

The Register

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL GUILDFORD



The Headmaster writes...

There is so much more to a school like the RGS than learning within the confines of the classroom. This edition of *The Register* highlights some very exciting projects which have been undertaken by RGS pupils and staff in various far-flung parts of the world. It also demonstrates the commitment of the School to engage with others in charity and support work.

It has long been an aim of the RGS community to be of service to others and I am very proud that our boys continue to uphold the traditions of service which are an integral part of the ethos of the School. I am, therefore, delighted to report that the School won an Independent Schools Award this month. This award recognised the RGS's outstanding community initiatives, in particular, the creation of the Primary Schools' Tudor Experience in which a different primary school from the Borough visits the RGS every Monday to enjoy extension work in a variety of Tudor topics. I would like to thank the many people who have worked so hard to ensure the success of this exciting project and the many other activities which allow us to interact so positively with our neighbours.

HEADMASTER





Global community

After two years of preparation, planning and fundraising, 18 boys, *Adventure Lifesigns* together with **Lorcan O' Brien** and **Richard Sears** embarked upon the trip of a lifetime to visit the RGS international link school in Cambodia, which the entire RGS school community raised funds to build, in partnership with the charity *United World Schools*. The main focus was to visit the newly built RGS school in the village of Thiam Khram, but also to run various educational summer projects in Ratanakiri, the poorest province in the country. The team taught in six villages, teaching over 1,200 local children in total a mixture of art, music, sport and logic games; the project proved to be both highly rewarding and successful. Lorcan and Richard commented: 'Teaching local children in a different language and living without running water and electricity for such an extended period proved to be a real eye-opening experience for the RGS boys. The boys, however, were fully committed; their enthusiasm, energy and teaching were simply amazing.' The RGS is now continuing to raise money for the school with the aim of installing a well at the school in the near future, providing a much-needed source of clean water.



Raising the roof

Twelve RGS boys accompanied by **Dan Hoyle** and **Nick Gough** travelled to India for three weeks to experience one of the most culturally diverse trips of their lives. 'Project India' was located just outside Tirunelveli in South India where the team were assigned various jobs including erecting a roof on a school, fixing up the school building, and digging a toilet for the village. Blisters were found on most hands as the hard labour

in sweltering conditions took its toll. The boys also attended the local university to help students with their English, played against them in a cricket match, and enjoyed some trekking in the mountains and a trip to the southernmost tip of India. The trip was a great success, with the local project manager commenting that the RGS was the best group that they had ever had.





Peak performance



Over the summer, a group of intrepid RGS boys led by **Steve Yetman** travelled out to Austria to participate on an adventurous training exercise in the Alps. After an acclimatisation phase where the boys were drilled in the use of various mountaineering tools and given glacial and emergency training, the boys became adept at walking with crampons and coping with the challenging conditions. The boys then ventured out on the main expedition to climb over the top of the valley and over the Taschag Joch, then from there to the next mountain hut, which was on the other side of a great plain of retreating ice. The expedition was a great success and the boys even managed to climb up a rock face with crampons on, which, although a great achievement, is something they wish never to repeat! **Charles Chichester Kaner** commented: 'The trip was a great learning experience for all of us, especially as we could see the damage done to the glacier from global warming. The trip was a chance of a lifetime and I would not have missed it for the world.'

On top of the world

The RGS has recently developed a new partnership with two schools in Besisahar, Nepal. The link with BhuPu Sainik Secondary School and Janabikas Government Secondary School has been formed in memory of the late Alex Ewart, a former RGS pupil. Alex worked in Besisahar during his gap year in 2004, before losing his life in a white-water rafting accident. The *Alex Ewart Fund* has raised over £150,000 helping the two schools more than double in size and changing the lives of many children in Nepal. **Richard Sears**, a former RGS pupil and teacher, has been teaching at these schools since September. **Nick Gough**, Head of the Partnership, and **Maggie Goodman** recently travelled to visit the schools and to nurture a range of cultural opportunities within the global context of the partnership. Nick commented: 'We experienced a very warm welcome from both schools and we are all excited about the cultural opportunities and links planned.'



