

The Register



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The newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford



The Headmaster writes...

The cyclical nature of school life is part and parcel of any school; however, the end of the Trinity Term brings this into even sharper focus. In the very same week as the nervous sense of excitement and anticipation of the new intake of RGS boys for September who were visiting the School for Reception Day, the Upper Sixth Form boys were completing their Leavers' Statements and attending the Leavers' Ceremony and Ball.

Many of the boys have been at the RGS for seven of their most formative years and there are two recurring comments which I read in their statements, as the boys reflect upon their time at the RGS. The first aspect is that, despite how the time has passed in a flash, they are amazed at how much they have achieved in such a short space of time. The fortnightly parental *Bulletin* and this edition of *The Register* only serve to underline and illustrate the rich diversity of success in a number of fields.

The second comment, and the one from which I derive the greatest pleasure, is the strength of their relationships both among their peers and also with their teachers. The School takes great pride in the quality of the educational experience and yet the single most important element of the RGS is a happy, cohesive community in which every single individual feels accepted and fulfilled. Although success brings pleasure, the underlying theme running through so many of these articles in this term's *The Register* is this sense of fun, unity and energy which make the RGS such a special environment.



The Fantastic Four

History has been littered with successful quartets. The Beatles. Abba. The four musketeers, with the inclusion of D'Artagnan. This year, however, a new quartet emerged on the lips of many in the corridors of the RGS: Flash Crash Algos. Four Sixth Form boys, **Alexander Pound, Benjamin Seed, George Simmons** and **Joshua Voller**, better known as Flash Crash Algos, were crowned Student Investor Champions. Over three months, teams of students were given £100,000 in virtual money to buy and sell shares in FTSE 100 and small cap companies. After an initial entry of 10,000 teams which comprised 40,000 students, reaching the final was a phenomenal achievement as the RGS team increased the value of their portfolio by more than £50,000. In the final, the first leg had the teams tackling an *Apprentice*-style business task, followed by a presentation on 'Whether trust in Libor rates could ever be restored'. A tough, experienced judging panel praised the professionalism of the RGS team as they emerged as winners of this national competition and won an all-expenses-paid educational trip to New York and £2,000 for the School, fortunately not in virtual money.



Love Tatchelly

The School was delighted to welcome international human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell to give this term's King's Lecture. Peter began with his forthright views on how to deal effectively with the current dilemma facing the Government over Abu Qatada, without having to compromise on Human Rights. His explanation of current Human Rights' legislation internationally and its shortcomings, together with his assessment of the UK and other countries' Human Rights' records, was genuinely eye-opening. For many, who only know the man from his media portrayal, Peter's calm and reasonable justification of his campaigning and activism was just as surprising. Rightly drawing attention to the excellent work of the RGS Amnesty group under the guidance of **Maggie Goodman**, he offered a clear message to boys and adults present that concerted action, no matter how small, really does make a difference. Informative, provocative, entertaining and inspiring, Peter ticked all the boxes for an outstanding King's Lecture.



A Change of Direction

The school year only provides so much scope for the staff at the RGS to showcase their true potential, until, that is, Charity Day comes around. Although the premise is fund-raising for beneficial and worthy causes, rumour has it that in fact it is an opportunity for the staff to flex their muscles, to reveal their full vocal ranges, to demonstrate extraordinary intellect and to prove that teaching is only one of many career options which could also include magician, ukulele player or sumo wrestler. In traditional manner, staff and boys alike threw themselves – quite literally – into an array of events which were all united by humour and a desire to raise significant sums of money. Highlights included the rendition by the Senior Management Team, under their alias of F01 Direction, of *What makes you beautiful*, the alarmingly competitive staff against boys dodgeball match, and the equally edgy cerebral challenge of staff against returning Old Guildfordians, all of whom had taken part in *University Challenge* on television. £6,400 was raised for the charities chosen by the boys: the RGS international link schools in Cambodia and Nepal, *Help for Heroes*, *Shooting Star CHASE* and *Tuk Tuk Travels*.



Rocking the Boat

The joint RGS and GHS drama production of ***Guys and Dolls*** was an explosion of colour, energy and exuberance as for a few days Guildford High School was transformed into 1950s Manhattan. The impressive set with its iconic skyline and advertising hoardings immediately immersed the audience in a world of gambling, guys, cheesecake, strudel and dolls. This was a truly ensemble production with the *Hot Box* girls glamorous and stylish and the *Missionaries* suitably demure. **Jack Morris** was outstanding in the lead role of Sky Masterson and he was ably supported by **Xavier Peer** whose sympathetic and detailed performance of the fixer and gambler, Nathan Detroit, was mesmerising. Among a succession of timeless, well-known songs, **Dewi Eburne's** rendition of *Sit down, you're rocking the boat* was a real highlight. With a cast, crew and orchestra of over



one hundred, this musical was one of the most ambitious and memorable productions in recent years as Broadway came to the streets of Guildford.



