

# The Register



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL GUILDFORD



## *The Headmaster writes...*

The School is now coming to the end of its quincentennial celebrations. Over thirty events have taken place this academic year to mark this auspicious milestone and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in planning, running or supporting the impressive array of events that have together helped us celebrate our 500th anniversary.

Our aim when planning the celebrations for the quincentenary was to engage the whole RGS community by staging events that reflected the full range of educational, aesthetic and cultural talents of the School. I very much hope that we have succeeded in this and that there has been something for everyone. It was wonderful that our celebrations should have been marked with the visit of the Princess Royal and I know that Her Royal Highness was incredibly impressed with all students and staff that she met on her visit, but particularly the boys!

This edition of *The Register* provides an update on our quincentennial celebrations over the past couple of months and also reports on the many other activities, successes and (concerning the volcanic ash cloud) tribulations of pupils and staff. It has been a wonderful year and I feel extremely privileged to have been the incumbent Headmaster during such a celebration. Thank you for your exceptional support.

HEADMASTER

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely of the Headmaster, written over the end of the letter.





## By Royal Appointment

Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal, paid a special visit to the RGS spending over an hour touring the School and meeting the boys and staff. The Headmaster accompanied the Princess Royal on her tour, which included listening to a string quartet and observing a lesson in the Art School. RGS first former **Alexander Sweet** presented the Princess Royal with a posy before she continued her tour, which included Latin and PE lessons and a display of archive material detailing the School's fascinating history and focusing on its royal connections.

The School Captain, **Kyle Fleischer**, was presented to the Princess Royal on her visit to the new Sixth Form Centre, where she took the time to chat to boys about their interests, Kyle said: "The Princess Royal took a real interest in all aspects of the School. She spoke to a number of boys who are currently representing their country in a variety of sports. It was a great honour for me to be involved in such a historic day for the School."

The Headmaster, **Dr Jon Cox** said: "A quincentennial year is a special occasion for any institution and it was particularly special for the RGS to be graced with a visit from the Princess Royal during its 500th year. It was a privilege to welcome her." At the end of the tour, the whole School gathered on the front lawn to witness the Princess Royal unveiling a plaque to commemorate her quincentennial visit.



The combination of the historic day of the General Election and the setting of Westminster provided the perfect back-drop for the RGS Music Department and the wider school community to gather at St. John's, Smith Square to give the School's inaugural London concert. Musicians from the School delivered a hugely varied and entertaining programme to a packed house. At times, the stage was not big enough for all the performers and the Parents' Choir became the angels in the gallery with the school choir high up on the platform. Fine solo piano performances in the Carnival of the Animals were balanced by some stunning

string playing and notable solos from **Emmanuel Bach** and **Joseph Butler**. The Big Band and Jazz Band were in fine form, and the close harmony group transported the audience back 60 years to the halcyon days of waistcoats and boaters. Some exquisite string quartet playing contrasted the pomp of *Zadok the Priest*, and the grand finale was **William Walton's** film music from *Henry 5th*, narrated by **William Clarke**. Throughout the evening, **Peter White**, Director of Music injected his usual charisma and energy to entertain the audience and steer the musicians through the intricate material.

As part of the quinquennial celebrations, the RGS 500th Birthday Bursary Ball was held in a marquee in the stunning location of Guildford Cathedral. Over 620 guests, including the Mayor of Guildford and the Earl of Onslow, were entertained in the Cathedral Nave to a cocktail reception and an exciting display of Latin American dancing from professional dancers from TV's *Strictly Come Dancing*. Following a sumptuous dinner, the live auction succeeded in relieving guests of their money for some splendid items including an original painting by

Edwin Greenman, whose grandson was at the RGS, and a dinner to be cooked by the School's senior management team at the winner's home. This was won by a gentleman whose wife is a professional caterer! **Maggie Goodman** outbid all the other guests in her quest to become 'Headmaster for the day'; this could well have serious consequences! The event raised approximately £25,000 to go towards funds for bursaries and help support vital developments to the School's facilities.

## Song and Dance



## Little Horrors

Audiences were treated to both a junior and senior production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, as the RGS revealed the depth of acting talent throughout the School. High-octane performances dominated the stage of the junior performance thanks to the expert guidance of **Mike Paterson** and **Jeremy Whittaker**: **William Cowie's** very touching interpretation of Seymour; **Will Phipps'** spectacular metamorphoses into a series of different roles, often with only a few moments between one role and the next, including his menacing and maniacal dentist; and a sterling performance by **Alexander Brackstone**. Finally, the plant. To give a plant a personality is a true acting challenge but **David Reeson** managed the difficult task of manipulating the plant and singing and speaking at the same time!



