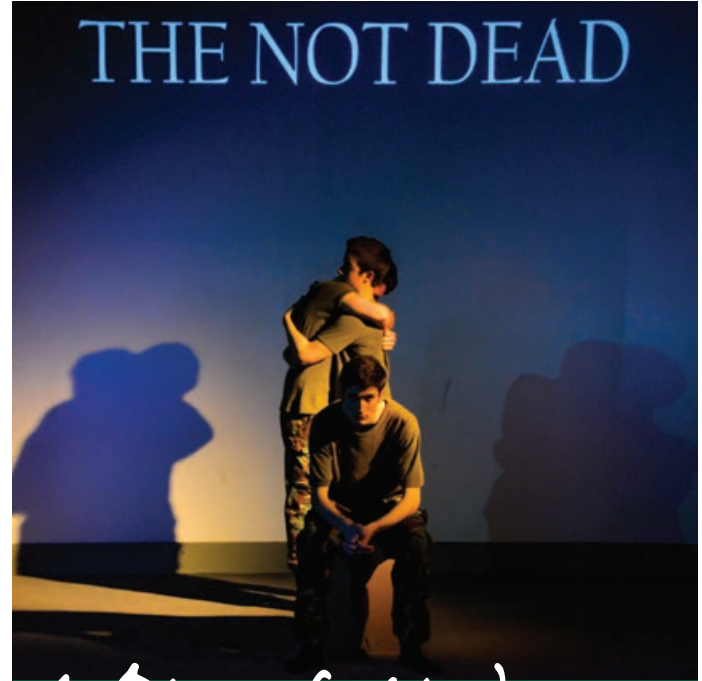
Economics teacher **Nick Gough** along with Old Guildfordian and Religion and Philosophy teacher **Richard Sears** have broken the world record for the greatest distance covered by tuk tuk as they travelled the length of the circumference of the earth. Richard acknowledged that their journey had not been without problems, "Everything that could go wrong, did go wrong with the vehicle," he said. Just 70 kilometres from the world record mark, due to mechanical issues, they realised they were going to have to push the tuk tuk for the rest of the way, leading to "a very painful three days" before it could be fixed. The motivation behind the trip was to promote and advance education worldwide. The millennium education goals focused on achieving universal access to primary education by 2015 and there are still 57 million children worldwide without access to primary education. Since their return, they have been promoting this charitable side of their endeavour. This has seen them doing school talks, including a visit to the RGS, highlighting global education issues and getting the next generation interested in development and education.





The Aboriginal Theatre Company

The main school play of term, *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker, proved to be a powerful, emotive production as it challenged the audience to reflect upon fundamental and relevant themes of civilization, colonisation, education, hatred, love, humanity and prejudice. The talented actors, supported by actresses from GHS and Tormead School, captured the zeitgeist perfectly and reflected with real insight the flawed nature of the characters, driven by circumstance and experience to behave as they do. As Ralph Clark, played by the outstanding **Jack Morris**, earnestly tries to stage a play using the convicts as his cast, so the human drama unfolds; the naturalistic, and at times impassioned, dialogue is relieved by the expressive and comedic turn of **Benedict Philipp** as Robert Sideway: all of this against the backdrop of the brooding presence of the aborigines. The atmospheric lighting and music as well as the imaginative staging drew the audience into the heart of the performance. As the actors took their bows, the audiences were left to reflect upon the final message of hope and redemption.



A Play of Words

The Not Dead proved to be one of the most moving plays of the year as the small cast had a profound impact upon audiences. **Benedict Philipp** and **Alexander Pusey** devised the piece, having been inspired by the Simon Armitage poetry anthology of the same name which explores the incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in soldiers. Along with **William Pinhey**, the boys then gave a number of performances of this play in which they really captured the emotional range of the characters. **Nancy McClean**, Head of Drama, commented: "The play was thought-provoking, highly theatrical and demonstrated the capacity of the boys to access and communicate an impressive range of emotions in an incredibly believable and committed fashion. As Harper Lee writes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." The boys demonstrated real maturity and sensitivity to do justice to such a devastating condition."



Perfect Harmony



Guildford Cathedral was the inspiring venue as the massed ranks of the combined orchestra, the choirs and choral society of GHS and the RGS, came together to provide an exquisite evening of music. The presence of just under 350 singers from the student, staff and parent body and over 70 members of the orchestra ensured this was a memorable evening in atmospheric surroundings. The schools were also delighted to welcome three highly-acclaimed and widely-renowned soloists: soprano Laurie Ashworth, mezzo-soprano Christina Gill and tenor Thomas Hobbs.



The programme opened with Rutter's *Three Movements from Suite for Strings* followed by Chilcott's *Requiem*; after the interval, Rossini's *Overture to La gazza ladra* led into the finale, Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*. Under the charismatic conducting of Grayson Jones and Director

of Music, **Peter White**, the evening was charged with emotion, energy and power. As the appreciative audience left at the end of the evening, it was clear that they had experienced an extraordinary occasion.