A Cut Above

As part of their AS qualification, the AS Drama and Theatre students performed an extract from Rob Hayes' moody and dark play, *A Butcher of Distinction*. Teddy, the brutal East End gangster, who is casually flippant towards the use and abuse of his "boys", was chillingly and believably portrayed by **Thomas Hosking**. **Alexander Pusey** developed a nervous schizophrenia for the role of Hartley, expertly controlling the delivery of lines to go from wit and wordplay one minute to the dark menace of the psychopath the next. **Benedict Philipp** playing Hugo, the rather hapless younger twin, who suffers terribly at Teddy's behest, was incredibly moving at points in the play contrasting superbly with his apparent innocence and lack of guile at the start of the play and his focused white-hot revenge at the end. The audience was drawn into the frighteningly tense, compelling world of the play as the boys performed to great effect.



One from the Very Top

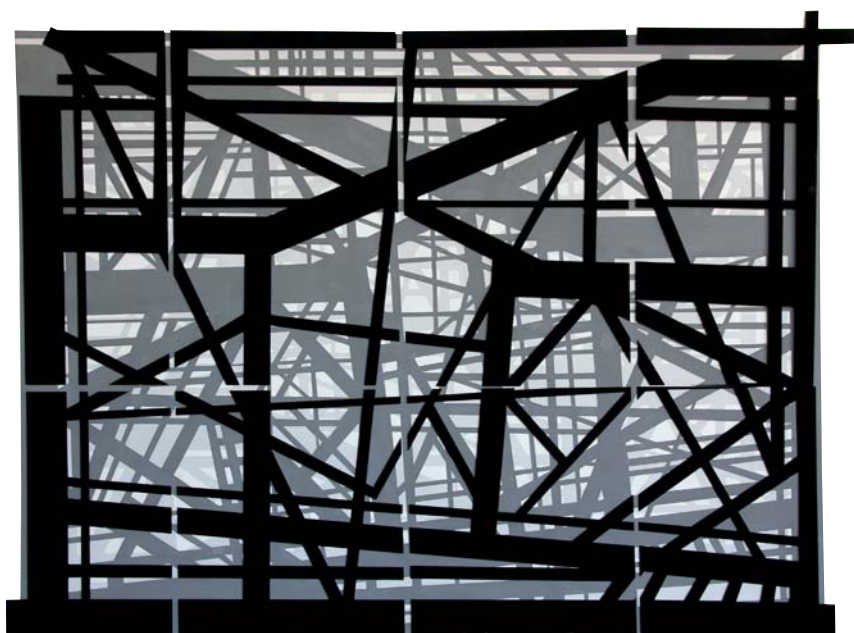
Giles Hutchings, or *The Typhoon* as he was referred to by host Nick Hewer, took this series of the Channel 4 programme, *Countdown*, by storm. Giles earned the title of octochamp after winning his preliminary eight programmes in a row; his total of 965 points from these heats is the highest in the history of the show and he wowed Susie Dent in dictionary corner with words such as *soutane* and *godetia*. He also solved all but one of the conundrums in less than a second, before he was finally and



frustratingly beaten by the word *lawnmower*. After convincing wins in the quarter- and semi-finals, Giles faced a real challenge in the final but emerged triumphant 95 – 86 including more unusual words such as *argosies*, *mangonel* and *shaliest*. This scoreline wrote Giles into the record books as the highest total score ever in the history of *Countdown*. Having already won the much-coveted *Countdown* teapot, as winner of the series Giles also received *The Richard Whiteley Memorial Trophy*, leather-bound copies of the 21-volume Oxford English Dictionary and a lifetime subscription to Oxford Online.

Strokes of Genius

The Private View of the Art Exhibition once again provided the opportunity to showcase work of extraordinary quality to an appreciative audience of boys, staff, governors, parents and guests including the Mayor of Guildford. The exhibition displayed some of the finest pieces of the GCSE, AS and A Level students, many of whom were on hand to provide context and insight into their work. To pick out any highlights from so many exceptional pieces would be invidious, however, **Ian Alcock's** deeply private and personal installation drew animated comment throughout the evening. Ian reinvented a small room into a full sensory experience as he explored the symbiotic relationship between his childhood and his imaginary friends in a piece entitled *Symbiosidynamics (Twins A – Z)*. Equally impressive was **James Delaney's** intricate and delicate sculptures that sought a dialogue between order and chaos, as precision and delicacy were maintained in a seemingly disorganised and random arrangement. The immaculately presented artwork in the Art School would not have looked out of place in a public gallery and guests were effusive in their praise as they emerged from the exhibition.





