

# The Register



Issue 13 Michaelmas 2013

The newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford

## The Headmaster writes...



An international focus dominates our daily lives: the recent tragic natural disaster in the Philippines; ongoing military conflict throughout the world; the very real global issues of sharing limited resources, whether food or sources of energy. It is only right, therefore, that education should nurture in students an equal concern for these issues which are only going to become more pressing and high-profile in their lifetimes.

The government, through the British Council, has increasingly recognised the importance and value of schools developing international links and the International School Award (ISA) is just one way in which this focus has manifested itself. The ISA is a high-profile award which requires schools to submit a year-long action plan in which internationalism is shown to be an intrinsic and established part of the curriculum. In this regard, the School is delighted to have been accredited formally with this award, in recognition of the excellent work carried out by the staff and the students of the RGS.

Service is one of the School's four aims. The RGS strives to promote an awareness of the world outside the School, and a sense of service to the local and wider community by developing and broadening the range of innovative educational projects in conjunction with local, national and international partners.

The School's aims, however, are not simply rhetoric. The RGS has established over a number of years personal, tangible and meaningful links which have the concept of collaboration at their very heart. This edition of *The Register* provides an insight into some of these projects, especially the Cambodia links, to where an expedition took place over the summer.





# A Brush with Fame

Sixth Form artists, **James Delaney** and **Daniel Innes**, had the honour of having their work selected for display at the high-profile Independent Schools Art and Design Association Exhibition which showcases the very best of students' artwork. Daniel's piece, entitled *Fragment Series - #7*, evolved from a building which he had designed during his work experience to convey, among other things, both the visual rhythm of the structure and also the emotive qualities of it. Daniel also explored the relationship between natural and artificial forms: the result was a series of seven pieces, each of them a fragment of the reality from which it was created, the last of which is pictured. James' painting was inspired by an architectural drawing of three archways. James explained: "Despite the static nature of the painting's architectural context, the sweeping black brush-strokes suggest movement and activity. The wooden sculpture was created to demonstrate the possibility of order in chaos; although seemingly randomly assembled, the sculpture nevertheless appears precise and in some way ordered." As such the pieces serve to present two subjects which would otherwise be considered as contradictory: buildings and movement; order and chaos.



# Toot Ensemble



RGS musicians have performed before packed audiences at some of the most inspiring venues from St John's, Smith Square in London to Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice. A joint choral and orchestral tour of Malta, comprising 60 of the best musicians from both the RGS and GHS, continued this rich tradition and crammed ten performances into a few intense days. The orchestra and choir performed to a remarkably high standard in some of the most amazing venues that the island has to offer, often in very hot conditions. Particular highlights included singing Mass in St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta and an outstanding performance of Dvorak's *New World Symphony* under the dome of the Mosta Rotunda. Notable solos were performed by **Joseph Fell** in the second movement of the Dvorak while **Frederick Money**, **Benedict Philipp** and **Samuel Clarke** took the tenor and bass solos in Schubert's *Mass No. 2 in G Major*. Appreciative audiences commented upon the extraordinary level of musicianship and professionalism in performance as the tour left a lasting impression.



# A Right Charlie

As a town-centre school, the allure of food outlets has always been powerful and much of the boys' attention seems to be constantly dominated by food and sweets. First Form boy, **Isaac Rouse**, however, has taken this passion to another level, as he spends much of his time surrounded by such temptation. Isaac auditioned for the London musical *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in July 2012 in their search for four boys to share the role of Charlie Bucket. Although Isaac had never had a singing, dancing or acting lesson prior to this five-month audition process, he had performed as The Boy in the 2011 production of *The Snowman*. After seven auditions, with a panel including Sam Mendes who was directing an original stage musical for the first time, Isaac landed the role. Isaac now performs four shows every fortnight and is also required to be on stand-by. He has thoroughly enjoyed his time on the show and has been inspired by Douglas Hodge, the actor who plays Willy Wonka. Isaac commented: "He always has something up his sleeve and tries out new things to keep his performance fresh. I have learned so much from him."