## Stage Fright

A Friday night session on horticulture may not be everyone's idea of a good time, but for those who attended **Mike Paterson's** senior production, the enthralling power of *that plant* had the audience gripped from start to finish. The bizarre combination of floristry and dentistry led to provocative and moving scenes on stage, supported by the amazing hip-swinging, foot-tapping music backstage. **Dominic Bull's** masterful performance, and brilliant singing voice, had the audience in the palm of his hand; **Charles Hunt** skillfully pulled off the transformation from slave-driving boss, to benevolent father figure, to plant food; **Alexander Simmons** delighted with his sadistic dentist; **James Wood** showed impressive diversity by giving convincing performances as Every Other Character. The last laugh had to go to the plant, spectacularly animated by **David Reeson** whose gravelly and seductive singing voice, matched by his, frankly all-too convincing *Att-I-Tude* when delivering Audrey II's alluring, cheeky, offensive reposts, stole the show. All this was done from the cramped interior of an increasingly airless model plant, with moving parts to contend with; he deserved a standing ovation for making Friday night horticulture an unforgettable delight.



## All White on the Night

Guildford Cathedral rang with applause following the first performance of *shall life inherit*. This intensely moving work, commissioned to commemorate the quincentenary of the School, was composed by the Director of Music, **Peter White**. Taking the words of the school hymn as its starting point, *shall life inherit* explored the concept of pilgrimage in a complex and often dark modern world; not as a devotional act, but more as a metaphor for seeking to find purpose and meaning to life. After months of rehearsals, the silence of the Cathedral was broken by an optimistic and innocent melody sung by the School's trebles and echoed by the massed forces of the school choir and parents' choir. This innocence was soon tested as the texts reflected upon darker periods of human existence in the modern world causing the music to take a more violent turn. As the work reached its conclusion, faith and love triumphed over evil and the music subsided with the return of the opening treble melody. As usual the school orchestra was outstanding in its mastery of some challenging orchestral material. This skill was matched by the stunning soloists and chorus. The truly profound nature of this monumental work touched both performers and audience alike.

To ensure that the newly-appointed Senior Prefects were moulded into an elite crack force, the boys were subjected to a rigorous training programme at the beginning of term. A classroom-based session discussing a range of scenarios was, however, only an appetiser to the main event, team-building exercises on a high ropes course. Inspired by many a cliché – there's no 'I' in team – the boys, bravely accompanied by the Headmaster, the Deputy Heads, **Mark Hoskins** and **Garth Williams**, and the Sixth Form team of **Jimmy Pressley** and **Pete**



## Monkey Business

**Bradnock**, faced their fears at *Go Ape*, conquering five vertigo-inducing circuits, the highlight of which was the Tarzan jump which produced tears of pain and laughter in equal measure! The certificate signed by *Chief Gorilla* on completion of the arduous circuit provided final confirmation that the Senior Prefect team was ready for the challenges ahead of them.

## Purely Academic

In the Chemistry Olympiad, outstanding results were achieved with five gold, three silver and one bronze awards. Gold awards went to the pentad of **Lawrence Barrott**, **Tom Eastell**, **Robert Moss**, **Ryan Mullarkey** and **Andrew Rolph**. Lawrence was one of the top 20 candidates (out of 2,384 entrants); Ryan was one of only nine lower sixth formers in the country achieving gold.

The RGS achieved nine medals winners in this year's British Physics Olympiad including gold medals for **Robert Moss** and **Andrew Rolph**. Following a gruelling 3 hour

15 minutes, Robert was then selected as one of the final 16 to attend the International Physics Olympiad selection camp.

A team of Lower Sixth Form boys, **Stefan Curtress**, **Luke Hinde**, **Thomas Rees**, **Oliver Smith** and **Alexander McWilliam**, represented the RGS at the Surrey Schools' AS Maths Challenge. The event attracted an entry of around 50 schools from all over the county; however, the RGS boys emerged triumphant winning the challenge despite stiff competition.



Over the Easter holidays 23 students and four staff, under the guidance of **Jimmy Pressley**, embarked upon a Greek odyssey in search of classical remains, Mediterranean weather and cuisine. A week of sunshine and stunning blue skies provided the perfect setting for a tour of classical Greece. After a couple of days in Athens including a visit to the newly opened and architecturally impressive Acropolis Museum, the boys enjoyed a whistle-stop tour around mainland Greece taking in visits to Delphi, Olympia, Pylos, Mystra, Sparta, Tiryns, Mycenae, Epidaurus and Corinth. The boys were keen to sample authentic Greek culture; dipping into Greek meze, the Mediterranean Sea and, of course, the Gorilla Club on the final night all provided the ultimate Greek experience. The trip was a great success and proved the perfect back-drop and inspiration for some exam revision.