Wight knuckle ride



The traditional First Form bonding weekend did not disappoint. 98 boys were bussed and ferried across to the PGL Little Canada on the Isle of Wight for three days of challenge, laughter and adventure. After an orientation tour, the boys had an ice-breaker session of robot construction followed by robot destruction. The next two days consisted of a series of challenging activities requiring personal courage and excellent teamwork. Highlights included hauling each other up the Jacob's Ladder and the fun but exhausting challenge of Aeroball. Also enjoyed were abseiling, archery, cat walk and zip wire. The staff karaoke crown was stolen by a show stopping rendition of *When you say nothing at all* by **Toby Inchbald**. **Debbie Whitehead**, the Head of First Year, commented: 'I was truly impressed with how positively the boys approached the various challenges. In an atmosphere of mutual support, they all made new friends and came back to school with a developing camaraderie and team spirit.'



Striking a chord

The performance of Monteverdi Vespers at St Mary's Church was a triumph for the combined resources of the RGS and Guildford High School. In front of a capacity crowd, the choir and orchestra, expertly directed by **Sam Orchard**, produced a hugely impressive performance of this complex work which is celebrating its 400th anniversary and is widely regarded as one of the greatest choral works of the early seventeenth century. There was clever use of the spaces within the church, mirroring how the musicians would have been placed in the original performances and the five young professional soloists, many of whom had had direct contacts with either the RGS or High School in the past, all gave magnificent performances. **Jonathan Peters** particularly impressed, joining the professional soloists as the third tenor!



Top marks

Once again, the release of public examination results saw records being broken by RGS boys. At A Level, 29.3% of all passes were at the new A* grade: eight boys, **William Ball, Lawrence Barrott, Arthur Kissin, Alasdair Knox, Robert Moss, Alexander Mitchell, Andrew Rolph** and **Guy Stevenson**, achieved four A* grades each, while a further sixteen boys achieved three A* grades. The Lower Sixth built on their record GCSE results in 2009 by setting a new record for A grades at AS Level (80.4%) while the Fifth Form were determined not to be left out, eclipsing the 2009 GCSE record for A* grades (69.6%) with one third of the year group achieving all A* grades. Eighty seven boys in the Fourth Form sat their IGCSE Mathematics early with 85 achieving an A* grade and 2 achieving an A grade.



Prize performance

The School was delighted to welcome back a former student, one of the stars of the BAFTA award-winning cult Channel 4 comedy *The Inbetweeners*, to present the awards at Senior Prizegiving. **Simon Bird**, who plays geeky teenage misfit Will in the hit TV show, left the RGS in 2003 to read English at Queens' College, Cambridge University. Simon won a British Comedy Award for Best Male Newcomer in 2008 and a British Comedy Award for Best Actor in 2009. After presenting the awards for progress and attainment to the senior pupils, Simon delivered a slick, entertaining and, at times, risqué talk, the likes of which Holy Trinity had never previously experienced!

University challenge



The RGS was privileged to welcome back one of its own, **Professor Andrew Hamilton** (OG) to deliver this term's King's Lecture, entitled 'Why university matters' to a full house, including his brother Ian, assembled in the Auditorium. Professor Hamilton, currently Vice Chancellor of Oxford University, presented a captivating address, in which he emphasised the

importance to society of universities such as Oxford, focusing resources on innovative and ground-breaking research. Professor Hamilton was a pupil at the RGS between 1963 and 1971, before going on to study Chemistry at the University of Exeter followed by a master's degree at the University of British Columbia and a PhD at Cambridge University. He then spent a post-doctoral period at the Université Louis Pasteur in Strasbourg before lecturing at Princeton, the University of Pittsburgh and Yale where he was also Provost.



