

The Register



ISSUE 1 MICHAELMAS 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL GUILDFORD



The Headmaster writes...

This is the school year in which the RGS celebrates its quincentenary and an exciting programme of events is in full swing. It has been a pleasure to witness the energy and endeavour which has gone into the celebrations to date.

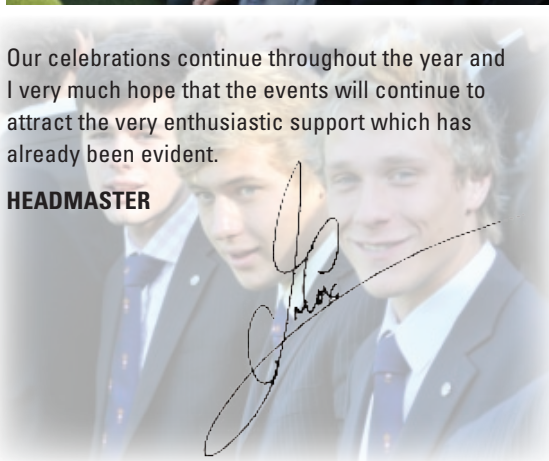
The whole-school photograph was a triumph of organisation; the logistics of getting all the boys and staff arranged were complex but the resulting photograph is a magnificent record of this special year. The Art Exhibition in Guildford House Gallery was appreciated by a large number of Guildford residents whilst our Commemoration Service allowed the school community to join together to give thanks to our Founder and the many other benefactors of the School. On Founder's Day each of the six Houses, named after the School's benefactors, held their own lunchtime celebration. Other notable events have included the inaugural fixture of the Quincentenary Trophy between the RGS and St Paul's School which was a memorable occasion and the RGS Foundation 500th Reception.

2009 is also the centenary of our CCF, first established in 1909. This important milestone was marked by a very successful dinner to which supporters of the CCF both past and present were invited.



Our celebrations continue throughout the year and I very much hope that the events will continue to attract the very enthusiastic support which has already been evident.

HEADMASTER



A time to remember



Blessed with glorious weather, the whole school community made its way to Guildford Cathedral to attend the RGS's Quincentenary Commemoration Service. The introduction in the order of service, written by the School Archivist, **Greg Schofield**, illuminated the manner in which the School was founded in 1509 by Robert Becketingham. The founder of the RGS would surely have been impressed by the occasion. The Right Reverend Christopher Hill, the Bishop of Guildford, gave the sermon and there were contributions from the Very Reverend Victor Stock, the Dean of the Cathedral, and RGS governor, Reverend Robert Cotton. RGS Director of Music, **Peter White**, conducted Vaughan Williams' 'Let all the world in every corner sing', with his usual effortless panache; the addition of the Cathedral choir, through the assistance of Lanesborough, making full use of the wonderful acoustics and producing a performance fitting for the occasion.



RGS musicians have continued to excel within the School as well as receiving national recognition for their musical talent. **Peter Baumann** who plays first horn in the RGS Symphony Orchestra has become the third RGS boy in the last two years to be offered a place in the National Youth Orchestra; the other two were **Cameron Millar** playing violin and **Richard Stuart-Matthews** playing the bassoon. Peter, who has achieved Grade 8 in the horn with distinction, is also a Grade 8 pianist and an accomplished singer. He was Head Chorister of the Cathedral Choir and currently plays first horn in the Surrey Youth Orchestra.

Making the grade

In the frame

'A fascinating exhibition with a wide range of styles and media: it is clear that technique has been well taught and that the boys have built on this to create a number of inspiring pieces. Thank you'. Comments such as this were common-place in the Visitors' Book at the Guildford House Gallery after the RGS 500th Anniversary Exhibition. The exhibition celebrated the achievements of generations of RGS artists, including the RGS's most distinguished Old Boy artist, John Russell RA (1745-1806), as well as the current members of the Art Department, **Andrew Curtis** and **Alastair Rozier**. There were also contributions from other former teachers such as the etcher George Edward Collins (Art teacher between 1919 - 1947),



as well as work by two Old Boys who went on to teach at the School, Frank Brown and his teacher, the widely acclaimed, Ronald Smoothery MBE, who was at the School as a boy between 1925 - 1933 and taught at the RGS from 1947 until 1979.



Party on

On 3 November 1509, Robert Becketingham, a London merchant left, in his will, monies that were to be used to build a chantry chapel where prayers could be said for the souls of him and his wife in perpetuity. His will also stated that should work on the chapel not start within two years of his death, then the money should be used *'to make a ffree scole at the Towne of Guldeford...and freely to teach all children...'*. 500 years later and with the contributions of John Austen, William Hamonde, Joseph Nettles, the Powell family and Canon Arthur Valpy also celebrated on Founder's day, RGS pupils and staff marked the



day with six house parties. Speeches about the particular founder's influence on the School were made by members of the respective houses and the irresistible combination of cake, crisps, sausage rolls and party games provided a fitting celebration.