## Acropolis Now



## Poll Position

Election fever gripped the corridors of the RGS as politics dominated the community in May. Presentations and aggressive poster campaigns dealt with topics ranging from the future of Britain's nuclear deterrent and the growing wealth gap to immigration and electoral reform. The highlight of the campaign was a hustings with the candidates for the Guildford constituency, Anne Milton, Sue Doughty and Tim Shand, which gave the boys the opportunity to grill the candidates on their party manifestoes. The RGS had its own 'Portillo moment' when **William Anderson** was returned as the Communist Party candidate, narrowly beating Green Party candidate **Alexander Hartley** and Conservative candidate **Thomas O'Brien**. Liberal Democrat **Peter Thompson** finished fourth beating **William Clarke** of Labour and UKIP's **Tomas Eisenstadt**. **William Anderson** who stood on a platform of nationalising the banks and major industries, abolishing private schools, scrapping Trident, tackling xenophobia, and withdrawing from the EU, claimed his election was a victory for the people and a blow for freedom and equality. Drawing his inspiration from Lenin, William ended with the rallying cry, 'The Revolution starts here!'



## Out of Africa

RGS Team Morocco, comprising 12 third formers, jetted off in high spirits to the Atlas Mountains in pursuit of the renowned 'Imil Trek'. The expedition started and finished with a day in Marrakesh where the boys experienced the colourful market square and the vibrant, bustling nature of the local people and their unique customs. In the mountains, five days of hard trekking aided by the mountain guide Mohammed, who became affectionately known as little Mo, sleeping in local villages and an abundance of mint tea added to an unforgettable experience. The real adventure, however, started at the end of the trip. With all flights cancelled due to the volcanic ash cloud, the team's sense of adventure was really put to the test with a five-day overland trip back to the UK. Minibuses, trains, ferries and finally a 36-hour coach journey allowed a return to the RGS via Tangiers, Tarfia, Algeciras, Brussels and Dover, where the adventure was finally completed.

On a breezy morning, a group of fifth formers, accompanied by **Greg Schofield** and **Ted Badham**, left Weymouth Harbour on the good ship *Atlanta* determined on hauling up denizens of the deep on their fishing lines. At this point, the wisdom of partaking of a gargantuan breakfast before departure was brought into sharp focus; the action of wind over tide made for an uncomfortable action of the boat and as the keen fishermen rocked and rolled several contributed their breakfasts in the interests of ground baiting. After a long cold winter, the sea was still below normal temperature and, as a result, the fish were lethargic and slow to feed. A number of different locations were tried, but largely with the same result; a slow catch of dogfish and pouting ensued until **Rupert McCreery** produced the catch of the day with a very fine 12lb. bull huss.



## Hook, Line & Sinkers



## Corps Values



## A Swell Time



The holidays and a field day provided the opportunity for a large number of boys of all ages, and staff, likewise of a variety of ages, to indulge in tennis, surfing and beach activities in Cornwall under the guidance of RGS's very own undisputed king of the waves, **Jonathan Casale**. The boys enjoyed intensive tennis sessions, beach football and rugby, and an eco tour of the Newquay coastline which took in the local flora, fauna and marine life. One of the highlights of both trips, however, was the brand new artificial wave at Retallack. Thousands of gallons of water are pumped out of high powered jets to create a standing wave where intrepid surfers can fine-tune their balance and manoeuvres on the super fast FlowRider. After a hesitant start from a number of the group who spent much of their time upside-down and back-to-front, the RGS team soon impressed the locals with their slick, professional moves!



## Sports Shorts

**Joshua Voller** and **Tim Gratton** have qualified for the GBR sailing team. Josh will travel to Langkowi to race in the Optimist class World Championships; Tim in the 420 class has qualified for the European Championships in La Rochelle and the World Championships in Haifa.

**Angus Groom** was selected to represent GBR in the double and quadruple sculls at the Munich International Regatta. Angus has recently won four gold medals in the Ghent International Regatta and at the GB rowing team trial regatta.

**Gus Cockle** achieved a personal best of 4.41.92. in the 1500m in the Surrey Athletics Championships and also won a bronze in his first ever 3,000m track race.

**Patrick Russell** was selected for the South West U17 ice hockey team. He competed in the English Ice Hockey Association Interconference Tournament from which players are selected to trial for the GB team.