A Classic Performance

The courtyard of the Old Building provided an atmospheric setting for the complex and challenging performances of *Dido and Aeneas* as the packed audience was treated to an evening of sublime music-making. Under the direction of **Sam Orchard**, the orchestra, led by **Frederick McGee**, relished the baroque idioms and lively rhythms of the music. Particularly impressive was the continuo playing of **Eric Foster** and **Michael Lan**, as well as the infectious enthusiasm and clarity of the chorus. Several Old Guildfordians returned for the performance and both **Jonathan Peters** and **Cyrus Dromgoole-Cavazzi** shone in their roles as Aeneas and the sorcerer. **Aiden Rutter** was convincingly fiery in the role of the witch and **Alistair Baumann** gave an enchanted performance as the spirit sent to lure Aeneas away. The whole show, however, was almost stolen by **Benedict Philipp** whose demonstrative performance as a sailor, complete with rustic sailor's accent, almost had the audience leaping from their chairs to join him on the briny!



Lingvina Latina



As many of Pompeii's finest artefacts travelled to the UK for the celebrated and impressive Pompeii Exhibition at the British Museum, so many of the RGS's finest students travelled to Italy to see what was left! The ninety-three boys, accompanied by ten staff, spent eight action-packed days visiting some of the most impressive classical sites in Italy. The first five days were based in Sorrento visiting Pompeii, Herculaneum, Capri and Mount Vesuvius; the final three days were spent sightseeing in Rome and Ostia. The awe-inspiring scale of the Colosseum, the haunting expressions of the plaster-cast bodies in Pompeii, the beauty of the Trevi Fountain were all highlights for the boys, as were ice-creams, pizzas and the irresistible temptation of street vendors. A number of parents watched the BBC programmes about Pompeii and Herculaneum which were broadcast during that week and quizzed their sons upon their return. To the credit of the boys – and the relief of the staff – they passed the interrogations with flying colours.



Ker-Powell!

Overcast skies, light drizzle and an unpredictable weather forecast can only mean one thing in the school calendar: the RGS Sports Day. Despite, however, the weather conditions being more conducive to rugby than athletics, the boys competed as energetically and enthusiastically as ever. Sports Day is always one of the most fiercely contested events as, spurred on by massed ranks of supporters, the boys strive to gain points for their Houses as the Cock House Cup, the inter-House competition, draws to its conclusion. On the track and field, there were some outstanding performances; four school records were broken including **Archie Hosking** in the Lower Discus and **James Stacey** in the Lower 800 metres. **Callum Spencer** shattered the Junior High Jump record with a height of 1.74 metres which beat the old record from 1989 by four centimetres and **William Childs** in the Lower Javelin improving on the previous record from 2000 by almost five metres. Under the charismatic and passionate leadership of Housemaster **Dai Cowx**, Powell nipped Nettles to the post and thereby won the shield for an extraordinary tenth time in succession. The shield was presented to the victorious House Captain of Powell, **Oliver Shorthose**, by the Mayor of Guildford.



In Their Element

The RGS Chemistry Department has continued to be the catalyst to some extraordinary reactions as the Sixth Form chemists have excelled on the international stage. 3,310 chemists worldwide took part in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, an innovative web-based competition for chemists. Set by Cambridge University lecturers, the competition is designed to take students significantly beyond the syllabus and encourage them to think about science in the way they would at university. Each of the eight rounds took place at 0:00:01 UK time on the first day of each month, from November to June. Remarkably, RGS boys claimed six out of the top eight places in the world for the Under 18s. **Giles Hutchings** finished in second place, **Angus Hammond** in third, **Sebastian Mansley** in fourth, **Benjamin Moore** in fifth, **Thomas Weatherley** in sixth and **Dewi Eburne** in eighth. The Head of Chemistry, **Wai-Shun Lau**, commented: "This competition challenges boys at the highest standard conceptually; to have performed at this level against the best young scientists in the world is a remarkable achievement."



In the Running

The RGS has been fortunate enough to have some outstanding middle-distant runners in recent years; however, the latest success story has raised the bar of achievement even higher. **Gus Cockle** has continued to excel at both 1,500 and 3,000 metres on the county and national stage. His recent time of 8.21.39 in a 3,000 metre race at Watford is the fastest time run by an Under 17 runner in the UK this year. In so doing, Gus also broke the Surrey County record which has stood for 27 years. He is now number one in the UK at this distance and number seven in the all time fastest 3,000 metre list. Mo Farah was only a few seconds faster at the same age! Not content with that success, Gus then went on to break the Surrey County record for 1,500 metres with a time of 3.52.80. The national standard time for the Under 17 age group, which gives automatic



entry into the English Schools Track Championships, is 4.03.00 which highlights how exceptionally well Gus is running.