Piano is his Forte

The quality and standard of music at the School continue to be notable and one of the highlights of the musical calendar, the final of the RGS Musician of the Year, provided the opportunity to showcase the very finest RGS talent. The competition proved once again to be a spectacular occasion in the inspiring environment and wonderful acoustics of the Rehearsal Room. The six finalists played to an appreciative audience and were judged by conductor and former Director of Music at the

Purcell School, Quentin Poole. The finalists were **Daniel Innes** on saxophone, **Michael Lan** on piano, **Freddie McGee** on violin, **Oliver Shorthose** on trumpet, **Nicholas Warren** on horn and **Oliver White** on harp. The standard was noteworthy, as Quentin Poole formally acknowledged, as all the finalists played with real emotion and sensitivity; however, the winner of the competition was Michael with his technically assured and wonderfully musical performance of Liszt and Chopin.



Alp-Fresco

The CCF winter adventurous training camp took place in the stunning setting of the Bavarian Alps. The cadets focused on improving their technical winter skills in an action-packed programme which included alpine skiing, avalanche rescue, a snow-shoe trek and snow shelter building. The boys also participated in Nordic skiing which was a real highlight and also a great leveller as it was new to all the cadets. Nordic skiing, where the heel of the boot cannot be fixed to the ski, is a combination of winter sports which encompasses all types of skiing and incorporates biathlon, cross-country skiing and ski jumping. **Steve Yetman**, Director of Activities, commented: "The trip was challenging and exhilarating in equal measure; the boys not only gained significant technical expertise but also, equally importantly, developed their own personal responsibility and self-confidence. The boys returned exhausted but also with a huge sense of personal fulfilment."



Sevens Wonders

In the annual Rugby Sevens Tournament held at Aldro School, the RGS Under 13 team performed with commitment and flair as they remained unbeaten throughout the competition, which for many of the boys was their first competitive sevens tournament. The sunny, spring conditions were conducive to running rugby and slick handling, and the boys rose to the challenge by playing flowing rugby in each of their matches. In the semi-finals, the RGS won convincingly 22 – 0 against Rokeby School to progress to the final. In a tense and exciting match against Danes Hill School, the RGS emerged victorious by 14 – 5 to win the tournament. Director of Sport, **Ian Wilkes**, commented: "The boys played with real spirit and were worthy winners of the competition. The talent in the younger age groups bodes well for the future of RGS rugby and we look forward to their continuing development and future successes."



Totally Onside



Despite the weather doing its best to grab the headlines, RGS football emerged from torrential rain, hail storms and waterlogged pitches to continue its excellent recent record. The four senior teams played 37 fixtures, winning 21 and drawing four matches, and scored 84 goals in the process. Led by captain **Andrew Hayward**, the 1st XI achieved a 60% win rate and, in their first year in the competition, reached the fourth round of the English Schools Football Association Cup. At an individual level, **Cameron Hooley** was selected to represent the South of England team. The other senior teams enjoyed similar success with, of particular note, the 4th XI conceding only one goal throughout the season. **Adam Lowe**, Head of Football, commented: "RGS football has continued to grow and develop its reputation on the schools' circuit; the commitment to attacking, passing football has been hugely impressive. With a talented group of young players coming through the School, the future looks very bright."

Mast-erclass

The RGS has continued to cement its strong reputation in sailing as boys throughout the School have proved to be accomplished sailors. 16 boys took part in the Surrey Schools' Regatta in two fleets, fast and slow handicap, which was held at Papercourt Sailing Club. In the slow handicap fleet, **Oliver Perkins** won both the slow handicap and the highly competitive Optimist class to take home two trophies; in addition, **Max Male** won the Pico class. **James Dickinson** and **Nicholas Forbes** just missed out on first place, taking home the Surrey Schools Plate. The result from the top four boats from each team was added together to calculate the overall winner which resulted in the RGS team being crowned champions. **James Witts**, the master in charge of sailing, commented:



"Despite light winds, the RGS boys performed superbly, especially considering some had never raced competitively before. The RGS has established itself as one of the strongest schools in the region in a sport which is technically demanding and requires genuine commitment."



County Bounty

RGS hockey has enjoyed one of its most successful seasons from both an individual and team perspective. The RGS dominated Surrey with the Under 16s and Under 14s both being crowned county champions and the Under 12s finishing runners-up in their competition. The Under 12A team, however, proved to be the most successful side in the School as they remained unbeaten in school fixtures throughout the season with the highlight being a 15 – 0 victory against Reigate Grammar School. On an individual level, **Edward Way** was selected for the



England Under 16 side; **Clemens von Hänisch** was selected for both the Under 18s Futures Cup, which gives talented players a first-hand experience of an international tournament environment, and for *The Swifts*, a selected school group competing internationally. **James Ferguson** has also been playing regular National League Hockey for Guildford Hockey Club. **Matt Baggs**, Head of Hockey, noted: "To combine strength in depth, with A to D teams at junior level, at the same time as high-level performance is a difficult balance to achieve. I am immensely grateful for the technical expertise of the coaching staff and the commitment and passion of the boys."

