

The Register

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, GUILDFORD



The Headmaster writes...



This first edition of the school year of *The Register* provides the opportunity to reflect upon many of the experiences which take place outside the classroom at the RGS. I never cease to be amazed by the sheer number and diversity of trips which are run both during term time and during the holidays; for this, I am extremely grateful to the staff whose expertise and generosity of time facilitate these opportunities. Expeditions and trips at the RGS are challenging, ambitious and global and are often one of the highlights of boys' memories of their school days: the camaraderie, the personal challenge and the enrichment mean the value of such experiences is an intrinsic part of each boy's development.

Within the last few months, RGS boys have been involved in academic, cultural, adventurous and sports tours far and wide; the fact that these have involved a cross-section of the school community and not just elite performers in their disciplines is all the more rewarding. There have been academic trips throughout Europe; a music tour to Northern Italy; the rugby tours from Ireland to South Africa, from senior to junior teams; and adventurous expeditions from the Bavarian Alps to the Arctic Circle.

I hope that the reports contained within this term's newsletter will prove to be inspirational and aspirational as the boys continue to seize every opportunity to broaden their horizons and to inspire and deepen their interests.





Orchestral Manoeuvres

One of the highlights of this term's musical programme was the recent concert in the atmospheric Holy Trinity Church which showcased an extraordinary level of musicianship from the choir and musicians of the RGS and Guildford High School. The concert began with the wonderful *Panis*

Angelicus by Franck, a moving performance with an exquisitely sung melody. Works by Duruflé, Ravel and Fauré further displayed the range and talents of the Joint School Choirs with an incredibly polished and confident strings orchestra providing accompaniment for Ravel's *Pavane pour une*

Infante Defunte. The major work presented was an exquisite performance of Fauré's *Requiem* with a fine solo from baritone **Cyrus Dromgoole-Cavazzi**. The students delivered performances more than worthy of the great applause they received when the *Requiem* came to an end.

A Class Act

RGS boys participated, for the first time, in the National Shakespeare Schools Festival with an abridged version of *The Tempest*. **Alexander Hartley** was a commanding Prospero with four junior boys, **Ronan Azimi-Mancel**, **Cameron Finlay**, **Philip Grace** and **Thomas Hartley**, as his lively Ariels. **Jaya Baldwin** gave a particularly comedic performance as Trinculo with **Robin Langfield Newnham** as an eerie Caliban. Head of Drama, **Nancy McClean**, commented: "The boys rose magnificently to the challenge of auditioning, being cast, rehearsing and performing all within the space of just four weeks and showed real prowess in their performance." All the cast displayed genuine professionalism and commitment and the adjudicator on the night singled out the RGS's version as having real energy and an ensemble feel.



Just One Soprano

For the first time in the School's 500 year history, the combined forces of the RGS and Guildford High School's Music Departments were unleashed on foreign shores as the musicians embarked upon a tour of Northern Italy visiting Lake Garda, Venice and Verona. The students performed at the Cathedral in Bardolino and in Malcesine; however, the highlight of the trip was the performance during the Midday Mass in Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice. After the service, the choir was immediately approached by a visiting Spanish Bishop who offered the opportunity to perform in his Cathedral in Rioja. On appreciation that this was such a fine wine region, Director of Music, **Peter White**, ensured contact details were duly exchanged and his enthusiasm for such a venture noted! An evening concert in Santa Maria dei Miracoli and the orchestra's performance of Haydn's *Symphony 104*, Elgar's *Chanson de Matin* and *Chanson de Nuit* were other highlights of this extraordinary experience.



Hitting All the Right Notes



The String Scheme - the brainchild of **Dale Chambers**, Head of Strings at the RGS - has provided a unique opportunity whereby every pupil in Year 4 at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School is currently learning either the violin or the 'cello under the expert tuition of a team of teachers. This is a genuine community project in that the Scheme is being funded by the generosity of primarily local, private sponsorship including many RGS parents. 60 instruments are being used each week as the pupils hone their techniques in preparation for a concert at the end of term which will showcase the achievements of these budding, enthusiastic instrumentalists.