Critical thinking

The ILA presentation evening provided the climax to the independent learning assignment completed by all members of the current Upper Sixth Form. The students focused on areas of personal academic interest with titles covering an eclectic and challenging range of questions and topics. The entries were whittled down to the finalists and the seven boys gave presentations which included an investigation into the role that nurture plays in the characteristics and personality traits in humans; whether authenticity in music is possible; the problems faced by translating Beowulf; and a solo piano composition inspired by the works of French composer Ravel. First prize went to **Joshua Crossley** for his presentation on the question of who benefits more from the 'special relationship'. **Helen Pike**, Director of Studies, commented: 'The boys astonished the audience with their intellectual range and poise; the evening proved to be genuinely stimulating and inspirational.'

The national press has been dominated by stories of the difficulties faced by students in securing university places; this has made the outstanding success achieved by our 2010 leavers all the more satisfying. All 42 boys holding offers for Oxford or Cambridge were successful in achieving the grades necessary to take up their places. A further fifteen boys secured their places at Exeter with eight also heading to both Durham and Warwick; in total over 95% of all places taken up by RGS boys this year were at one of the Russell Group or 1994 Group of Universities. Reflecting on the boys' success, **Peter Dunscombe**, the Head of Careers and Higher Education, commented: 'The demand for places at the leading universities in the UK has never been greater. We are delighted that the calibre and potential of the RGS boys continue to be recognised by Admissions Tutors.'



Onwards and upwards

Noteworthy achievement



William Pickering recently received the notable honour of being appointed Head Chorister at Guildford Cathedral. The basis of the choir's work is the regular singing of cathedral services, but there are other exciting opportunities, which include recording, broadcasting and touring, as well as frequent concert appearances in the cathedral and elsewhere. In recent years, the choir has toured in France, Bruges and the East Coast of the USA. For the occasion, William was not dressed in the usual manner of a choir boy when receiving this accolade from the Dean of Guildford Cathedral, the Very Revd Victor Stock. Immediately prior to the ceremony of his appointment, William was his usual busy self, taking part in the CCF Induction Day.

Enterprising characters

The Second Form boys took part in an Enterprise Challenge Day led by education company *Bright Green Enterprise*. The boys were placed in the entrepreneurial driving seat as they set about the task of launching their own magazine. Exploring a range of genres from music, sport, fashion and travel, to social enterprise publications, teams had to search for a gap in the market and work to tight deadlines to launch their magazine on time, on budget and with style. After completing a series of missions, the event concluded with a live final in which the teams pitched their new magazines to the judges in against-the-clock presentations. The judges were looking for great content, a clear grasp of the business, and exceptional presentation skills. Technology magazine *TechNova*, with **Peter Melnikov** as editor, was declared the winner. **Nick Wild**, Head of Second Year, commented: 'All the boys demonstrated excellent teamwork skills as they unleashed their creative imagination in a stimulating and enjoyable day's learning.'



Converting success

Rugby has continued to flourish this term and the strength in depth has been particularly noteworthy. After a successful pre-season, the 1st XV has secured some excellent victories, notably the 17 – 12 win over local rivals Epsom. Over half-term, the 1st XV were invited to the St Joseph's National Festival for the first time in the School's history. The RGS performed fantastically well over the two days, the highlight of which was the 8-3 victory over



Brighton College. In addition, the U15s toured Ireland visiting the inspiring stadia of Croke Park and Lansdowne Road and competing against local sides, securing two impressive victories. **Olly Torri**, Head of Rugby, commented: 'RGS boys continue to represent their school with real pride at all levels while also playing open, expansive rugby with real tactical awareness. The fact that the 1st XV and U15s have made such progress in the Daily Mail Competition illustrates the depth of talent currently at the RGS.'



Health matters

As part of the pastoral programme, there have been a number of high profile events throughout the term providing up-to-date information and promoting sexual health. The Fourth Form Sexual Relationships Day used a challenging and innovative range of methods. The boys were confronted by a slideshow of images to give them an insight into how the 'yuck factor' influences their attitudes to relationships – all to the strains of Elvis Presley singing *I can't help falling in love with you!* The boys stretched their acting muscles to create silent tableaux to represent how best to tell their friends personal issues. An epic version of Chinese whispers showed how stories can get changed as they are passed on; this led to "Sarah says she wants to dump Tom and go out with Dave instead" becoming "Sir loves shoes and tomatoes and shaves himself." Salutory lessons, indeed. The Sixth Form Centre housed a day-long sexual health fair providing professional, confidential advice and testing, introduced by an assembly entitled *How do you solve a problem like Chlamydia?*

