

# THE REGISTER

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The termly newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford



RGSG  
GUILDFORD

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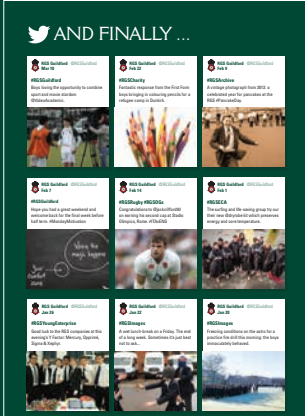


## ALL QUIET

The school's first ever... (text continues)



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# THE HEADMASTER WRITES ...

All schools experience a delicate balancing act as they strive to juggle the conflicting demands of conformity and individuality. On the one hand, conformity nurtures pride and respect, a sense of shared belonging and shared goals. Assembly is an obvious illustration of this as the RGS community comes together in its entirety, united by school uniform and communal singing, to share and celebrate our successes. The Super Tuesday initiative, about which there is more information in this edition of *The Register*, is a fantastic example of a whole year group venture involving all 102 boys participating together as every single boy represented the School to play in competitive fixtures.

And yet, by the same token, the

School's ethos firmly promotes the centrality of individuality and independence. Psychologists talk of such terms as beige, vanilla, camouflage tendencies to highlight how teenagers adapt their looks, actions and speech to blend in with their peers. I am proud to say that I firmly believe that the RGS is an institution which, within the reassuring context of a supportive environment and a shared vision, encourages each student to be proud of who they are and to forge their own path through the School. I am frequently asked the attributes and characteristics of a stereotypical RGS boys and, perhaps, one of the greatest strengths of the School is that it is impossible to generalise in this way.

This edition of *The Register* celebrates triumphs in a quite remarkable variety

of walks of life and as much as I join in applauding each and every achievement, the thing that truly deserves acclaim is the diversity of opportunity and the fact that the individuals behind these successes have the confidence to be themselves and to flourish in their chosen paths. This is truly something worth celebrating.

*gfe*

# THE BLUES BROTHERS

To follow in the footsteps of last year's cohort and their record-equalling 42 Oxbridge offers was always going to be daunting but the current RGS Upper Sixth Form boys enjoyed outstanding success in the latest round of Oxbridge applications. This year's final total of 38 offers – 13 to Oxford and 25 to Cambridge – was testament not only to their ability but also to their determination, tenacity and collaborative working. Once again there was a spread of offers across the various subject disciplines – including Chinese, Medicine, Music and Veterinary Science – but our Engineers deserved special mention for securing 11 offers. The overall total was the School's second highest on record and the 25 offers from Cambridge the highest ever achieved: what was perhaps most remarkable was that 62% of all those called for interview were made an offer. On an individual level, it was a pair of double successes for the Barnwell and Osborne twins as they built on their formidable success in the School to date having secured 43 A\* grades between them at GCSE. Ben and James Barnwell received offers for Engineering at Cambridge, although they will finally be separated as they are going to different colleges: Clare College and Sidney Sussex College; Alex and Daniel Osborne also secured offers at Cambridge but for different subjects: Chinese Studies at St John's College and Land Economy at Jesus College.



## TRUE BLUE

The RGS was delighted to welcome back Old Guildfordian Nick Hargrave (2006) to deliver this term's lecture entitled *Reflections from the backroom*. Since leaving the RGS, Nick has carved out an impressive political career as Head of Opposition Research for the Conservative Party's 2015 General Election campaign, political speech writer for David Cameron and recently as an elections consultant for a number of overseas political parties. Nick provided very honest insight into the world of politics including highlighting right from the very start that a recent survey on the professions you would most trust to tell you the truth placed politicians at the bottom of the pile; even estate agents and bankers finished above them! Nick's five reflections upon which his speech were based were: bubble versus reality; the necessity of getting your facts right; the need for strategy; the importance of teamwork; and the simple fact that politics matters. The varied and probing questions from the audience – boys, parents and staff alike – aptly illustrated how the lecture had been both challenging and inspiring.

# EARNING HIS STRIPES

Nurturing seeds of interest which have been sown in the classroom can lead students to work independently in many different directions; for James Miller it led to success in a prestigious national documentary competition. James entered the Cairngorms Nature Young Presenter competition providing an opportunity for 10 – 16 year olds to film themselves as nature presenters. James' film which focused on badgers provided excellent footage and a confident, detailed insight into their habitat and habits. James commented: "In the past few years, I have discovered that the badgers regularly visit my garden, and this has given me the opportunity to get to know them a lot better than most people would." As part of his prize, James spent a week at the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland observing some of the most rare and elusive creatures in Britain. He also got to spend a day with BBC Two's *Springwatch* presenter Iolo Williams to pick up some top presenting tips and also to make a documentary.