Polaroyds



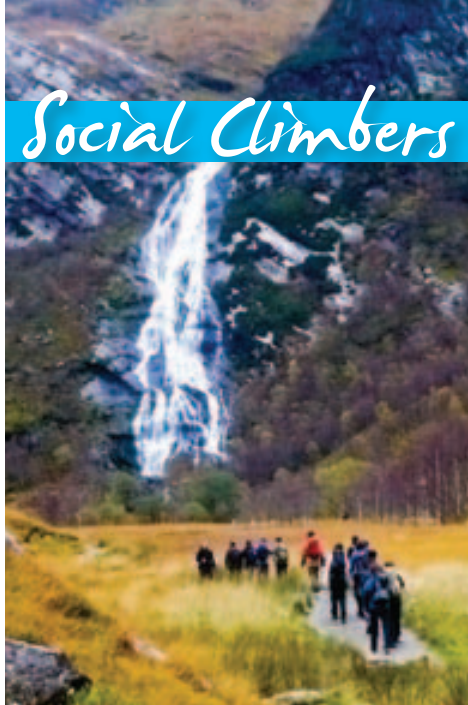
The Scouts have continued to enjoy a rich variety of opportunities with Field Day pursuits ranging from caving to surfing. The highlight of the year, however, was undoubtedly the Arctic Circle and Adventure Training Expedition. An intrepid group of 17 scouts visited the Norwegian mountains to experience whitewater rafting, climbing, canoeing and a beaver and elk safari. The boys then made an arduous and technically demanding ascent on the Buer glacier, progressing past crevasses to reach a spectacular plateau on the mountain. Travelling still further north, the scouts undertook a two day expedition in the Arctic Circle, trekking up into the mountains above Tromso to watch the midnight sun. **Mike Royds**, who organised the expedition, noted: "The boys acquitted themselves very well, showing considerable courage and a commendable *esprit de corps*."



All Wight on the Night

The annual First Form Adventure Weekend to the Isle of Wight was a great success as 102 boys enjoyed three days of bonding, team-building and physical challenges. A dynamic programme was provided including a new house competition, dragon boating. They also had the chance to participate in abseiling, zip wire and ladder logic, logically enough an obstacle course with a ladder. The real highlights for the boys were hauling each other up Jacob's Ladder and the fun but exhausting challenge of Aeroball. **Debbie Whitehead**, Head of First Form, commented: "The boys gelled together as a year group really well: their camaraderie, good humour and willingness to tackle each and every challenge were very impressive."





Social Climbers



The RumDoodlers recently enjoyed two of their most memorable ever expeditions. The RumDoodle Society was founded in 2004 and provides mountaineering excursions in the more remote and challenging mountains of Britain, particularly in Scotland. Its name derives from a novel by a Guildford author, W E Bowman's *The Ascent of Rum*

Doodle, one of the great classics of modern mountaineering literature. Over the summer a group of boys succeeded in climbing Britain's hardest mountain, the Inaccessible Pinnacle, a 30 metre high shark's fin of rock sticking out of a knife-edge ridge 980 metres up in the Cuillin Mountains. **Catherine Moorehead** highlighted the challenges

facing the boys: "Even reaching the base of the Pinnacle requires a steady head as one traverses ledges with immense drops of about 600 metres." Undaunted by this challenge, the RumDoodlers then headed for Fort William to tackle the country's highest mountain, Ben Nevis, over half term: the snowfall simply added to the challenge!

Ooh-La-La

A group of RGS scholars enjoyed their inaugural trip designed to inspire them culturally, historically, linguistically and, most importantly, gastronomically. A cultural tour of Paris, under the leadership of **Catherine Moorehead**, included visits to Notre Dame's south tower; the remarkable National Library; the old Jewish Quarter; the Place des Vosges, perhaps the finest square in France; and the famous Jardins de Luxembourg. Evening entertainment included an outstandingly good production of Alfred Jarry's great surrealist satire, *Ubu Roi*, followed by dinner at Chartier's restaurant, where the boys were suitably amazed to see waiters carrying five plates, and a meal at Procope restaurant, the oldest restaurant in the world (1686), where the eighteenth-century *Philosophes* planned amongst other things dictionaries and revolutions. The experience was completed by a visit to Stohrer, the first pâtisserie in France and probably the finest cake-shop in Europe, which proved to be the icing on the cake.



