



From the Headmaster

"A bird gets up every morning and sings its song. It does not wait to hear what other birds are singing, nor does it look to see if another bird is getting more notice. This is nature: knowing your own song." As I reflect on the last twelve months, this quotation by American artist and author Michele Oka Doner seems strangely apt as the academic year at the RGS comes to an end.

This has, undoubtedly, been an exceptional year even by RGS standards and for me there is a recurring theme which epitomises the last twelve months. Ambitious aspirations and being willing to follow one's own passions and dreams are characteristics which allow an already talented group of students and staff to raise the bar of achievement even higher. The self-esteem and self-confidence of each individual – stemming from the foundations of a supportive, nurturing environment – mean the boys are happy and at ease with themselves. This, in turn, allows them to express themselves with honesty and integrity, and with a smile on their faces.

As I reflect on this memorable academic year, so many of the highlights have incorporated students who have exceeded expectation; the fact that a number of these achievements have showcased such originality proves that individuals at the RGS can truly be individuals. The sheer exuberance and enthusiasm of our actors in drama productions such as *Emil & the Detectives* or *RENT, A Midsummer Night's Dream Gone Wrong* or *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. The talent of our musicians at Musician of the Year, or the Concerto Concert, or the opera in the Old Building. The diverse artwork on display at the exhibition where through different media the artists had the self-belief to express themselves in such innovative ways. The charitable initiatives and partnership opportunities where students selflessly and altruistically threw themselves into activities simply for the benefit of others. The sports fields. The academic spheres. The co-curricular life of the School. The passionate focus of the community on the environment and sustainability. And so I could go on.

As we break-up for a very well-deserved rest, I would like to thank you, the parents, as well as the staff, the governors and all those who have contributed so much to our community. I would also, in keeping with the words of wisdom imparted by Michele Oka Doner, urge all the boys to continue to know their own song, celebrate their individuality, and have confidence in themselves. With extraordinary effort comes extraordinary achievement and I look forward, with anticipation, to what next year brings at the RGS.

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Chemistry: In the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, in which more than 9,000 Sixth Form chemists participated, RGS students once again flourished. Fifth Form student **Alex Thow** finished in the top 0.6% of all the candidates in the UK and was awarded the coveted Roentgenium Award. In total, our students secured one Roentgenium, seven Gold, nine Silver and ten Copper Awards.

Charity: The total amount raised this year in charitable initiatives comes to over £12,500 and will be split equally between our three nominated charities. Events have ranged from the Great RGS Bake Off, to the charity assembly, to the cinema evenings, to the cross-country challenge, to the pancake race, to the Christmas Fair, to name but a few! This year's local charity was the *Fountain Centre*, located in the St Luke's cancer unit at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, which aims to empower cancer patients and their families with information and support. Our national charity was the *Campaign Against Living Miserably*, or *CALM*, launched in March 2006 with the purpose of bringing the suicide rate down among young men. Finally, our international charity for this year was the *World Wildlife Fund*, the world's leading independent conservation organisation. We are delighted to have raised such significant sums and hope, in some small way, we have made a difference to all three fantastic charities.

Engineering: **Ethan Game** (5B) and **Elliott Latham** (5A) have been awarded prestigious Sixth Form Arkwright Engineering Scholarships. This is the most prestigious scholarship of its type in the UK which inspires and nurtures school-age students to be the country's future leaders of the Engineering profession.

Events: A phenomenally busy last fortnight of term has seen a succession of impressive school events. These have included: the excellent drama production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream Gone Wrong* on the Headmaster's Lawn; the powerful opera *Venus and Adonis* by John Blow in the atmospheric courtyard of the Old Building; the engaging Junior Piano Concert in the Recital Room; the outstanding Leavers' Concert in the same venue; the inspiring Economics' Speakers Day to which a significant number of local schools were invited; the Art Exhibition Private View in the Art School; the author visit by Karen McCombie; and the uplifting Junior Prizegiving ceremony in Holy Trinity Church.

Staff: We are bidding a sad farewell to a number of individuals – support staff and gap teachers – as well as the following members of teaching staff: Miss Georgina Bell (Classics); Mrs Penny Brooks (Economics); Mr Peter Clarke (Modern Languages); Mr Andrew Curtis (Art); Mr John Dunne (English); Mr Andrew Gyford (Mathematics); Mr Michael Hughes (English); Mrs Zoe Marsden (Learning Support); Mrs Sarah McLoughlin (Modern Languages); Mr Ed Pearson (Geography); Dr Alex Page (Mathematics); Mr Dick Seymour (Geography); Mr Jeremy Whittaker (English); Mr Henry Wiggins (History); and Dr James Wisson (Economics). Mr Seymour and Mr Whittaker are retiring having accrued 72 years teaching at the School between them. As Dr Cox commented: "The School is indebted to our retirees and their impact on generations of students cannot, for a second, be underestimated. Their dedication, professionalism and scholarship and a desire to put the students at the heart of all they do means they will be sorely missed." We thank all the staff who are leaving and wish them all the very best in the future.

Sports News

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Chess: At the National Schools Chess Championship at Uppingham School, sixteen of the strongest school chess teams in the country competed. The RGS team – captain **Harry Grieve** (U6), **Amardip Ahluwalia** (4V), **Omeet Atara** (5A), **Alex Golding** (4N), **James Golding** (L6) and **Luke Nelson** (L6) – lost just one game, against the eventual winners, City of London School. The RGS finished third overall: a phenomenal achievement.

Cricket: In the NatWest County Cup, having won tense quarter and semi-finals against Reed's School and Hampton School respectively, the Under 15A team competed in the final against King's College School, Wimbledon. Captain Joe Sheldon won the toss and the RGS posted an imposing 183 for five off 35 overs. An exceptional team bowling and fielding display resulted in the opposition's dismissal for 108 and a win by 75 runs. In the final block fixtures of term, the highlight against Hampton School was the hat-trick of wins for the Under 15 teams and, individually, an excellent 60 by **Abhay Gonella** (U6) for the 1st XI. The sun was shining for our last block fixture of the season against Portsmouth Grammar School, as the RGS won all nine fixtures. For the 1st XI, **Tom Eves** (U6) finished the season style with scores of 69* and 108* in his final two matches. In addition, **Ollie George** (2P) used guile and high levels of concentration to construct a superb inning of 93* for the Under 13As.

Fencing: In the Surrey Youth Team Foil Championship, the Under 14 team of **James Harper-Jones** (3P), **Ben Kamstra** (1E) and **Rishikesh Mistry** (2L) were crowned silver medallists; **Zed Law** (3R) also secured silver.

