

The Register



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The newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford



The Headmaster writes...

This term always brings into sharp focus the cyclical nature of school life. In the same term that the RGS welcomes boys to sit the 11+ Entrance Examinations so the Upper Sixth Form are coming towards the end of their school careers as they receive offers from universities. The very fact that the Sixth Form boys take such a prominent role in the organisation and smooth running of the entrance exam day reinforces the concept of this journey.

I am often asked by prospective parents if there is such a thing as a stereotypical RGS student and I am delighted that one of the great strengths of the School is that in fact there is no clichéd blueprint. Our boys are individuals: tolerant, happy, engaged individuals who

take genuine pride in all that they do. The interview process at 11+ entry really highlights this diversity. Boys attend wearing anything from shorts and replica football shirts to their school blazer liberally decorated with badges showcasing their positions of responsibility. Likewise, boys talk passionately about their interests, be it national sporting recognition or their love of computer games. It is an exciting process to offer places to a year group which is characterised by such rich diversity as well as contrasting passions and experiences; indeed, this sense of personal identity was immediately apparent with our most recent intake last September.

At the other end of the spectrum in the Upper Sixth Form, this independence and individuality manifests itself in the choice of courses. As well as more conventional subjects, boys in this year group have applied to study courses including Arabic and Mediaeval History; Computing (Games, Vision and Interaction); Contemporary Music Production; Earth Sciences; Human, Social and Political Science; Japanese; Materials Science; Physics with Australian Placement; and Psychology. The



record-equalling year for Oxbridge offers – 42 in total – and the highest number of offers in a decade from Durham University are testament to the fact that the boys continue to maintain the very highest standards.

The strength and cohesion of the RGS community is at the very heart of the success of the School. It is a school, however, despite this unity, which comprises a talented group of individuals who take genuine pride in their performance in every aspect of school life, who embrace their own and others' uniqueness, and who have the opportunity to flourish irrespective of their chosen sphere.





The History Boys

The annual Fourth Form History trip to the First World War Battlefields of Northern France and Belgium provided an intense visit to the – predominantly – British sector of the Western Front, stemming from Picardy and the Somme all the way up to the Belgian Channel coast 100 miles further north. Particular highlights included Notre Dame de Lorette (the largest French military cemetery on the Western Front housing the remains of over 40,000 soldiers) and the recently completed International Monument that lists the names of the 580,000 soldiers of all nationalities who died in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais during the whole war. At the Thiepval memorial, a number of boys managed to locate the names of some of their own relatives that were listed and a brief service of remembrance was held including the laying of a wreath on behalf of the School. **Henry Wiggins**, Head of History, noted: "The trip proved informative and emotive in equal measure as the boys were encouraged to draw their own conclusions as to the wisdom and good sense of the various operations, tactics and offensives as well as to consider the merits (or culpability) of the actions of senior commanders."



World Dominance

While many local Surrey residents were seeing in the New Year in a more traditional manner, a group of A Level Chemistry students were pitting themselves against the very best young scientists in the world. After making the sacrifice of spending the first hour of 2015 on Round 3 of the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, the boys were rewarded as they now top the 2015 World Honours Table. In the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, new challenges – set by Cambridge University – are released at 00:00:01 (UK time) on the first day of the month. In total, 1,900 chemists worldwide have so far taken part in this year's competition. **Wai-Shun Lau**, Head of Chemistry, commented: "In both 2013 and 2014, RGS boys claimed the majority of the top ten places in the world for the Under 18s. Currently, RGS boys have taken five of the top six places in the world. This is an extraordinary achievement and highlights the impressive standards the boys are attaining academically as well as their self-motivation and independence."

Uni-que Success

An anxious start to the New Year for those who had applied to Cambridge and Oxford Universities proved well worth the tense wait as a record-equalling 42 Oxbridge offers were received by students. 22 offers from Cambridge University and 20 from Oxford spanned 24 different courses with an equal split of 21 offers between the sciences and the arts/humanities/social sciences. It was also the second time in six years that over 40 offers had been achieved. Headmaster **Dr Jon Cox** commented: "The challenge of gaining an Oxbridge offer is getting harder each year as boys have to navigate a growing number of additional tests and compete against large numbers of very able and well-prepared students. The fact that RGS boys have received 340 offers in the past decade is testament to the extraordinary talent and commitment of the boys, the dedication of the staff and the support of the parents." Of particular note were the nine offers in Mathematics, including all eight who applied to Cambridge, and the six offers for Economics-related subjects, four of which were for PPE at Oxford. In addition, impressive numbers of offers – with offers still pending – have been received from the School's principal target universities: Bath (54), Bristol (65), Durham (52), Exeter (68), London (25) including 12 from Imperial College, Nottingham (43) and Warwick (43).