**Luca Signorelli** and **Oliver Sugg**, both Surrey U17 players, were selected to participate in the National Hockey Finals; the Surrey team ended runners-up, narrowly losing to Essex.



# Opposition Stumped

The biennial inspection of the RGS CCF was carried out by Air Chief Marshal Sir John Allison and provided the opportunity for the School to showcase the diversity of activities offered. He experienced the full range of the RGS CCF, seeing boys involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, night exercises, orienteering, mountain biking, drill, climbing, military asset recognition and threat assessment, fieldcraft, range firing of the new L98 A2 cadet rifle, the assault course, the DCCT (dismounted close combat trainer) and even live firing an LSW (machine gun). The day ended with a formal parade and inspection on the drill square. The fourth formers in the RN section were inspected by the PELO (Parent Establishment Liaison Officer) from JSU Northwood; the watch spent the day in the Solent yachting, driving high speed RIBs and also navigating RN FMLs (Fast Motor Launches). Sir John concluded that the RGS CCF was exceeding the standards required and that the staff's commitment and enthusiasm were commendable.

**Nicholas Cooper** has been selected for the England U21 hockey squad; this is a very fine achievement bearing in mind he is the only school boy in the squad.

In the Bath and Otter Cup swimming competitions, over 50 schools competed for the Bath Cup (freestyle relay) and Otter Cup (medley relay). The RGS team of **William Elliott, Michael Ingram, Liam Man** and **James Shields** took third place in both competitions: the second year in a row the RGS has made the podium.

The RGS golf team of **James Charteris-Black, Freddie Hosking, Thomas Lees, Thomas Parkinson, Alexander Russell** and **James Shields** beat Tonbridge in the HMC Foursomes South-East Final to become Regional Champions and to qualify for the National Finals.



This term's cricket season has enjoyed, as always, the irresistible mix of sunshine and showers that characterises English cricket but it has also been dominated by some outstanding individual performances with both bat and ball. The century club has continued to grow in number; few, however, have managed as impressive a score as **William Ball** who made 176 for the 2nd XI off only 30 overs, and Nicholas Cooper's mercurial 155 not out for the 1st XI. **James Chaumeton** and **Luke Jones** made accomplished hundreds for the U13A team in an impressive score of 268-3 against Christ's Hospital; **Alexander Sweet** added to their woes with a hundred at U12A level. At other times, the opposition bowlers have been put to the sword by scores of over one hundred by **George Brown, Jamie King, Charles Warren** and **Christopher Way**. The bowlers also have intimidated the opposition: **Gus Cockle** took six wickets for three runs, including a hat-trick, and **Ben Morse** has recorded 5 for 11 and 6 for 12.





## Super Troupers



The quincentennial Charity Day was one that no one will forget. The Guildford Heat was back for another exhibition of basketball, although the RGS all-stars, comprising both boys and staff, were just as fired up as their opponents when it came to the big game! The Charity Day assembly was the funniest for many a year, with star turns from **Jonathan Chapman** and **William Clarke**, all put together courtesy of the technical wizardry of **Michael Yeomans**. The event, however, that will live long in the memory must surely be the House Abba Contest. Bjorn and Bennie may not have been impressed by the quality of all the singing, but there was no denying the level of effort and innovation displayed in the respective performances of each House, especially by the winners, Beckingham. In addition to the main event, boys used the extended break to sample all the activities, 3C's sponge space invaders being a notable innovation. The Staff Quiz was a real clash of the titans, with **Catherine Moorehead's** egg-heads worthy winners against **Steve Thornhill's** finest. Boys and staff managed to raise over £6,000 for the supported charities: Great Ormond Street Hospital, Amnesty International, EducAid and the RGS Cambodia School Project, and with the total raised at the recent Rock Gig adding another £1000 it certainly was a case of money, money, money at this year's Charity Day.

## And finally

Four members of the RGS staff participated in this year's London Marathon. **Tony Dubois** dressed in full academic garb – mortar board and all – and **Shirley Perrett** finished the course in impressive times. Aware, however, that running a marathon as an individual, pounding the hard streets of London lacked sufficient challenge, **Ian Wilkes** and **Adrian Woodman** raised the stakes. Dressed in a giant caterpillar costume they joined Chris Burrows, father of OG Jack Burrows, and Yoko Sellek in a bid to complete the London Marathon as a tribute to RGS student Akio Sellek. The team completed the gruelling 26.2 miles in six hours and one minute supported vociferously throughout the course. The run was in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital which had supported Akio for 14 years and, bolstered by a contribution from the school Charity Day, the fundraising total hit a remarkable £30,000.