Going for gold



RGS hockey teams are currently benefiting from the wealth of experience of current England international, **Rob Moore**. Rob has just returned from the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, where England lost on penalties to India in the semis and then to New Zealand in the 3rd/4th place play-off. Rob made his senior international debut in 2003 aged 21 and has played at all the most prestigious tournaments including two Olympics, two World Cups, three European Championships and two Commonwealth Games. He won a gold medal at the 2009 European Championships and a silver medal in the 2010 Champions Trophy. Rob's ultimate goal is now to win a medal in the 2012 Olympics in London and, of course, to nurture the England hockey stars of the future at the RGS!



Sports Shorts

William Baker, James Ferguson

and **Oliver Sugg** all qualified for the hockey JRPC level, the Junior Regional Performance Centre, which provides high level coaching for the brightest young talent in hockey.

Jack Clifford and **Alexander Stout** have both played for the Harlequins A team this year and performed impressively against players with full international caps. In addition Jack has been selected for the England U18s.

Ben Gratton has been selected for the RYA Olympic Development Squad, an exclusive opportunity for only those with a very realistic chance of being part of the British Olympic team.

Harry Little has been selected for the London Irish Gold group in their academy, a small group of athletes identified with potential to graduate to Senior Academy status.

Luca Signorelli, Clemens von Hänisch

and **Christopher Way** have all been selected for England Hockey's HiPAC, High Performance Academy Centre. In addition, Luca Signorelli played in the Futures Cup for the Wessex Leopards at U18.

Alexander Sweet was presented with the U12 Surrey Cricketer of the Year award at the Oval, scoring over 380 runs for the county.

Joshua Voller has been selected for two international sailing regattas this term and will be competing in the World Championships in Langkawi, Malaysia after Christmas.





No slacking for charity

The School recently supported national *Jeans for Genes* day, an event initiated by the UK children's charity. The charity provides funding for the care and support of children with genetic disorders and also helps to fund research into genetics and the development of effective treatments and cures. This was a particularly poignant cause in memory of Akio Selleck, an RGS pupil who sadly lost his battle against a genetic disorder. On the day, boys and staff wore their jeans in return for a charitable donation. The event was supported enthusiastically by all, although many of the staff suffered certain sartorial angst as to whether jeans paired with a jacket and tie was a viable fashion option. The final total raised was £1,860, thanks to the hard work of **Charlotte Smith** and the generosity of the school community.



Marathon men

Deputy Head, **Garth Williams** recently ran the New York Marathon with his wife, Mrs Williams. Garth, buoyed by the 'Rocky' theme tune **Mark Hoskins** had insisted he listen to just before the race began, eschewed received marathon wisdom and shot off at break-neck pace, unlike his sensible spouse who kept a consistent pace throughout. Despite his poor strategy, Garth finished in an impressive time of 3 hours 44 minutes with Mrs Williams arguably outshining her husband's performance with a tremendous time of 3 hours 59 minutes. Team Williams' marathon effort raised over £3,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital. Another family effort involved **Edward Vos** who, along with his sister, completed the Great North Run in 1 hour 35 minutes, raising over £1,000 for the charity DBA, offering support for families of children with Diamond Blackfan Anaemia.

And finally

RGS student **Jack Otton** has been named as one of the region's best start-up entrepreneurs in an HSBC competition. Jack was only 14 when he founded Racquet Depot UK, an online sports company dealing with the tennis, squash and badminton market, as well as supplying injury sport products. He had not intended to start what would turn into a global business while still at school; however, according to HSBC, Jack had an entrepreneurial instinct which made it impossible for him to ignore such a great opportunity. He has built the business and managed it entirely on his own; the company is flourishing turning over an average £10,000 a month. Jack commented: 'I really enjoy running my business and continuing to develop and expand it. Balancing the demands of school and a business has been a real challenge; it has been an exciting but steep learning curve.'