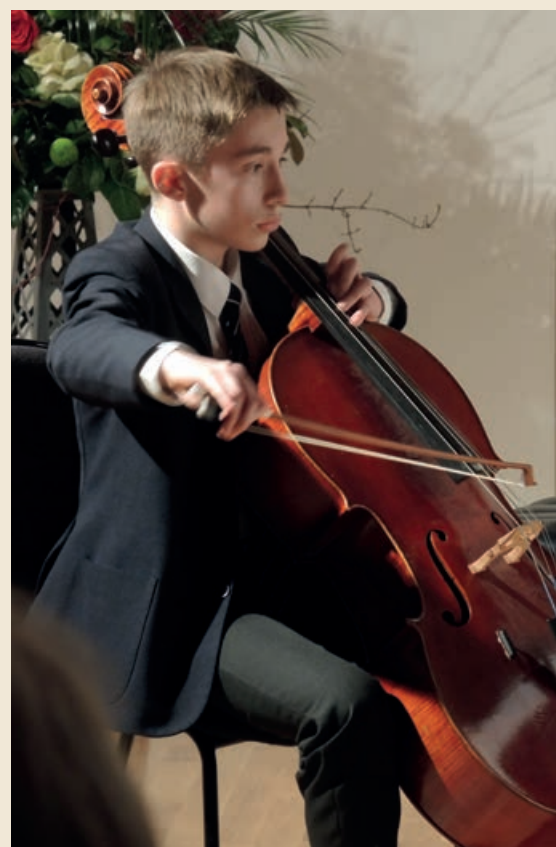


King of Brass

The final of the RGS Musician of the Year competition proved to be an exquisite evening of music which had the appreciative audience captivated by the extraordinary talent and diversity of the boys. The finalists **Michael Collis** on viola, **Callum Lau** on piano, **Frederick McGee** on violin, **Oliver White** on harp, **Alistair Baumann** on cello and **Rory Wilson** on tuba performed a programme which was uplifting, delicate and surprising in equal measure but all with the same exacting standards of musicianship. The adjudicator Joy Farrall – one of Britain's most successful and highly respected wind soloists – had the unenviable task of picking a winner. She admitted she was taken aback by the sheer quality of talent on display but in the end awarded the Steynor Prize to the boy whose performance and energy ensured he stood out, Rory Wilson. His first piece *Fnugg*, with elements from the Australian Aboriginal repertoire for didgeridoo as well as Norwegian folk music, included a percussive lip-beat section, the



likes of which the Rehearsal Room had not experienced before. A cameo appearance from last year's winner **Michael Lan** on piano provided a fitting climax to the evening's proceedings.



Aspiring Performers

The Music Department has established an enviable reputation in recent years and offers a host of choirs and ensembles which continue to cater for all abilities and interests. An impressive line-up of over 20 talented peripatetic music staff provides expert tuition in instruments from the popular and traditional to those instruments such as the bassoon, electric guitar, harp, horn, jazz piano and organ. As well as providing such rich diversity, concerts are a regular and important feature of each school week. **Peter White**, Director of Music, noted: "Concerts take place in venues from the intimate setting of our very own Rehearsal Room to grand, imposing buildings. Such opportunity gives the chance for boys to embrace the joy of performance and seeing the boys develop and flourish on the public stage is one of the most satisfying elements of



my role." This term has illustrated this: from the Market Day Concerts at local venues such as St Mary's Church and Holy Trinity Church, to the String Concert at Chichester Cathedral and the combined Guildford High School and RGS Chamber Choir singing Evensong at Winchester Cathedral.