## Full of Beans

Staff strutting around, cracking terrible jokes, with appalling dress sense: the staff pantomime just felt like any other day at the RGS! It is unlikely, however, that such acting talent has ever been gathered together in one place and to such great effect ever before. The sell-out performances of the RGS Staff Pantomime, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, this year in aid of *Kids Company*, were a triumphant, rip-roaring success. It was clear that the cast, superbly led by dame **Peter Dunscombe** and lovebirds Jack and Jill, played by **Charlie White** and **Harriet Suenson-Taylor**, enjoyed themselves as much as the audience. Although whether the mighty giant, voiced by the Headmaster, or the sight of **Mark Burbidge** in a tutu was the scariest part of the play was the source of much debate. Behind the scenes, the boys who ran the lights and sound and who comprised the stage crew provided much-needed professionalism and composure. As the audiences left at the end of the performances, buoyed in festive spirit, they were relieved that it is another two years until the next staff pantomime!



## An Electrifying Performance

For the third year running, the RGS took part in the nationwide Shakespeare Schools Festival with an abridged version of *Hamlet* performed at The Electric Theatre. **William Pinhey** as Hamlet produced a wonderfully sensitive and committed interpretation of the young prince, ably matched by **Max Tether** as Horatio and **Jonathan Andrews** as Marcellus. **Felix Clarke** created a convincingly tense and watchful Claudius with **Matthew Sargent** showing a superb grasp of the comedy potential of the blustering Polonius. **Zachary Moulder** as the Ghost made the most of his chilling demand for revenge and **Nicholas Hall** really brought to life the anger and passion

of the bereaved Laertes. Other roles were played with verve and detail, in particular **Sukant** and **Sumant Roy** as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, pleasingly playing on the mix up between the characters. **Edward Cook** was suitably disdainful as Osric and **Thomas Hartley** created an instant earthy character as the Gravedigger. Head of Drama, **Nancy McClean**, commented: "There were some notable moments in the show including the use of on-stage torches for the ghost scene, flickering tea-lights for the play within a play, minimal key props and low-level lighting to evoke the dark forbidding nature of the play's themes."





# Wat an Experience

The School's links with Cambodia began with the construction of the RGS link school at Tien Kram, Ratanakiri province in partnership with the charity, United World Schools, in 2010. This was entirely funded by the RGS community; further fundraising has enabled the construction of a well, accommodation for the local teachers and the addition of solar panels to the school. This summer, building on the success of the last expedition, 24 boys visited Cambodia for four weeks with a main focus on teaching in the local community; impressive lessons were delivered in art, logic, music and sports. Other highlights included trekking through a leech-infested jungle, the stunning temple complex of Angkor Wat and the very emotive Killing Fields, as the boys learned at first-hand about the troubled history of Cambodia. **Sophie Blair**, Global Links Co-ordinator, commented: "The personal development of RGS boys is significant as they develop their confidence and communication skills in fundraising for the expedition and then delivering lessons in a challenging environment. The boys who travelled out to Cambodia returned with greater self-belief, maturity and awareness, while leaving a lasting legacy in one of the poorest areas of Cambodia."









## Sub-ILA-tion

The Independent Learning Assignment, completed by all boys in the Lower Sixth Form, again produced submissions of the very highest order as boys impressed with their self-directed, independent research. A final shortlist of eight was drawn up and these boys had the opportunity to give a presentation to a panel of governors and an audience of boys and parents. Among the subjects covered were: the extent to which the EU is a superpower; the First Crusade and Crusader States; the synthesis and electronic properties of Graphene; epistemology; opportunities for Corporate Banking Services with UK Universities; a video diary of a ski-season in Whistler; and a comparison of predicted peak maximal oxygen consumption between Caucasian and Afro-Caribbean athletes. Assistant Head and Director of Higher Education **Peter Dunscombe** commented: "The depth of knowledge shown, the passion for their subject and the engaging presentational skills were truly outstanding and any one of the finalists would have been a worthy winner." That accolade, however, after long deliberation from the judges, went to **Alexander Hartley** for his mesmerising presentation on his work in translating some of Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus.



## Result!

In recent years the RGS has been consistently placed amongst the top five boys schools in the country in the influential *Sunday Times Parent Power* guide. The only publication that publishes results from all schools, and which combines performance at both GCSE and A Level, the 2013 edition ranked the RGS as third boys school in the country and fifteenth overall. At A Level, 39% of all entries were graded A\*, a figure over five times the national average. Fourteen boys – a new record for the RGS – achieved the distinction of four A\* grades; fourteen boys also averaged over 95% in all their modules. **Christopher Cooksley** and **Joseph Lidbetter** both averaged over 98% across all papers, dropping just 73 marks out of a possible 3,600 across 36 papers; in addition, Christopher



along with **Frederick Money** both achieved full marks in A Level English Literature. At AS Level, the A grade pass-rate was 71.6%, while at GCSE, 70.4% of all entries were awarded the top A\* grade. This figure matched that percentage achieved two years ago, with 20% of the boys achieving A\* in all subjects and a further 17% managing the feat in nine subjects.