## SCHOOL REPORT

**Biology:** The RGS achieved three gold, six silver and four bronze medals in this year's Biology Olympiad. Mark Thornton and Joe Brunet finished in the top 16 in the country to progress to the finals: four of these students will gain a slot on the British team for the International Biology Olympiad held in Vietnam.

**Chemistry:** In the Chemistry Olympiad, Mark Thornton was one of the highest scoring gold medalists and was invited to the selection event to represent the British team in the International Chemistry Olympiad. In addition, Piers Cole, Martin Dibb-Fuller, James Hilditch and Peter Robinson came in the top 50 nationally. In total, the RGS achieved eight gold, 23 silver and 23 bronze awards. In the national Royal Society of Chemistry competition, *Top of the Bench*, the RGS team was crowned as south-east regional heat winners.

**Debating:** The RGS team progressed to the district finals in the English-Speaking Union national debating competition. Christopher Gooding won the award for best overall chairperson: an impressive accolade.

**Economics:** The RGS maintained its recent success in the *ifs Student Investor Challenge*, with Team Mythritz coming 25th out of over 10,000 teams to progress to the semi-finals. This is particularly notable for a Fourth Form team in a competition dominated by Sixth Form students.

**Mathematics:** As one of the highest scoring runners up in the regional heats of the UK Mathematics Trust Challenge, the RGS Sixth Form team qualified for the national final.

**Music:** Michael Collis was awarded a diploma (Dip ABRSM) from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in viola while Alistair Baumann gained a place in the National Youth Chamber Orchestra.

**Physics:** RGS boys made a real impact upon this year's British Physics Olympiad securing eight of the top 150 awards while Martin Dibb-Fuller and James Hilditch won two of the top 50 awards. In addition, RGS boys won two silver and six bronze awards and two commendations to complete a record-breaking year for the School in this competition.

**Young Enterprise:** The RGS was delighted to host the Surrey Y Factor which attracted a record number of businesses and 145 attendees. The highlight of the evening was the e-advertising competition: RGS teams *Opprimé* and *Sigma* scooped first and second prizes respectively to cap a very successful evening.

# ALL ABOUT THE BASS



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 – Edward Ball (double bass), Alistair Baumann (‘cello), Michael Collis (viola), Hans Hu (piano), Joshua Powell (oboe) and Ronan Thomas (violin) – performed a programme which was refined, sophisticated and engaging in equal measure but all with the same exacting standards of musicianship. The adjudicator William Bruce, Head of Strings at the Junior Guildhall School of Music and Drama, had the unenviable task of picking a winner. He admitted that despite his experience adjudicating competitions he was taken aback by the sheer quality of talent on display and that any one of the boys would have been a worthy winner. In the end, however, he awarded the Steynor Prize to the boy whose performance incorporated great technical ease, confident expression and lovely sense of overall architecture, Edward Ball. Head of Keyboard Jan Newman also merited special mention as effortless accompanist for an intense succession of pieces. A cameo appearance from last year’s winner Rory Wilson on the tuba provided a fitting climax to the proceedings and left the audience to reflect upon an inspiring, memorable evening.



## SCHOOL OF ROCK

The Auditorium has enjoyed many and diverse uses this term from lecture hall, to theatre, to examination and interview room; for one night, however, it was transformed into a rock venue as some of the School’s brightest talents performed to a packed audience for RGS’s Rock Gig Reloaded 2016. Five headline acts performed: *Vacation*, *Pink Sock*, *25 Pound Hug*, *Los Angelos* and *Avalanche*, as the setlists ranged from Green Day, to Oasis, to Radiohead, to Red Hot Chili Peppers, to covers of new bands and modern classics. The event was organised by the RGS’s very own rock guru and guitar teacher, Dave Locke, who noted: “The boys put in performances worthy of much larger venues: their talent, levels of performance, passion and confidence were extraordinary and far exceeded what you would expect of a schoolboy concert.” Over £650 was raised from the evening, all of which will be reinvested into contemporary music and new equipment at the RGS to ensure that next year’s gig is even better, and louder.