A Sweet Truth

Rarely have marshmallows enjoyed such high profile at the RGS but, for one night and one night only, **Cameron Finlay** and **William Pinhey** elevated this humble item of confectionery to legendary status. Their A2 devised piece, *The Marshmallow Men*, was performed in front of their AQA examiner and a captivated audience. The boys took an expressionistic style – bold and exaggerated characterisation, comedy, multimedia and musical elements – and created an allegorical tale about CEO Dale Firoth's (Adolf Hitler) Confectionery Company and his demand for the perfect white marshmallow (the Aryan race). The play revealed that despite Hitler's abhorrent use of medical scientists to conduct inhumane and unethical research on real people captured and imprisoned under the Nazi regime, many of those scientists were subsequently recruited by the US with their crimes conveniently ignored. **Nancy McClean**, Head of Drama, commented: "The play juxtaposed high comedy and absurdism with the darker, sinister historical truth to great effect. The examiner was bowled over by the tightly scripted, imaginatively staged and impeccably performed show."



Totally Batty

Dark, atmospheric, sinister, moody: not just, as some boys might say, another day at the RGS, but the theme of World Book Day as the School was infused with the cross-curricular Gothic theme. Enterprising teachers led activities including Gothic vocabulary bingo in Latin, calligraphy in Art, Gothic Consequences in English and discussion of the Goth subculture in Politics and also in Religion and Philosophy. Special guest speaker Dr Kathryn Harkup enthralled boys with talks explaining the science behind Vampires, Frankenstein and Poisons respectively. Sinister sustenance was the focus of lunch as the catering staff produced such horrific fare as Bulging



Eyeballs and Bread and Bogey Pudding, eaten to the accompaniment of silent film *Nosferatu*. Meanwhile the Lower Sixth gave a series of well-researched talks on various aspects of the topic: art, music, literature and film, and boys of all ages used their smartphones to hunt down clues in the Haunted Mansion Treasure Hunt. RGS Librarian **Tamsin Farthing**, commented: "The day informed and educated, amused and entertained: the day was full of surprises as highlighted by the Art Department's skeleton. The skeleton, recruited to the catering team complete with coffin, caused some consternation to passers-by as he crossed the High Street at the end of the day!"





Grammar School Knockout



Right from Vince Fontaine's – **Enrico Cadoux-Hudson** – opening greeting over House of Waxx radio, the audience was transported back to 1959 and teenage dramas at Rydell High School. A huge cast of GHS and RGS students produced an electrifying performance that gave the audience chills that multiplied until they struggled not to lose control and start dancing in the aisles; this was in no small part down to the backstage live band

led by Director of Music **Peter White**. The sharp choreography had the cast shakin', rockin' and rollin' across the stage and the costume department pulled off a number of magic changes, with Frenchie's *Beauty School Dropout* dream sequence a particular highlight. Special mention should go to the technical and props teams who have been hopelessly devoted to creating a spectacular set in recent months and, indeed, Greased Lightning's

entrance stole the show. It is impossible to pick out every star performance, as Director and Head of Drama **Nancy McClean** made the entire cast of teen angels look as though they had been born to hand jive. By the end of the show Sandy's lightning fast transformation into a bad girl managed to convince Danny, played by **Daniel Parker**, that they went together like chang chang changitty chang shooobop.





A Tour de Fours

Beach cricket, street cricket, back-yard cricket, tennis ball cricket, hard ball cricket: the passion for the sport was evident on every street corner as the RGS went on tour to Sri Lanka. The typically friendly and hospitable Sri Lankan welcome and the opportunity to play at international and first-class venues provided a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The RGS won the three one-day matches: highlights of which included a magnificent 217 run partnership between **Alexander Sweet** 108* and **George Mackenzie** 101*, including 23 fours between them, in the third match of the tour in Colombo.



On the bowling front, the magic number four continued with **Joe Norton** picking up four wickets in the same match as the RGS scored 314 for 5 and dismissed the opposition for 94. Off the field, the boys visited places including: the Foundation of Goodness charity project at the south of the island and saw the effects of the 2004 tsunami; an elephant orphanage; the Temple of the Tooth (the most sacred shrine of Buddhism) and the Galle Dutch Fort. Head of Cricket, **Chris Sandbach**, noted: "The boys were impeccably behaved and proved to be excellent ambassadors for the School. They all embraced the whole experience to the full and this beautiful island left a lasting impression on every one of the tourists."