Headline news

The King's Lecture series provides the forum for talks by eminent professionals to which all members of the wider School community are invited. This term, the School was fortunate to welcome Michael Buerk: BBC journalist, newsreader and Radio 4 presenter, most famous for his reporting of the Ethiopian famine in 1984. Michael Buerk spoke for over an hour on the demise of the traditional forms of media such as newspapers; the decline in scope and depth of modern-day news; the overwhelming power of the internet; and the future of the media. This deeply



thought-provoking talk prompted a challenging range of questions from the packed audience and, as the Headmaster mentioned in his vote of thanks, to hear

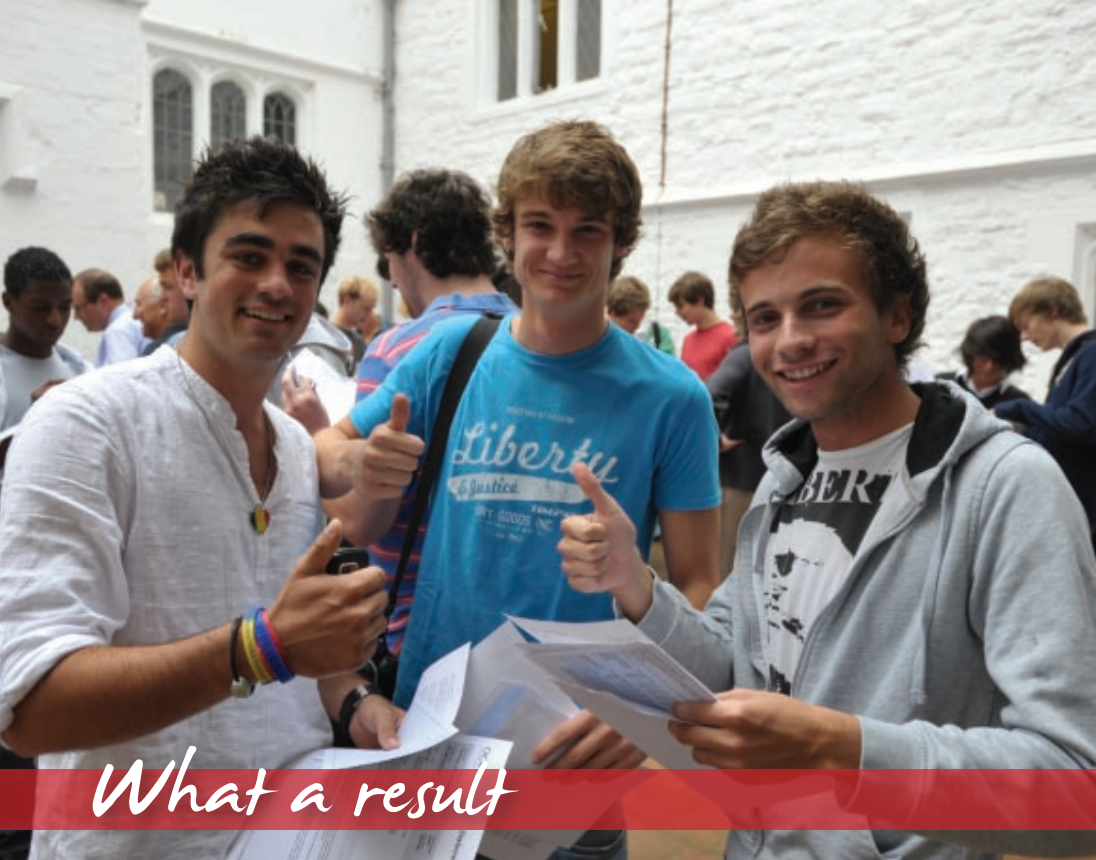


such a consummate professional combine erudition, reflection and amusing anecdote into a lecture was a real privilege.



Sweet harmony

As part of the 500th celebrations, the RGS is preparing for a large orchestral and choral concert to be held in Guildford Cathedral next year. A highlight of the musical calendar, the parents' choir has always proved to be immensely popular, comprising parents, OGs and friends of the School, and usually numbers well over 100 voices. The irresistible combination of talent and enthusiasm has produced stunning results in recent years, once the vocal cobwebs have been brushed off! An exciting programme will include the ever-popular *Zadok the Priest* by Handel and a new work specially composed for the quincentenary of the School by Director of Music, **Peter White**, entitled *Shall life inherit* which takes the School Hymn, *He who would valiant be*, as its starting point.