# PRIME CUTS

One of the strangest and darkest comedies, *A Butcher of Distinction* by Rob Hayes, proved to be an inspired choice for the AS drama production as the boys delivered subtle, well-tuned and skilled performances. Two brothers are clearing out a basement flat in London where their father lived before he killed himself and their mother, and the brothers are on



a quest to discover what their tyrannical father's secret life entailed. The boys are extremely odd, to say the least, having been brought up to be a butcher and a goatherd. Nancy McClean, Head of Drama, commented: "As many professional actors will testify, playing comedy is far harder than performing in a tragedy. You have to discover exactly the same amount of truth in your performance, and yet deliver the role with a lightness of touch and total unawareness of the comedy. The boys loved the experience and their performances were beautifully paced and detailed with every moment on stage having been crafted to create a convincing filial relationship – albeit a dysfunctional one – as well as to reveal the understated comedy that underpinned the piece."





# ART ATTACK

Set in 1644, *Pity in History* transported appreciative audiences to the English Civil War at a time when Cromwell's anti-royalist army was gaining the upper hand. Right from the opening scene, the audience was immersed in a world of human pain and suffering as the cook Murgatroyd, played powerfully and emotively by Edward Chapman, dies loudly and angrily having been shot accidentally. Against this backdrop, the play reflects upon the position of artists and art in political society as the self-assured stonemason Gaukroger, played with no little confidence by Nicholas Hall, provides a philosophical, insightful commentary to proceedings, well supported by Harry Somerville as his apprentice Pool. The moody, atmospheric staging, lighting and sound effects conveyed the zeitgeist perfectly, against which the play explored the function, durability and necessity of art in the world through the engaging, and often humorous, characters and sharp, tight dialogue. A demanding play produced performances of extraordinary maturity and sensitivity, none more so than the charismatic portrayal of the pent-up anger of the Puritan chaplain Croop by James Cashman. As Factor noted towards the end of the play, "the longer the civil war goes on the less civil it gets".



## NOT ALL BARD

The theme of this year's World Book Day was Shakespeare, in honour of the 400th anniversary of his death. A number of staff – slightly alarmingly – jumped at the chance to dress up as characters from his plays, leading to such sights as Cleopatra, complete with asp, leading a mentoring session, Bottom addressing an outdoor junior assembly and Titania conducting a Chemistry demonstration, fortunately without damage to her wings. The Fourth Form attended a lively workshop, led by *Guildford Shakespeare Company*, designed to enhance their understanding of their GCSE set text *The Merchant of Venice*; elsewhere, strenuous efforts were made to persuade boys that Shakespeare was not just for English lessons. In Mathematics, they looked at patterns in sonnets; in History, they researched the influence of Shakespeare's times on his work; in Economics, they compared sixteenth century concerns about refugees to current issues. Even the kitchen staff rose to the occasion with a themed lunch, including an incredible display of assorted freshly-baked bread complete with inspiring lines from Shakespeare.



## LICENCE TO THRILL



The formidable reputation of the RGS on the Model United Nations' circuit has continued to grow and this year alone has seen an extraordinary number and range of successes at conferences including Benenden, Christ's Hospital, Croydon, Lady Eleanor Holles, London Oratory, to name but a few. One of the highlights of the term, however, was the second conference to be hosted at the RGS following the very successful Junior RGSMUN conference. With the overarching theme of *SPECTRE* focusing on global co-operation and security, topics ranged from the Security Council discussing the situation in Yemen, to how the United Nations should respond to global pandemics in health and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in disarmament. The conference proved to be challenging and impassioned in equal measure and as Alex Denny, the Deputy Secretary General of the RGSMUN, commented: "From first timers to diehards who were carrying the battle scars of 25 tours of duty for the United Nations, every delegate took away experience of debate, discussion and the United Nations as well as new perspectives on the various topics and issues. The inspiring words which are often said at the beginning of conferences, *speak up, speak out, speak well*, were certainly taken to heart."

## OUT OF THIS WORLD

The RGS enjoyed national profile on BBC's *The One Show*, capitalising on the current media coverage of Tim Peake as the popular prime-time show did a feature based upon the School's involvement in the 1991 Juno space mission. On 22 May 1991, members of the RGS Radio Club were the first school and, indeed, the first amateur radio group in the UK to make contact with Helen Sharman, Britain's first astronaut on the Mir space station. They staged a reconstruction of this original link-up using the original equipment of former Head of Biology (1976 – 99), Frank Bell, and four current Fourth Form RGS boys, Philip Bowler, Adam Ewens, Oliver Pinhey and Dominic Rosevear, as well as Assistant Head Jimmy Pressley. This was followed by an interview with presenter Angellica Bell and Frank Bell and members of the original RGS radio club, Les Starkie and Pete Hibbs, before linking up live with Helen Sharman and then, as a surprise to the two Old Guildfordians, doing a live link with Tim Peake from the International Space Station.