The Lowe Down

All top managers these days seem to blame anything and everything other than their own inadequacies – the weather, the pitches, and the opposition. Despite all of these being challenges, not a word of complaint has emerged from the changing rooms or post-match reports of the RGS as it has proved to be another impressive season for RGS football. Battling horrific weather and tough opposition, at the time of writing, over 70 senior boys have represented the School in more than 35 fixtures. The 3rd and 4th XIs have only lost a combined three matches, scoring over 25 goals this season, while the 2nd XI has amassed a series of impressive performances with **George Mackenzie** pulling the strings in midfield. The 1st XI, captained by **Matthew Lopez**, has had a hugely impressive season, losing only four of their nineteen games and scoring a remarkable 57 goals. **Adam Lowe**, Head of Football, noted: "Perhaps most encouraging has been the quality of the football that RGS sides have produced. In a professional era of the counter-attack and low block tactics, RGS teams continue to impress with free-flowing, possession-based, attacking football." Now a respected member of the Independent Schools Football Association, the sport at the RGS continues to go from strength to strength.



A True Heavyweight

Success in sport requires talent, dedication and practice and usually the input of a proficient coach. It is rare, however, for the seeds of success to have been sown by watching *YouTube* videos! For **Christopher Murray**, this was the starting point for an exciting journey. Christopher, inspired by his brother's involvement in the sport at university, started coaching and training himself by watching videos. After being talent spotted at *CrossFit Guildford*, he participated in more frequent weightlifting sessions and a structured training schedule. After less than three months of specialist coaching, he unofficially – as it was during a training session – broke the Under 15 British record on two occasions. The GB Talent Pathway Manager was alerted to his progress and Christopher recently competed in the British Schools Weightlifting Championships in the 62kg class. In the snatch lift, Christopher lifted 75kg to win by 2kg; in the clean and jerk lift, he was successful at 97kg which was enough to secure victory in the competition. Christopher commented: "Unfortunately although I made an attempt at the British record, one attempt was not enough; however, breaking this record and also winning the British Youth Championships are now my next goals."



Sports Shorts

Badminton: **Christopher Chong** won gold in the Surrey County Badminton Association at Under 12 and silver in the England National Circuit Hampshire at Under 13.

Chess: **Harry Grieve** has been invited by the England Junior Chess Squad to play in a tournament in Poland.

Cross-Country: **Charles Kershaw** won the Danes Hill Invitational Event, coming in as the individual winner; **Samuel Martin** secured third place.

Fencing: **Peter Robinson** has been selected to fence in the final European Cup Épée event in Bratislava. He finished third at the British Youth Championship (BYC) Under 18 Southern Qualifier to qualify for the BYC Final. In the Surrey County Fencing Championships, **Max Tether** won a silver medal and **James Hilditch** won bronze in the Under 18 age-group.

Ice and Roller Hockey: **William Lawson** has been selected for the Under 13 South West Conference Ice Hockey team. He has also been selected for the Under 12 Southern Snipers Roller Hockey Team, which represents the South of England.

Judo: At the HMC competition **Oliver Platt** won gold and thereby qualified for the England development squad; **Ridley Hymas** won silver and **James Wallace** secured bronze.

Sailing: **James Dickinson** competed in the Mirror World Sailing Championships in South Africa. In the African Championships, he achieved fourth place overall and was the second placed British boat. **Patrick Croghan** has been selected for the Royal Yachting Association UK Youth Squad, recognising his potential to progress within the British Sailing Team.

Shooting: **William Johnson** and **Rupert Fitzsimmons** have been selected to represent England A in the British Schools Smallbore Rifle Association team against Scotland.

Taekwondo: **Charles Dorkins** participated in the Global Taekwondo International (GTI) British Open Championships and won a bronze medal in the sparring event.



Bully for Us

The 23 hockey teams have continued to represent the School with distinction this year. The 1st XI has enjoyed some excellent performances, notably beating Cranleigh School 5 – 1 and Wellington College 4 – 1, as well as progressing to the final of the Surrey Cup and finishing as runners-up. The Under 16 and Under 14 teams were runners-up in their respective county tournaments. The School has also enjoyed considerable success on the representative front. **Edward Way** is in the England Under 18 squad and has also represented Surbiton Hockey Club 1st XI who are currently at the top of the *Now: Pensions National Premier League*. **James Ferguson** has developed into an integral part of Guildford Hockey Club 1st XI in National League West Conference. Additionally, more than 20 boys have received county honours for both Surrey and Hampshire. **Ben Tibble** and **Rupert Shipperley** have both been selected as part of the GB Hockey development squad, following

their performances for Surbiton HC, allowing them not only to push for further international honours, but also to pass on the latest in cutting-edge strategies and techniques to the boys. **Matt Baggs**, Head of Hockey, commented: "It is remarkable that we manage to provide the opportunity for so many boys to represent the School while still maintaining an elite performance atmosphere at the top end which allows the highest performers to flourish."