What a result

The 2009 examination results saw the boys breaking records at both A level and at GCSE. 82.1% of all A level passes were achieved at grade A and 97.9% at either A or B; as a result, *The Times* ranked the RGS as the top boys' school in the country. At AS level, there were full UMS scores for **Laurence Suckling** in Biology, **Daniel O'Brien** and **Alasdair Knox** in Chemistry, **Alistair Pepper** in Economics, **Jake O'Keeffe**, **Christopher Murphy** and **Guy Stevenson** in French. **Laurence Barrott** gained full UMS in A level Mathematics in one year while **Sunil Ghosh** gained the top mark in the country for AEA Mathematics and the second highest mark in the country for Cambridge Step 1. At GCSE, a new record of 94.9% of all results were achieved at either A or A*, 28 boys (20% of the year) gained nine passes at A* of which five boys, **Christopher Broughton**, **Stefan Curtress**, **James McCallion**, **Thomas Millard** and **Alexander McWilliam**, gained an additional tenth A*.



Independence day

The first ILA presentation evening provided the climax to the inaugural independent learning assignment completed by all members of the current Upper Sixth Form. Students chose one essay from a challenging and eclectic number of titles including an investigation into the dangers and delights of method acting; whether terrorism is ever justifiable; what doctors will be doing by 2050; what problems our quest for

the perfect body can lead to; and even a preliminary study into fuzzy logic. The entries were whittled down to the finalists and the six boys gave visual presentations to a panel of governors based on their assignments. The boys all gave outstanding performances; first prize went to **Guy Pearson** for his presentation on the nature of the global problem of malaria and its control.

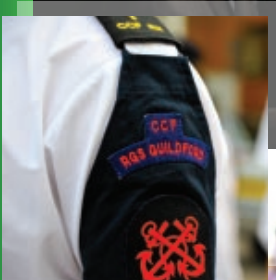
Degree of success

An exceptional set of results once again enabled the RGS leavers to take up their offers at the top universities; of the 2009 cohort, 15 boys are off to Cambridge, 17 to Oxford, 13 to Medical School and 12 to Durham. A further 18 boys have chosen, on the basis of their results, to make post A level applications to either Oxford or Cambridge. **Peter Dunscombe**, the Head of Careers and Higher Education, commented: 'The continued success of RGS boys in gaining places at the leading UK universities is a testament to the hard work of the pupils and the dedication of the staff who teach them. The particular success of the 2009 leavers has already engendered a sense of ambition in those making applications for 2010'. Special mention should be made of both **Matthew Barr** and **Steven Sellers** who gained a full 600/600 in Physics. Steven averaged 98% across 24 modules in all subjects while Matthew averaged 97%. A further five boys, **Thomas Hill**, **Alistair Overy**, **Nicholas Patrick**, **Andrew Tyler** and **Ross Vinten**, averaged over 95%



What a mess

To celebrate the centenary of the formation of the RGS CCF, the School hosted a full mess dinner for past and current cadets and officers. Past cadets ranging right back to 1941 enjoyed a display put together by a team of CCF cadets under the supervision of **S/Lt Murray Bruce** and the archives group under the leadership of **Greg Schofield**. Memorabilia included medals, record of service books, a pace stick, uniform and photographs from the last 100 years. The catering was, as ever, excellent with full silver-service as required by the traditions of the dinner. Speeches were given by the current CO, **Lt Cdr Yetman**, on the current strength of the CCF with the Honorary Colonel, Col Rule, providing a fascinating insight into its history. A final speech and toast to the future of the CCF was given by OG, Air Chief Marshal Sir John Allison KGB. The evening ended with the RN tradition of singing sea songs and a rousing rendition of the School Hymn.



Sports shorts

Joshua Voller has recently represented Great Britain at an international Optimist sailing event at Vigo in Spain; he finished second overall in the recent UK championships and is ranked seventh in the country. In addition Joshua has already attended four international events this year as a member of the GB team in Italy, France and Japan.

Cross-country runners and brothers, **Nicholas** and **Gus Cockle**, have continued their success. Nicholas has been invited to represent Surrey Schools while Gus has been selected for Surrey County's Cross Country U13 team; Gus also helped his team win bronze in the South of England road relays event and won silver in the final of the 1500m in the National Young Athletes League in Birmingham with a personal best of 4.48.65.

Jonathan Hay was selected to represent GB in the Athletics World Student Championships in Bressanone, in Italy, competing in the 1500m; his current personal best is 3.49.34!

RGS swimming teams have continued to impress. At the recent Surrey Schools' Gala, the Lower Juniors were crowned County Champions for freestyle and the Intermediates County Champions for both freestyle and medley.

Howzat!