# BANG ON TARGET



The RGS has enjoyed a long and distinguished history in shooting and over the years, as a succession of boys have won national and international recognition, there have been many highlights. The current students, however, against this distinguished backdrop have managed to achieve a feat which has only been achieved once before in the School's history by winning both the Staniforth and Country Life trophies in the same year. The RGS team was victorious in both the Combined Cadet Force school small-bore competitions: the Staniforth Challenge Cup with a winning score of 781 out of 800, beating

17 other public schools in the process; and the Country Life Cup with a final total of 892 out of a possible 1,000. Both of these achievements were the result of excellent team performances, but worthy of particular credit were Vishnu Satkunabalan, who scored a maximum 100 in the Staniforth, and Nicholas Lehrter, the current Captain of Shooting, who scored 94 out of 95 in the Country Life. David Woolcott, master in charge of shooting, commented: "Our success is due to the commitment and dedication of the boys involved, all of whom have learnt and practised their skill exclusively within the School."

## PASS MASTERS

The phrase Super Tuesday has become synonymous with political voting in the USA; however, this was trumped by events in Hampshire and Surrey this term as Super Tuesday was superseded by – according to Director of Sport Ian Wilkes – Super Duper Tuesday. Ranked masses of First Form boys crossed the county border in both directions as for the first time in the School's history, every single member of the First Form competed simultaneously in competitive hockey fixtures against Portsmouth Grammar School. 102 RGS boys were involved and ten fixtures were played, both home and away, and the matches served to highlight the value of such an initiative: irrespective of the team, boys represented the School with pride, spirit, good humour and no little skill as evidenced by the fantastic set of results which, due to the philosophy of participation rather than success, we are unable to mention! After the event Ian Wilkes commented: "This opportunity highlighted the strength in depth we have at the RGS: in whichever squad the boys train weekly, they get access to high-level coaching. To see the enjoyment and passion from all boys as they put on an RGS shirt was absolutely fantastic."





## ON POINT

Such is the popularity of fencing at the RGS that the sight of boys walking around the corridors in the distinctive white jackets, masks and breeches rarely raises a second glance as fencing has continued to go from strength to strength producing the School's best ever set of results. In the Surrey County Fencing Championships, RGS boys took all three medals in the Under 18 age group as Peter Robinson secured gold and was crowned county champion as he beat fellow student Christopher Gooding in the final. In the Under 12 Epée, Leo Kamstra also won gold to become county champion. In total, RGS boys secured nine medals. Then at the British Schools Team Fencing

Championships, both the Under 15 and Under 13 teams finished as bronze medallists against some of the strongest fencers in the country. Wai-Shun Lau, master in charge of fencing, commented: "The boys have developed so much technically. Although we have made the finals of national events several times previously, I still think this is the most memorable RGS performance to date. The boys learnt and improved so much during the competition and fought with determination when the odds were against them."



# PLAYING THE ADVANTAGE

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, never in the field of hockey were so many fixtures played by so many to so much acclaim. This season saw record number of RGS boys pulling on the shirt to represent the School in competitive fixtures. From the Under 12s – a number of whom had never played competitive hockey before – all the way through to the elite players representing their county or country or playing at National League level, RGS hockey flourished. Particular highlights included 17 victories and one draw out of 18 fixtures against King's College School, Wimbledon with 43 goals scored and only four conceded. In addition, the 1st XI recorded a 7 – 2 victory over Hurstpierpoint College in the National Cup while the Under 15s were crowned as County Champions after defeating Trinity School, Croydon on penalty flicks. On an individual level, Edward Way was selected for the England Under 18s and also the Great Britain Development Squad, while Joshua Powell was invited to attend the England National Age Group Academy at Under 17 level. Cameron Morgan and Benjamin Thomas both made their National League debuts for Guildford Hockey Club. Matt Baggs, Head of Hockey, commented: "The RGS is fortunate enough to have some individual boys who play to an extraordinary standard technically and tactically; however, for me the lasting impression of this term has been the enjoyment, the energy and the commitment of every single boy who has represented the School. It has been a really successful season and I am grateful for the commitment of boys, staff and parents alike."