Pace Setters

Gus Cockle and **George Gathercole** have continued their long-standing rivalry as they have dominated cross-country events at school and county level resulting in national recognition. Gus has developed an impressive running CV: achieving the fastest time for 3000m in UK at Under 17 level; being crowned the English Schools and British Schools Champion over 3000m; and running for England at the Lotto Crosscup International Under 20 event in Brussels where he came in as the first England runner. He is also currently the Surrey Under 20 cross-country champion. George has been equally impressive and, after often playing second-string to Gus, recorded a notable recent victory. In the 40th Knole Run at Sevenoaks, a prestigious run which attracts the best athletes in the south, Gus won and George came second; however, at the Surrey Schools' event George turned the tables and won the race with Gus coming in second

place. **Dai Cowx**, master in charge of cross-country, commented: "It is very unusual to have two such naturally talented athletes in any one year group in any one school. Their friendly rivalry has helped to spur them on to even higher standards and it is testament to their training, dedication and determination that they have both achieved such great success in recent years."





At a Push

Economics teacher and joint founder of *The Tuk Tuk Educational Trust*, a UK Charity working to promote and advance education worldwide, **Nick Gough**, delivered an inspirational King's Lecture focusing on the journey he made with **Richard Sears**, Old Guildfordian and ex-RGS teacher, around the world in a tuk tuk. He spoke about the many issues they encountered, mostly to do with the mechanics of 'Tommy the tuk tuk' as everything that could go wrong did. Just 70 kilometres from reaching the world record mark of the greatest distance covered by tuk tuk, they ended up pushing it for the last section due to mechanical failure. The lecture was fascinating and hilarious in equal measures with comedic antidotes and serious insights into the time they spent going through areas that lacked education and visiting projects seeking to alleviate this problem. A retiring collection raised £1,400 with £800 going towards building a classroom and the remainder being used to develop a piece of land on which an orphanage can be built.



Band Aid

It is often argued in the music industry that you can never improve on the original of a song and the RGS Charity Day provided further ammunition that this is very much the case! What individuals lacked, perhaps, in tone, musicality and talent they more than made up for with sheer energy and enjoyment and this set the tone for one of the most memorable Charity Days in recent years. After the slickly professional and hilarious assembly from the Upper Sixth Form, a day of charitable activities ensued. As well as the pre-requisite availability of doughnuts, events ranged from the alarmingly competitive boys against staff dodgeball match to the equally combative staff sumo wrestling match which proved that intelligence and physique have little bearing on ultimate sumo success! The highlight for many, however, was the inaugural House Music Video Competition where all boys in each house were involved in producing a music video. These, which included *Parklife* by Blur and *Anything Goes* by Lew Stone, ranged from the not-particularly-sublime to the ridiculous and were, perhaps, best summed up with *Our House* by Madness. Significant sums of money were raised for the charities chosen by the boys: the local charity, Treloar School, a school for physically disabled children; the national charity CRY; and the international charity, our link schools and Isiqalo.



And Finally

Long-standing member of staff and former Head of Geography **Dick Seymour** has been presented with the Chief Scout's 40 Years' Service Award. Dick has been a Scout since joining as a cub aged eight; he has subsequently been a Venture Scout and a Queen's Scout, the highest award in Scouting. He was the Group Scout Leader for the RGS Scouts at a time when there were two Scout troops as well as a Venture Scout unit, amounting to over 100 boys; Dick held this post for more than twenty years. He is still actively involved at the RGS and believes that he has been leader to more than 2,000 Scouts in his 40 years. He commented that among many memorable achievements, "I have taken part in camps and expeditions to countries such as USA, Iceland, Norway, France, Switzerland, and last year to the Sahara Desert in Morocco. Being a Geography teacher these opportunities for foreign travel and exploration have been an added bonus." This award is deserved recognition for his selfless and inspirational devotion to Scouts over an extraordinary number of years.