Sports Shorts

Chess: First Form student **James Golding** has been invited to represent England at the European School Chess Championships in June 2014.

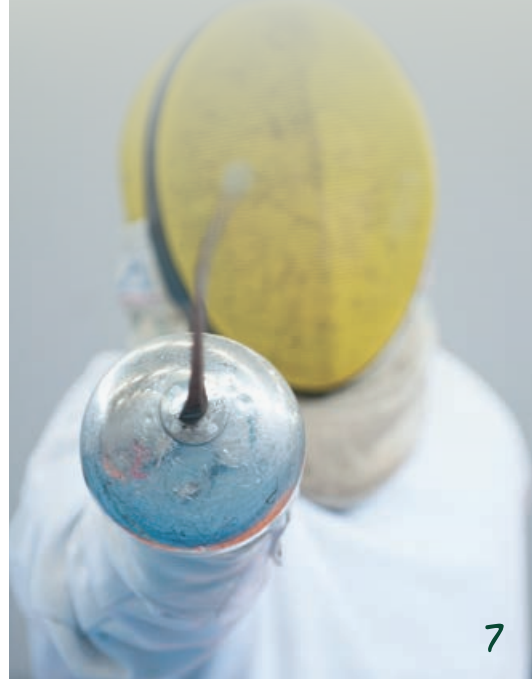
Cross-country: **Gus Cockle** won the Surrey County Under 17 Championships by 23 seconds; **George Gathercole** came in second. In the Knole Run at Sevenoaks School, which attracted 42 teams and 350 runners, Gus came first followed by George in third.

Fencing: In the Surrey County Fencing Championships, **Sebastian Morton** came third in the Under 18 Épée; **Peter Robinson** came second in the Under 16s; they have subsequently both qualified for the British Youth Fencing Championships. In the British Schools Team Fencing Championships, the RGS won the bronze medal: an impressive success in a national competition.

Judo: At the HMC Judo Championships, **Ridley Hymas** won silver and **Mikel Bober-Irizar**, **Angus Hammond** and **James Wallace** all won bronze medals.

Shooting: **Sebastian Mansley** and **Oliver Woolcott** have been selected for the Great Britain Under 19 rifle team, *The Athelings*, to go to Canada this summer.

Swimming: In the Guildford and District Schools Championships, the RGS won the overall title, coming first at Under 15 and second at Under 13. **Alec Shackleton** qualified for the regional finals after his performance in the 100 metre breaststroke in the Surrey County Final.



Namastay

The annual Nepal Day once again brought into focus the international partnership with two schools in Besisahar, Nepal. The connection with the schools was formed when Old Guildfordian Alex Ewart tragically lost his life in a white-water-rafting accident during his gap year in Nepal. Since then, *The Alex Ewart Fund* has raised over £150,000 helping the schools to double in size and changing the lives of many local children and families. Nepal Day started with an assembly which focused on the mutual benefit and the exciting opportunities afforded by the partnership. Recent RGS leavers **Ben Allchurch**, **Alex Mackowski** and **Will Russell**, on their return from their gap year teaching in Nepal, spoke movingly about their experiences inside and outside the classroom. Other highlights of the day included the Nepali flag being recreated by the boys, Nepali-themed lessons, Nepali food and a number of kabaddi games which were passionately contested by staff and boys alike.



Gift Rap

After raising a staggering total of £32,276.71 for charity in the calendar year 2013, charitable initiatives have continued to be as innovative and diverse as ever. As well as more conventional fundraising events such as mufti days, doughnut and cake sales and the Upper Sixth Form assembly, this term has pushed the boundaries even further as houses have been responsible for setting up their own initiatives. Hamonde House raised £603 for *Pancreatic Cancer UK* by staging the staff rap battle as six extremely brave members of staff, dressed accordingly or alarmingly, lay their inhibitions aside and performed bespoke raps. The staff impressed with their verbal acrobatics and attitude if not necessarily with their rhythm or musical talent. The inter-house pancake race also provided an opportunity for staff and boys to move well outside their comfort zone as the art of tossing pancakes proved far more problematic than expected. The event, however, summed up the spirit of fun

and community which all charity events at the School promote and, in addition, raised money for *Diabetes UK*.



School of Locke



In the historic setting of the Tudor buildings, students are used to the tranquillity being interrupted by the sound of music-making; however, there is one distinctive sound which can only have one origin. Electric guitar and bass teacher **Dave Locke** is the inspiration behind so many boys developing their technical expertise as well as expressing themselves musically. In addition to his teaching, he also coaches the boys in the band format and helps them creatively with song writing and performance, as showcased by this term's *Gig of Destiny*. Dave is heavily involved in writing, recording and performing his own solo music and he has recently drawn the attention of *Guitarist*, the leading national guitar magazine, for his playing and debut album release *Riding Out Youth*. He is also very proud of receiving some high praise from guitar legends such as Walter Trout as well as solo artist and once *Whitesnake* guitarist Jason Becker. His loyal and significant following on *YouTube* for his guitar instrumental covers of classic songs is testament to his talent and has drawn endorsements from leading names in the field.