Seamless Performances

After a couple of years where the weather has been the focus, it is to the credit of new Head of Cricket **Chris Sandbach** that he has brought success and sunshine in equal measure this term. Competing in the 50/40 South London Schools League, the RGS 1st XI finished top after recording notable victories against schools including Hampton, KCS Wimbledon, Reeds and St Paul's, as well as a win against the MCC. Central to the success of the team have been the majestic innings of **Charles Warren**, highlights of which have been 104 against Hampton and 107* against Reeds. Charles has captained the team intelligently and has led by example with the bat. Special mention also goes to the budding talent from the Fourth Form, **Alexander Sweet**. Alexander made his debut against the MCC and went on to score 115 in a match-winning performance which demonstrated real poise and maturity. The bowling attack has been equally talented



and exciting: one of the highlights being **Alexander Waghorn's** hat-trick against Trinity School. With a number of talented young cricketers emerging, the future of RGS cricket is very exciting, as long as the Head of Cricket continues to work his magic with British summertime.



Sports Shorts

Judo: **Oliver Platt** competed as a member of the England Judo Squad at the International Judo competition in Holland. This is one of the biggest international competitions of the year with 1,500 competitors from 28 countries.

Kayaking: **Edmund Haws** has been training with both the GB sprint and marathon teams, recently missing out on a medal by only 20 seconds over a 12 mile race at the European marathon championships. Edmund has been selected to race Under 18 K2 in the 1,000 metres, an Olympic distance, in the European sprint championships.

Sailing: **Josh Voller** has successfully qualified as part of the Team GBR squad at both the 420 World Championships in Valencia, Spain and the European Championships in Pwllheli, Wales. As a result of his second place overall in the RYA Youth National Championships he has been awarded one of only two Team GBR places at the Kiel Youth Week Regatta in Germany. He will be sailing against the best in the world over the coming months.

Shooting: **Michael Downes** and **Christopher Makowski** are the latest in a long line of RGS boys to be selected for the *Athelings* after their invitation to join the 2013 British Cadet Rifle Team. The boys will compete in the annual tour to Canada.



Once Upon All Time

As part of the celebrations for this year's National Libraries Day, the RGS took part in *Parallel Universes*, a countrywide attempt to set a new Guinness World Record for the most people writing a story on the same day at multiple venues. The award-winning author and recently appointed writer-in-residence for Booktrust, Matt Haig, wrote the start of a story and students then took over and finished writing it, taking turns to add two sentences each. 41 boys contributed to the RGS story resulting in an epic tale of slime, tentacles and inter-planetary travel: a standard day in the imagination of a typical RGS boy. The previous record was 953 contributors; however, this was comfortably surpassed as 3,217 participants at 69 venues across the UK were officially verified by Guinness World Records. The RGS, therefore, as part of this initiative holds the World Record for the most people writing a story at multiple venues, and is the proud owner of an official certificate.



Sociable Climbers

The First Form enjoyed a full and varied programme of activities at the stunning 28 acre Walton Firs Activity Centre, designed to develop self-reliance, teamwork and leadership skills. Transported by the whole fleet of school minibuses, the boys enjoyed a day of relaxation after their examinations. Each group did four different activities from a choice of archery, assault course, caving, crate stacking, Frisbee-golf, GPS navigation, initiative exercises and pioneering. The added incentive of Jelly Babies ensured a competitive edge to proceedings and resulted in some determined performances by the boys. Head of First Form, **Debbie Whitehead**, commented: "Boys joining the School in September came from a whole array of schools and backgrounds but they settled in really quickly and have bonded as a tight, cohesive year group. Experiences such



as this, and the other Field Day trips including the Isle of Wight adventure weekend, have allowed each individual to become an intrinsic part of the year group dynamic. The sheer energy, humour and enthusiasm of the boys have been a joy to observe."



And Finally

The School's annual charity bike ride from Guildford to Brighton saw 23 Upper Sixth and eight Lower Sixth Form boys undertaking the 43-mile, off-road route, down the Down's Link and then along the seafront. Organiser of the event, **Sarah Kendell**, along with **Becky Rathmell** decided to put their Spinning classes to good use by doing the ride on a tandem, which, when they eventually managed to synchronise their pedalling, proved to be a match even for the fittest of the Sixth Form boys. Geography teacher **Dai Cowx** felt that the one-way trip was insufficiently challenging and did his customary return journey by bike, making his journey a staggering 80 miles or so off-road. After a few punctures, an exploding tyre and an alarming amount of sweat, the group successfully reached the south coast, having raised in the process significant sums for the School's charities.