As traditional as strawberries, knotted handkerchiefs and deck chairs, the annual RGS cricket festival marks the beginning of the summer holidays. The competition between five Royal Grammar Schools – Colchester, Guildford, High Wycombe, Newcastle and Worcester – is the culmination of the 1st XI's season and was as fiercely contested as always. **Nicholas Cooper** was on mercurial form, hitting 88, 129 and 116 runs during the festival. **Edward Sutton** also impressed with the bat making a century against RGS Newcastle and helping the 1st XI to win all their games and to lift the trophy for the second successive year. The future of RGS cricket continues to look promising with the U14A team being crowned Surrey Champions and the U12A team winning all their games throughout the term.



Going Dutch



Over half term, thirteen Sixth Form and three Fifth Form boys travelled to Rotterdam: a city renowned for the exceptional quality of its hockey and less renowned for the funky Stay Okay Hotel. Intense training and then rock-climbing provided perfect preparation and team-building for the first match against HC Victoria. Trailing by two goals at half-time, the RGS came back to

win 4-3, with a hat-trick from man of the match, **Harry Kearney**. The following day, the boys relaxed at the swimming pool after another training session in the morning before the match against Rotterdam HC in the evening. Playing under floodlights, the boys experienced the true talent of Dutch hockey and fought valiantly to secure a 2-2 draw and round off a highly successful tour.





Luck of the Irish



During the first week of half-term, 22 boys under the expert guidance of **Greg Schofield**, **Jeremy Whittaker** and **David Woolcott** embarked on a six-day rugby and cultural tour of Ireland which included a tour of Croke Park in Dublin and a sighting of the new liner, the Queen Mary II. The first fixture resulted in a 56-15 defeat to King's Hospital, Dublin; fortunately, the post-match celebrations were more pleasurable as the host school proved much more hospitable off the pitch than on it! This match was followed by a 28-7 defeat to Castletroy College in Limerick but the tour ended on a high with an impressive and hard-earned victory by 13-10 over Presentation Brothers College in Cork, with **Charles Warren** scoring all the points with a try, conversion and two penalties and being named the player of the tour.

On the crest of a wave

Ben Gratton has continued to perform at the very highest level in sailing and over the summer travelled to Brazil to represent Team GB in the 420 class at the ISAF U18 World Championships in Rio de Janeiro. With three first places, three seconds and a disqualification in one race it was all to play for in the final race of the event. The official press release noted: 'Gold went to Ben Gratton and his helm Phil Sparks in the 420, the 16 year old pair holding

their nerve to seal an awesome victory on their ISAF debut'. To put Ben's victory into perspective, the previous best result in this class was the British pair who won Silver in the 1997 ISAF Youth World Championship and then Silver at the Athens Olympics in 2004 and the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Ben has been selected as the RYA southern region young sailor of the year which will be presented to him at the London Boat Show next year.



Honours even



Under the floodlights at Imber Court and with a 700 strong crowd cheering every scrum, kick and lineout, the RGS and St Paul's 1st XVs confronted each other in a gladiatorial quincentenary epic fitting for arguably the two finest boys' schools in the land. Ten-all, the final score, left everyone breathless, with St. Paul's missing a late, late opportunity to win the game with the final kick. As the second half unfolded, it was the RGS who held sway in the close quarter battles at ruck and maul; **Edward Hellier** powered over from close range

and rampant forward play combined with great precision behind saw **Samuel Kaye** dive for the corner to score a glorious try just ten minutes later. Just when it looked as though the RGS would overwhelm the opposition, St Paul's roused themselves and from an insurgence into the RGS half were awarded and then converted a penalty which tied the scores. Despite chances for the RGS to win the game in the final minutes, there was a collective sigh of relief from everyone supporting the boys in red, as that final kick floated past the upright.



And Finally



Benedict Phillip is a member of the chart-topping vocal group *Libera*; the group's albums, renowned for their shimmering, mystical chords and ecstatic harmonies, have topped both mainstream and classical charts in many countries. Benedict has just returned from a very enthusiastically received tour of the Philippines performing to capacity audiences of over 7,000. The encore song for these concerts, *Bayan Ko*, was sung by *Libera* in the local Philippino dialect, a task virtually never attempted by foreign performing artists.

RGS sporting diversity and excellence have now spread to the world of American Football. The Great Britain Lions beat the Polish U19 junior national team 42-2 in a friendly international game held in Gdansk, Poland. The GB team included recent OGs, **Harry Clifford**, **Thomas Roberts** and **Alexander Thompson**.

Daniel O'Brien and **Guy Pearson** embarked upon a ten-day mission to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats in order to raise money for two charities: NSPCC and a scout charity which is building a school in Zambia. Fuelled by Mars Bars and Lucozade, and despite being buffeted by stormy winds and torrential rain, the boys successfully completed the challenge raising well over £2,000 for their chosen charities.