## SPORTS SHORTS

**Cross-Country:** Samuel Martin came eighth out of 420 runners at the English National Championships. At a team level, the junior team retained the trophy in the invitational schools race. As a result of the Surrey Schools Championships, seven RGS boys were selected to represent Surrey.

**Football:** Highlights of a successful season for football included a 7 – 2 victory for the 1st XI over Caterham School in the Trinity Cup quarter final, as well as 9 – 2 and 7 – 1 wins against Lord Wandsworth College and Reigate Grammar School respectively for the free-scoring 1st team.

**Ice Hockey:** William Lawson has been selected for the Under 15 South West Conference ice hockey team and will be representing the South West of England both in the UK and abroad later in the year.

**Sailing:** The RGS won the rescheduled Papercourt Regatta, the result of a fantastic team effort. From many impressive performances, of particular note were Nicholas Forbes and Henry Woodfine who won three of their four races in the Fast Handicap class by a notable margin and a first overall from Benjamin Mueller in the Slow Handicap and Oppy class.

**Sailing:** Benjamin Mueller was selected to represent the GBR optimist team at the Magic Marine Regatta in Holland: a four-day international event with around 250 attendees from 17 countries.

**Swimming:** At the Surrey County Swimming Championships, Max Windle won gold in seven races and qualified for 12 individual events in the regionals. In the process he broke a long-standing south-east regional record for the 100 metre breaststroke and secured a National Qualifying time at 1500 metres.





For a town-centre school which is neither renowned for its mountains nor its snowfall, the number of boys taking part in skiing remains extraordinarily high. This year alone has seen boys from all years getting involved with recreational skiing by taking part in our junior and senior ski trips, based in the French Alps. In racing, the RGS entered a team to Switzerland to race in the British Schoolboys' International event, closely followed by the off-piste exploits of the Combined Cadet Force with their winter adventurous training in Bavaria. A significant number of boys of varying abilities also refined their race skills on the dry slopes of Aldershot in preparation for the English Schools ski race which this season resulted in the RGS A team being selected as a representative English School in the British finals. This year, as in the past, several boys have been invited to join the English Schools' ski squad. Steve Yetman, master in charge of skiing and Director of Activities, commented: "Whether in the start gate in Aldershot, on the mighty Lauberhorn in Switzerland, or skiing down a high-alpine glacier, the boys are learning how to read, adapt and utilise developing situations. This skill is important on the slopes, but equally so in their later lives."



## ALL QUIET

The annual Fourth Form History trip – running since 1988 – 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 and Vimy where fighting resulted in 255,000 casualties 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. Poignantly, a number of boys managed to locate the names of some of their own relatives that were listed. At the Thiepval memorial and at Tynecot the following day, brief services of remembrance were held including the laying of wreaths on behalf of the School. John Saxton, member of the History Department, noted: "Students came to appreciate the very different national ethos deliberately fostered in the cemetery design of the different belligerents: from the sense of nationalism and national sacrifice, to overt pacifism which conveyed the sheer sense of loss, to a sense of individualism in deliberately small, quiet cemeteries where even the unidentified were at least *known unto God* (Kipling)."



# AND FINALLY ...



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Mar 10

## #RGSGuildford

Boys loving the opportunity to combine sport and movie stardom @VideoAcademic.



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Feb 22

## #RGSSharity

Fantastic response from the First Form boys bringing in colouring pencils for a refugee camp in Dunkirk.



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Feb 9

## #RGSArchive

A vintage photograph from 2013: a celebrated year for pancakes at the RGS #PancakeDay.



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Feb 7

## #RGSGuildford

Hope you had a great weekend and welcome back for the final week before half term. #MondayMotivation



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Feb 14

## #RGS Rugby #RGSOGs

Congratulations to @jackclifford93 on earning his second cap at Stadio Olimpico, Rome. #ITAvENG



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Feb 1

## #RGSECA

The surfing and life-saving group try out their new @dryrobe kit which preserves energy and core temperature.



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Jan 26

## #RGSYoungEnterprise

Good luck to the RGS companies at this evening's Y Factor: Mercury, Opprimé, Sigma & Xephyr.



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Jan 22

## #RGSImages

A wet lunch-break on a Friday. The end of a long week. Sometimes it's just best not to ask...



**RGS Guildford** @RGSGuildford  
Jan 20

## #RGSImages

Freezing conditions on the astro for a practice fire drill this morning: the boys immaculately behaved.