Making the Grade

The Sunday Times Parent Power is the only publication that assesses schools on the basis of combined performance in GCSE and A Level examinations. This year the RGS achieved its highest ever position of tenth, placing it third among boys schools and confirming our growing reputation as one of the most consistently high performing schools in the country. At A Level 41.7% of all entries were awarded the top A* grade with 11 boys achieving this in four subjects and a further 19 in three. **Alexander McCallion** and **Cai Read** gained an average mark of 99% with **Jamie Crawford**, **Stefan Curtress** and **Ryan Mullarkey** just behind with 98%; Alex, Cai and Ryan dropped just 98 marks between them out of a possible 6,800. At AS Level the A grade pass rate was 73.4% while at GCSE a new record was set for A* grades; 70.6% of all papers were awarded this grade with 38 boys gaining the accolade in all 10 or 11 subjects that they took.

Fairground Attraction

The weekend Masterclasses, which date back to the mid 1990s, have continued to provide the opportunity for the brightest pupils from a diverse range of local schools to be inspired academically; this year 208 pupils from 41 different primary schools will attend. A stimulating programme has been developed to cater to the interests of all, with classes offered in Chess, Chinese, Drama, German, Japanese, Mathematics, Russian, Science and Technology. Recently, pupils have emerged from these sessions having



designed and streamlined a car, including testing in a wind tunnel, and having had an insight into the realities of gambling! In the Mathematics Masterclass, entitled *Winning Ways*, the pupils investigated probability and the expected profit or loss for various fairground-style games. The pupils started off with 25 pence in 1 pence coins and gambled their coins on different games; all but one of the Year 6 pupils found out the harsh reality that it should, of course, be renamed *Losing Ways*!



Green Fingers

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 an eclectic and challenging range of topics. The entries were whittled down to the finalists and the boys gave presentations, in front of a panel of governors, which included a demonstration of a Lego robotic hand; a discussion of portrayals of heroism in Russian Literature; an assessment of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Trilogy*; an insight into autism; and the 'Quantum' in Quantum Computing. In addition, **James Powell's** work on homes for the homeless was displayed. First prize went to **James Mainwaring** for his presentation on the concept of garden grabbing. The quality of his submission was publicly recognised when his assignment was reproduced almost in its entirety and published as the front-page article in the *Guildford Environmental Forum* newsletter.



Young Apprentices



The School's very own budding apprentices dusted down their briefcases and power-dressed for the occasion as the Second Form boys left aside their academic studies for the day to enter the world of entrepreneurialism and advertising. The boys were introduced to the publishing industry and invited to consider what made an effective and attention-grabbing magazine, both in terms of content and presentation. The boys then devised their own magazines, with a front cover and several features, before launching them to the entire group. The launch included justification of their content, a short television advert and ideas for marketing the publication. The standard was universally high and the winning group's magazine, *Agape*, looked at global environmental issues in a mature and creative manner. **Ben Baulf**, Head of Second Form, commented: "The boys demonstrated genuine flair and insight as they showed originality and professionalism in their publications."

Sports shorts

Canoeing: **Edmund Haws** has been selected for the GB marathon canoe team. Over the summer Edmund won a silver medal in the National Kayaking Marathon Championships in the Under 16 age group in his K1 (on his own) and a gold medal in his K2 (two in the boat).

Cross-Country: The intermediate team has continued to make progress in the English Schools Cross-Country Cup Competition; the RGS team has now qualified for the National Cross-Country Finals.

Fencing: **Laurence Peplow** represented the Great Britain fencing team in his first international event in Bonn. He was the highest placed Under 17 fencer which makes him the provisional GB Number One, putting him in a strong position for qualification for the European Championship.

Sailing: **Tim Gratton** won a bronze medal at the International 420 Junior European Sailing Championships in Belgium over the summer. **Patrick Croghan**, despite being in the Second Form, has been selected for the GB National Topper (4.2) Sailing Squad and is about to embark on a programme of intense winter training under their expert guidance.

Shooting: The RGS VIII came fifth in this year's Ashburton Shield equalling last year's excellent performance; the RGS collected the Queen's Regiment trophy for being the best South-East team.

Swimming: The Senior Team, comprising **Edward Dillon, Henry Gibbons, Michael Ingram, Joseph Lidbetter, Liam Man** and **Christopher Morgan**, was crowned South East Champions and County Champions in the Medley Relay. The boys celebrated this achievement by following up with a victory in the Freestyle Medley making them double Divisional Champions. The Senior Freestyle and Medley Swimming teams have now qualified for the National Finals. In addition, **Christopher Green** has been selected to represent the Surrey Swimming team in the ASA National County Team Championships.