## Moving on Up

RGS students have remained ambitious in their hopes and aspirations despite the fact that university entrance for the most rigorous courses at the Russell Group universities is so competitive. The class of 2013 were not to be disappointed and for the sixth consecutive



year, over 30 boys were successful in gaining places at Oxford or Cambridge. The impressive figure of 34 matched that achieved last year and brought to 208 the number of places gained since 2008. 96% of boys holding offers achieved the grades required to start their degree programme at either their firm or insurance choice. More remarkably, 83% of these places were at one of just twelve institutions: Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Exeter, Imperial, Leeds, Sheffield, University College, London and Warwick. Reassuringly, these were all universities which featured among the top 20 universities most targeted by companies, as listed in *The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers*.

## Made of the Wight Stuff

Armed with enough Calpol, Piriton, Epipens and Insulin to unnerve the most hardened of immigration officers, the entire First Form once again set forth and set sail to the Isle of Wight. On arrival, the request for passports struck panic among the boys; however, once they had recovered from the threat of deportation, the boys enjoyed three days of bonding, team-building and physical challenges on the annual adventure weekend. A varied and dynamic programme was provided including the eagerly-anticipated culmination to the weekend, the Inter-House Dragon Boating Competition. Abseiling, Aeroball, Jacob's Ladder, Ladderlogic, Wacky Races and Zip Wire all proved as popular, and competitive, as ever; this year, Low Ropes and Giant Swing were very popular additions to the programme. **Debbie Whitehead**, Head of First Form, commented: "The weekend proved to be an excellent bonding experience with the new boys mixing in different groups, meeting many new friends and working closely with the Sixth Form boys who act as Form Prefects. Adrenaline, humour and camaraderie were all on show in equal measure and the boys had a fantastic time."





## Brecon Bleakons

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has always chimed very closely with the School's philosophy and the development of initiative, service, commitment, confidence, self-esteem, leadership and teamwork are at the very heart of the School's ethos. Opportunities have also become increasingly diverse and recent years have seen the first cycling-based and also water-based Gold Expedition with, in the latter case, boys successfully completing their expedition in two Fox Terrier Yachts on the Solent. Over half term, the largest October expedition that has ever been run by the School took place with 98 boys and 11 staff in the Brecon Beacons, 10% of the whole school, taking part in Silver and Gold expeditions. The completion rate of Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards continues to be impressive: last year 22 boys were invited to Buckingham Palace to receive their Gold Awards from the Duke of Edinburgh; this year, 15 RGS boys have been invited so far. **Steve Yetman**, Director of Activities, commented: "The School has always been proud of our ability to offer the Award to all boys, uncapped by number, as we believe that it is so beneficial to the

participants' development. We are fortunate to have a committed and qualified staff that allow the teams to venture into the exciting and often remote environments that the boys journey through."



## Turf Wars

RGS rugby has enjoyed a buoyant season as the sport has epitomised the School's philosophy of sport for all. Opportunities have abounded from the Hong Kong and New Zealand tour for the seniors to the tour of Ireland for the Under 15 age group. On Saturdays, it has not been unusual for over 20 teams to be representing the RGS which has accounted for over a third of the whole school community. Despite a genuinely competitive circuit which includes fixtures against traditionally strong rugby schools, RGS teams have enjoyed successful seasons, most notably at the Under 14 age group. The

1st XV has consistently impressed with notable victories over Cranleigh School, Portsmouth Grammar School, St John's School, Leatherhead and Wimbledon College. Head of Rugby, **Tom Rogers**, commented: "I am very proud of the commitment and tenacity of all the boys who have taken such pride in putting on an RGS shirt for each fixture. Technically, they have developed significantly but it is the camaraderie, unity and passion of all the teams from the 1st XV all the way down to the Under 12C team which gives me most pleasure."



## Sports Shorts

**Athletics:** Following his excellent season in the 1500 metres and his selection for the England squad, **Gus Cockle** was selected to compete in the 2013 School Games held in Sheffield.

**Football:** **Cameron Hooley** represented the Independent Schools Football Association Under 18 South England team against Essex Schools and Kent Schools.

**Hockey:** **Edward Way** was selected for the England Under 16 Hockey National Training Squad, one of just 32 players. In addition, **Clemens von Hānisch** was selected for the Futures Cup, the tournament from which the England squads are selected.

**Kayaking:** **Edmund Haws** has continued his success in kayaking sprint and marathon racing. He has competed in the Olympic Hopes Regatta for the GB sprint team in the junior K1 500 metres and 1000 metres and in the world marathon championships for the GB marathon team in both junior K1 and K2.

**Kitesurfing:** **Harrison** and **Jack Porter**, along with Richard Branson and 315 others, set a new Guinness World Record for the largest parade of kitesurfers to complete a one-mile course.

**Sailing:** In the Eric Twinline National Sailing Championships, the RGS team finished fourth nationally: a fantastic achievement by the boys.

**Sailing:** **Joshua Voller** was crowned 420 British National Champion 2013 and 420 British Youth Champion 2013; he also finished as top Team GBR boat at the 420 World Championships in Valencia.

**Ski-racing:** The RGS senior team won silver medals after coming second in the Surrey Schools Ski Championships. The team then went on to compete in the UK Skiing Championships after qualification in the regionals and the English National Schools races.

**Windsurfing:** **Ben** and **James Barnwell** competed in the UK national Under 17 windsurfing series. After six weekends of competition, James finished seventh nationally, Ben ninth nationally.





## Dr Woo Hoo!

The Design and Technology Department at the RGS has always been renowned for the rich diversity of items to emerge from its four walls. In recent years, they have built a car for a school production of *Grease* and recreated Audrey II, the giant flesh-eating plant from *Little Shop of Horrors*. The latest design-product to appear, however, took everyone by surprise. To celebrate 50 years of science fiction and to form the centrepiece of Guildford Library's Sci-Fi Invasion event, the School was asked to recreate one of the most iconic villains from this genre. After approximately 100 hours using a range of techniques from complex laser-cutting and fibre-glass moulding to incorporating discarded household items, a full-size diabolical cyborg emerged. Head of Design and Technology, **Justin Kelly**, commented: "We were all amazed at how well the Dalek turned out; it even looked scary." This sense of awe and fear, however, was nothing in comparison to the looks of bemused members of the public as immaculately presented RGS boys took the Dalek down to the Library!



## Not just Lip Service



RGS staff have always prided themselves on sartorial elegance and sophistication, and therefore it was no surprise that the arrival of Movember inspired teachers to follow in the footsteps of such style icons as Charlie Chaplin, Inspector Clouseau, Tom Selleck, Salvador Dali, Merv Hughes. The comic, the sportsman, the artist: each member of staff had their own very personal inspiration, and, indeed, their own very personal interpretation of the upper lip adornment. Despite the, at times, considerable mirth which the facial appendages created, the central message of Movember maintained high-profile. It allowed the School to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the health issues young men face and raise money to support prostate and testicular cancer and mental health. A number of events occurred during the month including assemblies, an opportunity for boys to sport their own fake moustaches, and talks. The end of Movember came as a relief as a sudden rush on razorblades and shaving foam saw staff trying to regain their smooth, clean-shaven good-looks.

## Children in Need

The King's Lecture series has always provided a forum for speakers who have achieved exceptional success, who push boundaries and who challenge expectations or preconceptions, and the succession of perceptive questions proved that the latest lecture had certainly inspired a captivated audience. The flamboyant and charismatic, Camila Batmanghelidjh, founder of *Kids Company*, a charity which provides practical, emotional and educational support to vulnerable inner-city children delivered the King's Lecture. In her own passionate, inimitable style, she spoke about the vital scientific research that *Kids Company* was championing into the demonstrable, negative effects on brain development of children raised in an atmosphere of fear and lovelessness. Her call to all those present to speak out and pressure their MPs to move children's social care to the top of the political agenda, and to put love back into the public space as a phenomenon to be praised, and nurtured, was well received. The evening also saw £1,200 being raised in impromptu donations which will all go to support the vital work that Ms Batmanghelidjh's charity carries out.