Windsurfing: **James** and **Ben Barnwell** were recently selected for the RYA Team Great Britain Junior East/South East Zone Windsurfing Squad. James is currently the Junior East/South East of England Zone Class Champion, with Ben the runner-up.



Up and Under

The foundations for a successful term for RGS rugby were laid with the intense pre-season training programme which included the South Africa rugby tour based around Cape Town and Pretoria, led by **Oilly Torri**. The boys from the first team squad trained with real pride and professionalism, winning two of their four fixtures and playing some inspired rugby. The boys then assisted at the Goedgedacht Trust where they taught local children and worked in the olive fields. A number of stadium tours and a safari searching for the Big Five were also highlights of the trip. Inspired by this experience, the boys at all levels have played with real passion and technical skill this term: highlights have included convincing wins for the 1st XV against Epsom and St Paul's; the Under 15A team remain unbeaten and continue to make excellent progress in the Daily Mail Cup. On an individual level, **James Clements** and **Harry Little** have both represented the Surrey Under 18 team with James captaining the side.



The Nth Degree

The 2011 battle for university places was, as expected, the most intense and competitive ever seen making it all the more pleasing that, once again, RGS boys were successful in securing offers and places at the top institutions. A further 33 offers were made by Oxford and Cambridge, taking the number of offers made over the past six years to 200. For the second year in succession, 20 offers were secured at Imperial College, London. Durham now boasts 60 current Old Guildfordians among its undergraduate body which includes a record breaking 18 boys who began their studies there in October. **Peter Dunscombe**, Assistant Head and Director of Higher Education, highlighted the contribution made by staff in supporting the boys' university applications commenting: "Our boys are able to demonstrate the depth of knowledge that admissions tutors are looking for and this can only be achieved with the exceptional support and guidance of those who teach them."



The Nut Crackers

This term boys have, among other things, donned their jeans and devoured their doughnuts all in the name of charity and raised significant sums of money; however, the inaugural conker challenge took fund-raising into uncharted territory. The inter-house conker challenge, complete with a definitive set of rules and with conkers supplied by the School to ensure no foul play, was an extraordinary spectacle. The rules were the very same regulations which apply to the World Conker Championships; the minutiae with regard to snags, rethreads and deliberate mis-hits proved to be an education to even the most ardent conker fan. The event was supported by boys from the First to the Sixth Form with, rather alarmingly, the senior prefects and staff by far the most competitive. The camaraderie, humour and yet fiercely competitive spirit ensured that discussions continued long after the final strike.



Made in Guildford

The School has continued to take advantage of its unique position in the heart of Guildford to contribute fully to the local community and further afield. A number of new initiatives have been launched this term where RGS boys have taken the lead in inspiring and motivating others.

A group of 30 Sixth Form boys has been visiting the Chelsea Academy, a state school in London; the Academy has only been open for two years and took its first Lower Sixth Form pupils in September. RGS boys have acted as classroom assistants, provided support in one-to-one reading and helped out with a range of extra-curricular clubs.



The Latin Primary School Project has provided the opportunity for boys at the RGS to put their classical education to good use by teaching Latin to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils from Holy Trinity Junior School. After intense instruction on the art of preparing lessons, producing resources and inspiring pupils, the boys have consistently created fun and lively sessions, while teaching the children all about Vindolanda, Hadrian's Wall and about adjective and verb endings. The boys have continued to be resourceful and innovative with ideas ranging from an alarmingly competitive game of Latin bingo to a challenge where the pupils practised verb tenses while learning about the roles of slaves in Roman society. Classics teacher **Natacha Goul-Wheeker** enthused: "The boys have relished the opportunity to utilise their skills for the benefit of others; their commitment, energy and professionalism have been remarkable as they have delivered dynamic lessons."

Bookworms

The RGS has been fortunate to welcome two high-profile authors this term. Actor, comedian and author Charlie Higson gave an inspirational talk to the Second and Third Form boys about his new book, *The Fear*. The School then hosted one of Guildford Book Festival's schools' events, a visit by popular children's author Mark Walden. Mark gave an entertaining talk about his H.I.V.E. (Higher Institute of Villainous Education) series of books and the villains who have inspired him in his writing. "Mark's books are full of action and humour and the idea of

a school which encourages wickedness really appeals to this age group," explained **Tamsin Farthing**, Librarian at the RGS. "As Guildford's oldest academic institution, the RGS is delighted to be able to host this event as part of the Book Festival, which is such an important part of the town's cultural calendar and which involves so many local schools."

